GREAT BOOKS TO READ IN 4TH GRADE 2015
SELECTED BY MS. BOCK
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This book belongs to:

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Cover image by Ms. Bock. Next year, we’ll have a contest for students in each grade, so start thinking about ideas.
Introduction from the Librarian

Dear students, teachers, and families,

I am so pleased to offer these book lists to you. All year, students, teachers, and parents ask me for suggestions for reading material, and giving recommendations is one of my favorite things to do. I hope that these lists will offer a starting point for anyone looking for something excellent to read.

The most important thing in elementary school is that students find books they enjoy reading. I firmly believe that there is a book out there for every reader. If you haven’t yet found books that make you want to stay up all night reading under the covers, don’t worry. Maybe you’ll discover some in this booklet! The important thing is to keep trying different books until you find the ones that are perfect for you.

I sincerely hope that there will be something for everyone on this list. There are picture books, novels, informational books, poetry, and graphic novels. There are books in every genre, classics, and new releases. What they all have in common is that every single one is worth reading.

The lists are made up of books that will be of interest to students in that grade. I have paid little attention to reading level, except to make sure that there is a wide range on each list. For some students, this will mean listening to an audiobook or having someone read a book aloud to them. I encourage everyone to access the stories in whatever way suits them. Family read-alouds are a fantastic way to spend time together, regardless of anyone’s age.

I hope you’ll tell me if the lists are helpful. I already have some ideas for how to make them even better next year. When you find a new favorite, be sure to come and tell me about it!

Happy reading!

Amanda Bock
How to Use This Book

The list has been divided into broad categories.

**Realistic Stories:** These are made-up stories that could actually happen, but didn't. They might take place now or in the past. They might be novels, graphic novels, picture books, or stories told in poetry.

**Fantasy Stories:** These are made-up stories that could never happen in real life. They might have magic, fantastical creatures, or take place in the future. They might be novels, graphic novels, picture books, or stories told in poetry.

**Unlikely Stories:** These are the made-up stories that don't fit easily into Realistic or Fantasy. Perhaps there's one about a kid who is an international spy, or one about family, friendship, and school that just happens to have talking mice instead of people. This is where you'll find a story that is *almost* possible. These, too, might be novels, graphic novels, picture books, or stories told in poetry.

**Nonfiction:** These are true stories, biographies, and informational books, as well as poetry.

Within each section, the books are arranged in alphabetical order by the author’s last name.

Almost all of the books will be available at any self-respecting bookstore. There are a few under-appreciated gems that will only be available at the public library or a used bookstore. When that is the case, I have tried to include that information in the annotation.

Most of the annotations come from publishers’ websites, although some have been written especially for this list. The source or contributor is indicated in parentheses at the end. Can you do a better job describing a book or series? Write it up and bring it to the Library! Maybe it will be included in next year’s booklet!
What’s Great About Being a Reader in Fourth Grade

As a Fourth Grade reader, you will build up your stamina to read for longer periods of time. You will probably read more books this year than any other year. You will find books that have sophisticated writing, meaningful adventures, and characters who you’ll remember forever.

Ms. Bock’s Top Picks for Grade 4

Overwhelmed by the number of books on this list? Start with these. Find the annotations in the main list.

Realistic Stories
The Strange Case of Origami Yoda by Tom Angleberger
Iron Thunder by Avi
El Deafo by Cece Bell
The Arrow Over the Door by Joseph Bruchac
Frindle by Andrew Clements
Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech
Fish in a Tree by Lynda Mullaly Hunt
The Great Greene Heist by Varian Johnson
From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basile E. Frankweiler
Reign Rain by Ann M. Martin

Unlikely Stories
Danny, the Champion of the World by Roald Dahl
Secrets of Shakespeare’s Grave by Deron Hicks, Jr.
Regarding the Fountain by Kate Klise
Black & White by David Macaulay
Ask the Bones by Arielle North Olson
A Drowned Maiden’s Hair by Laura Amy Schlitz
The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick
The Bad Beginning by Lemony Snicket

Fantasy Stories
The Boggart by Susan Cooper
The Dark is Rising by Susan Cooper
The Sea of Trolls by Nancy Farmer
Among the Hidden by Margaret Peterson Haddix
Princess Academy by Shannon Hale
Finn Family Moomintroll by Tove Jansson
Ella Enchanted by Gail Carson Levine
Aviary Wonders Inc. Spring Catalog and Instruction Manual by Kate Samworth

Nonfiction
Scientists in the Field series by Various authors
The New Way Things Work by David Macaulay
When the Wolves Returned: Restoring Nature’s Balance in Yellowstone by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent
The Tree of Life: Charles Darwin by Peter Sis
If America Were a Village by David J. Smith
How to Build Your Own Country by Valerie Wyatt
New Recommended Books for Everyone

These books were published in the last year and may be of interest to all readers, regardless of age.

Arégui, Matthias. *Before After*
Which came first? No words are necessary in this beautiful, artfully humorous book, in which every turn of the page offers a surprise. (candlewick.com)

Barnett, Mac. *Sam and Dave Dig a Hole*
Sam and Dave are on a mission. A mission to find something spectacular. So they dig a hole. And they keep digging. And they find... nothing. Yet the day turns out to be pretty spectacular after all. Attentive readers will be rewarded with a rare treasure in this witty story of looking for the extraordinary — and finding it in a manner you’d never expect. (candlewick.com)

Cronin, Doreen. *The Chicken Squad: The First Misadventure*
No job is too big or small for the shortest, yellowest, fuzziest detectives around: The Chicken Squad. Follow Dirt, Sugar, Poppy and Sweetie as they piece together the mysteries of their backyard friends while stirring up some trouble too! (simonandschuster.com)

DiPuchchio, Kelly. *Gaston*
A bulldog and a poodle learn that family is about love, not appearances in this adorable doggy tale from New York Times bestselling author Kelly DiPuchchio and illustrator Christian Robinson. (simonandschuster.com)

Escoffier, Michaël. *Take Away the A*
Take Away the A is a fun, imaginative romp through the alphabet. The idea behind the book is that within every language there are words that change and
become a different word through the simple subtraction of a single letter. (enchantedlion.com)

**Florian, Douglas. Poem Depot: Aisles of Smiles**
In the vein of Shel Silverstein and Jack Prelutsky, this illustrated book of humorous poems will guarantee giggles! (penguinrandomhouse.com)

**Frazee, Marla. The Farmer and the Clown**
Whimsical and touching images tell the story of an unexpected friendship and the revelations it inspires in this moving, wordless picture book from two-time Caldecott Honor medalist Marla Frazee. (simonandschuster.com)

**Himmelman, John. Tales of Bunjitsu Bunny**
Introducing Isabel, aka Bunjitsu Bunny! She is the BEST bunjitsu artist in her school, and she can throw farther, kick higher, and hit harder than anyone else! But she never hurts another creature... unless she has to. (us.macmillan.com)

**Janeczko, Paul B.. Firefly July: A Year of Very Short Poems**
Celebrated poet and anthologist Paul B. Janeczko pairs with Caldecott Honoree Melissa Sweet for a collection of short poems to sample and savor. (candlewick.com)

Here is a poetic ode to the beauty of the natural world as expressed by the movement and moods of water on Earth. (leeandlowbooks.com)

**Morales, Yuyi. Viva Frida**
Distinguished author/illustrator Yuyi Morales illuminates Frida’s life and work in this elegant and fascinating book. (us.macmillan.com)
Myers, Christopher. *My Pen*
My pen rides dinosaurs and hides an elephant in a teacup. What can your pen do? Acclaimed author and illustrator Christopher Myers uses rich black-and-white illustrations to bring a sketchbook to life, showing that with a simple pen, a kid can do anything! (books.disney.com)

Peña, Matt De La. *Last Stop on Market Street*
This energetic ride through a bustling city highlights the wonderful perspective only grandparent and grandchild can share, and comes to life through Matt de la Pena’s vibrant text and Christian Robinson’s radiant illustrations. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Pizzoli, Greg. *Tricky Vic: The Impossibly True Story of the Man Who Sold the Eiffel Tower*
In the early 1900s, Robert Miller, a.k.a. “Count Victor Lustig,” moved to Paris hoping to be an artist. A con artist, that is. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Samworth, Kate. *Aviary Wonders Inc. Spring Catalog and Instruction Manual*
What can you do when all the birds are gone? Build your own! This comic environmental fable offers a businessman’s dollars-and-sense solution to the drastic effects of deforestation. (hmhco.com)

Schatz, Kate. *Rad American Women A-Z: Rebels, Trailblazers, and Visionaries who Shaped Our History . . . and Our Future!*
American history was made by countless rad—and often radical—women. By offering a fresh and diverse array of female role models, we can remind readers that there are many places to find inspiration, and that being smart and strong and brave is rad. (citylights.com)
Spires, Ashley. *The Most Magnificent Thing*
Award-winning author and illustrator Ashley Spires has created a charming picture book about an unnamed girl and her very best friend, who happens to be a dog. (kidscanpress.com)

Willems, Mo. *Waiting Is Not Easy!*
The newest book in the Elephant & Piggie series! (Ms. Bock)
Realistic Stories

Alcott, Louisa May, Little Women

Little Women is one of the best loved books of all time. Lovely Meg, talented Jo, frail Beth, spoiled Amy: these are hard lessons of poverty and of growing up in New England during the Civil War. Through their dreams, plays, pranks, letters, illnesses, and courtships, women of all ages have become a part of this remarkable family and have felt the deep sadness when Meg leaves the circle of sisters to be married at the end of Part I. Part II, chronicles Meg’s joys and mishaps as a young wife and mother, Jo’s struggle to become a writer, Beth’s tragedy, and Amy’s artistic pursuits and unexpected romance. Based on Louise May Alcott’s childhood, this lively portrait of nineteenth-century family life possesses a lasting vitality that has endeared it to generations of readers. (randomhouse.com)

Angleberger, Tom, The strange case of Origami Yoda

In this funny, uncannily wise portrait of the dynamics of a sixth-grade class and of the greatness that sometimes comes in unlikely packages, Dwight, a loser, talks to his classmates via an origami finger puppet of Yoda. If that weren’t strange enough, the puppet is uncannily wise and prescient. Origami Yoda predicts the date of a pop quiz, guesses who stole the classroom Shakespeare bust, and saves a classmate from popularity-crushing embarrassment with some well-timed advice. Dwight’s classmate Tommy wonders how Yoda can be so smart when Dwight himself is so clueless. With contributions from his puzzled classmates, he assembles the case file that forms this novel. (abramsbks.com) This is the first book in the series. They are best read in order.

Appelt, Kathi, The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp

Raccoon brothers Bingo and J’miah are the newest recruits of the Official Sugar Man Swamp Scouts. The opportunity to serve the Sugar Man—the massive creature who delights in delicious sugar cane and magnanimously rules over the swamp—is an honor, and also a big responsibility, since the rest of the swamp critters rely heavily on the intel of these hardworking Scouts. Twelve-year-old Chap Brayburn is not a
member of any such organization. But he loves the swamp something fierce, and he’ll do anything to help protect it. And help is surely needed, because world-class alligator wrestler Jaeger Stitch wants to turn Sugar Man swamp into an Alligator World Wrestling Arena and Theme Park, and the troubles don’t end there. There is also a gang of wild feral hogs on the march, headed straight toward them all. The Scouts are ready. All they have to do is wake up the Sugar Man. Problem is, no one’s been able to wake that fellow up in a decade or four... (simonandschuster.com)

Applegate, Katherine, *The One and Only Ivan*

Inspired by the true story of a captive gorilla known as Ivan, this illustrated novel is told from the point-of-view of Ivan himself. Having spent 27 years behind the glass walls of his enclosure in a shopping mall, Ivan has grown accustomed to humans watching him. He hardly ever thinks about his life in the jungle. Instead, Ivan occupies himself with television, his friends Stella and Bob, and painting. But when he meets Ruby, a baby elephant taken from the wild, he is forced to see their home, and his art, through new eyes. (harpercollins.com)

Auch, M. J., *One-Handed Catch*

What would it be like to go through life with only one hand? That’s exactly what eleven-year-old Norm finds out when he loses his left hand in an accident at his family’s store. It’s July 4, 1946. World War II has ended, and life is getting back to normal. But for Norm, the pressing question now is whether he will ever be able to play baseball again. And what about his dreams of becoming an artist? Norm can’t even figure out how to tie his shoes anymore. How will he ever learn how to pitch or catch or swing a bat with no left hand? It’s up to Norm to find the strength to get beyond this roadblock and move on with his life. (us.macmillan.com)

Avi, *Iron Thunder*

When his father is killed fighting for the Union in the War Between the States, thirteen-year-old Tom Carroll must take a job to help support his family. He manages to find work at a bustling ironworks in his hometown of Brooklyn, New York, where dozens of men are frantically pounding together the strangest...
ship Tom has ever seen. A ship made of iron. Tom becomes assistant to the ship's inventor, a gruff, boastful man named Captain John Ericsson. He soon learns that the Union army has very important plans for this iron ship called the Monitor. It is supposed to fight the Confederate 'sea monster'--another ironclad--the Merrimac. But Ericsson is practically the only person who believes the Monitor will float. Everyone else calls it 'Ericsson's Folly' or 'the iron coffin.' Meanwhile, Tom's position as Ericsson's assistant has made him a target of Confederate spies, who offer him money for information about the ship. Tom finds himself caught between two certain dangers: an encounter with murderous spies and a battle at sea in an iron coffin. (hyperionbooks.com)

**Bagnold, Enid, National Velvet**

The timeless story of spirited Velvet Brown and her beloved horse has thrilled generations of readers. ... Fourteen-year-old Velvet is determined to turn her untamed horse into a champion and personally ride him to victory in the world's greatest steeplechase, the Grand National. (harpercollins.com)

**Baker, Deirdre, Becca at Sea**

Becca's made many visits to her grandmother's rustic cabin in the Gulf Islands, but this February, it's different. With her mother expecting a baby, Becca is making the trip to Gran's all by herself. Suddenly, the place, and even her grandmother, feels foreign. Summer's carefree, fun-filled island is now cold and unfamiliar, full of mystery and challenges, kind of like Becca herself — the visit has brought out all her insecurities. But when she finds an oyster full of pearls, it sets off a series of small but significant adventures that leave her seeing the island, her family, and herself through new eyes. As her mother's pregnancy progresses, Becca returns to the island again and again. And with each new adventure — from watching the annual herring run in a sinking dinghy to skinny-dipping to learning to deal with bossy cousins — Becca gains a little more self-assurance. Funny, endearing, and completely true-to-life, Becca's journey is one all young readers can identify with. (groundwoodbooks.com)

**Barnett, Mac, The Terrible Two**

Miles Murphy is not happy to be moving to Yawnee Valley, a sleepy town that's famous for one thing and one thing only: cows. In his old school, everyone knew him as the town's best prankster,
but Miles quickly discovers that Yawnee Valley already has a prankster, and a great one. If Miles is going to take the title from this mystery kid, he is going to have to raise his game. It’s prankster against prankster in an epic war of trickery, until the two finally decide to join forces and pull off the biggest prank ever seen: a prank so huge that it would make the members of the International Order of Disorder proud. (abramsbooks.com)

Bell, Cece, *El Deafo*

Going to school and making new friends can be tough. But going to school and making new friends while wearing a bulky hearing aid strapped to your chest? That requires superpowers! In this funny, poignant graphic novel memoir, author/illustrator Cece Bell chronicles her hearing loss at a young age and her subsequent experiences with the Phonic Ear, a very powerful—and very awkward—hearing aid. The Phonic Ear gives Cece the ability to hear—sometimes things she shouldn’t—but also isolates her from her classmates. She really just wants to fit in and find a true friend, someone who appreciates her as she is. After some trouble, she is finally able to harness the power of the Phonic Ear and become “El Deafo, Listener for All.” And more importantly, declare a place for herself in the world and find the friend she’s longed for. (abramsbooks.com) This is a graphic novel.

Birdsall, Jeanne, *The Penderwicks: A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits, and a Very Interesting Boy*

This summer the Penderwick sisters have a wonderful surprise: a holiday on the grounds of a beautiful estate called Arundel. Soon they are busy discovering the summertime magic of Arundel’s sprawling gardens, treasure-filled attic, tame rabbits, and the cook who makes the best gingerbread in Massachusetts. But the best discovery of all is Jeffrey Tifton, son of Arundel’s owner, who quickly proves to be the perfect companion for their adventures. The icy-hearted Mrs. Tifton is not as pleased with the Penderwicks as Jeffrey is, though, and warns the new friends to stay out of trouble. Which, of course, they will—won’t they? One thing’s for sure: it will be a summer the Penderwicks will never forget. (penguinrandomhouse.com) This is the first in the series. They are best read in order. If you enjoy the Penderwicks, try books by Noel Streatfeild or Edward Eager.

I, Catherine Cabot Hall, aged 13 years, 6 months, 29 days...do begin this book. So begins the journal of a girl coming of age in nineteenth-century New Hampshire. Catherine records both the hardships of pioneer life and its many triumphs. Even as she struggles with her mother's death and father's eventual remarriage, Catherine's indomitable spirit makes this saga an oftentimes uplifting and joyous one. (books.simonandschuster.com)

Blume, Judy, *Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great*

Sheila Tubman sometimes wonders who she really is: the outgoing, witty, and capable Sheila the Great, or the secret Sheila, who's afraid of the dark, spiders, swimming, and dogs. When her family spends the summer in Tarrytown, Sheila has to face some of her worst fears. Not only does a dog come with the rented house, but her parents expect Sheila to take swimming lessons! Sheila does her best to pretend she's an expert at everything, but she knows she isn't fooling her new best friend, Mouse Ellis, who happens to be a crackerjack swimmer and a dog lover. What will it take for Sheila to admit to the Tarrytown kids -- and to herself -- that she's only human? (books.google.com)

Boyce, Frank Cottrell, *The Unforgotten Coat*

When two Mongolian brothers inexplicably appear one morning in Julie’s sixth grade class, no one, least of all Julie, knows what to do with them. But when Chingis, the older of the two brothers, proclaims Julie as their “Good Guide” – a nomadic tradition of welcoming strangers to a new land – Julie must somehow navigate them through soccer, school uniforms, and British slang, all while trying to win Shockey’s attention and perhaps also an invitation to her friend Mimi’s house. At times funny, this moving and simply told novella tugs at the heart—a unique story of immigration both fierce in its telling and magical in its characters. (candlewick.com)

Bredsdorff, Bodil, *The Crow-Girl: The Children of Crow Cove*

Near a little cove where a brook runs out to the sea live a girl and her grandmother. All alone with no neighbors at all, the two lead a peaceful existence. They have a house, dine on sea kale and
mussels and sand snails, and build fires from driftwood. But the grandmother is very old. When the time comes that the girl must bury the woman, she makes up a funeral song about the birds she is watching: Two crows never fly alone, and death is never, ever past. The next day the same crows seem to beckon her, and so the Crow-Girl begins her journey, one in which she will meet people both warm and cold, hurt and hurtful. And the Crow-Girl, before she knows it, has the makings before her of a new family... This lyrical story, with its characters' moments of darkness always overcome through incredible humanity, introduces a strong new voice for American readers. (us.macmillan.com)

Brink, Carol Ryrie, Caddie Woodlawn
Caddie Woodlawn is a real adventurer. She’d rather hunt than sew and plow than bake, and tries to beat her brother’s dares every chance she gets. Caddie is friends with Indians, who scare most of the neighbors -- neighbors who, like her mother and sisters, don’t understand her at all. Caddie is brave, and her story is special because it’s based on the life and memories of Carol Ryrie Brink’s grandmother, the real Caddie Woodlawn. (books.simonandschuster.com)

Bruchac, Joseph, Arrow over the Door
For young Samuel Russell, the summer of 1777 is a time of fear. The British Army is approaching, and the Indians in the area seem ready to attack. To Stands Straight, a young Abenaki Indian scouting for King George, Americans are dangerous enemies who threaten his family and home. When Stands Straight’s party enters the Quaker Meetinghouse where Samuel worships, the two boys share an encounter that neither will ever forget. Told in alternating viewpoints, The Arrow over the Door is based on a true story. (penguin.com)

Bryant, Annie, Worst Enemies/Best Friends
Yikes! As if being the new girl isn’t bad enough, Charlotte just made the biggest cafeteria blunder in the history of Abigail Adams Junior High. There’s no way that Katani, Avery and Maeve will want anything to do with her now ... or will they? Find out whether a mysterious landlady, a romantic evening gone wrong,
and a cryptic key to nowhere can help four extraordinary girls survive 7th grade and accept each other. Will they become best friends? Or worst enemies? (This is the first in the Beacon Street Girls series.)

Burg, Ann E., *Serafina’s Promise*

Serafina’s Promise is the story of a young girl in Haiti who wants to go to school. Written entirely in verse, it enables readers to experience her struggles and triumphs as she seeks to overcome the limitations of her environment and her personal circumstances. (annburg.com)

Burnett, Frances Hodgson, *The Secret Garden*

When orphaned Mary Lennox comes to live at her uncle’s great house on the Yorkshire Moors, she finds it full of secrets. The mansion has nearly one hundred rooms, and her uncle keeps himself locked up. And at night, she hears the sound of crying down one of the long corridors. The gardens surrounding the large property are Mary’s only escape. Then, Mary discovers a secret garden, surrounded by walls and locked with a missing key. One day, with the help of two unexpected companions, she discovers a way in. Is everything in the garden dead, or can Mary bring it back to life? (harpercollins.com)

Byars, Betsy, *The Dark Stairs*

Mystery is in Herculeah Jones’s blood. How could it not be, with a father on the police force and a mother who’s a private eye? So when Herculeah notices a man hanging around the “Dead Oaks” mansion, she can’t resist doing some investigating of her own. Legend has it the old estate was the site of a murder, and now it looks like there’s something even more nefarious going on. Can Herculeah crack the case before the mystery man closes in on her? (penguinrandomhouse.com) This is the first book in the Herculeah Jones series. They can be read in any order.

Cabot, Meg, *Moving Day*

When nine-year-old Allie Finkle’s parents announce that they are moving her and her brothers from their suburban split-level into an ancient Victorian in town, Allie is sure her life is over. She’s not at all happy about
having to give up her pretty pink wall-to-wall carpeting for creaky floorboards and creepy secret passageways — not to mention leaving her modern, state-of-the-art suburban school for a rundown, old-fashioned school just two blocks from her new house. (scholastic.com)

Cali, Davide, *The Enemy*
After watching an enemy for a very long time during an endless war, a soldier finally creeps out into the night to the other man's hole and is surprised by what he finds there. (books.google.com)

Cameron, Ann, *The Secret Life of Amanda K. Woods*
Eleven-year-old Amanda Woods is discovering that the person other people think she is and the person she really is are not the same. So she changes her name from bland Amanda Woods to Amanda K. Woods--someone who is proud and strong and sure of herself. And that small change sets off a chain reaction, leaving Amanda--and the whole Woods family--entirely different. (us.penguin.com)

Choi, Sook Nyul, *Year of Impossible Goodbyes*
It is 1945, and courageous ten-year-old Sookan and her family must endure the cruelties of the Japanese military occupying Korea. Police captain Narita does his best to destroy everything of value to the family, but he cannot break their spirit. Sookan’s father is with the resistance movement in Manchuria and her older brothers have been sent away to labor camps. Her mother is forced to supervise a sock factory and Sookan herself must wear a uniform and attend a Japanese school. Then the war ends. Out come the colorful Korean silks and bags of white rice. But Communist Russian troops have taken control of North Korea and once again the family is suppressed. Sookan and her family know their only hope for freedom lies in a dangerous escape to American-controlled South Korea. Here is the incredible story of one family’s love for each other and their determination to risk everything to find freedom. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Choldenko, Gennifer, *Al Capone Does My Shirts*
When Moose’s family moves to Alcatraz Island so his father can work as a guard and his sister can attend a special school in San Francisco, he has to leave his friends behind. But it’s worth it, right?

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If his sister, Natalie, can get help, maybe his family will finally be normal. But on Alcatraz his dad is so busy, he’s never around. His mom’s preoccupation with Natalie’s condition (today, it would be called autism) is even worse now that there’s no extended family to help. And of course, there’s never enough money. When Moose meets Piper, the cute daughter of the warden, he knows right off she’s trouble. But she’s also strangely irresistible. All Moose wants to do is protect Natalie, live up to his parents’ expectations and stay out of trouble. But on Alcatraz, trouble is never very far away. (penguinrandomhouse.com) There is a sequel to this book called Al Capone Shines My Shoes.

Cleary, Beverly, Books

If you like realistic fiction, then you simply must read some books by Beverly Cleary. She has a knack for capturing kids’ feelings in a powerful way. She was one of the first authors to show that kids could have complicated emotions in stories. It doesn’t seem like a big deal now, but at the time it was revolutionary. Any realistic fiction story you read now owes a debt to Beverly Cleary; if it wasn’t for her, those other books wouldn’t exist. Her most famous books are probably the Ramona series, which starts with Beezus and Ramona. Her next famous book is probably The Mouse and the Motorcycle. It’s hard for me to choose a favorite, but I think it might be Dear Mr. Henshaw, which won the Newbery Medal when it was new. (Ms. Bock)

Clements, Andrew, Books

Every once in a while, I pick up a new book by Andrew Clements and I am surprised by how much I like it. And then I remember that I always love his books and I really shouldn’t be surprised. Andrew Clements was a teacher before he was a writer and you can tell- most of his stories happen in school and he is really good at capturing how kids interact in a classroom. His characters are interesting and realistic, and the
stories are often about kids fighting against ineffective grownups. His most famous book is probably Frindle, about a boy who comes up with a new word for pen that catches on, even though his teacher hates it. I think my favorite book by him is The Landry News because you learn about newspapers and censorship while you read a great story. (Ms. Bock)

Cole, Henry, *Unspoken: A Story From the Underground Railroad*  
A young girl's courage is tested in this haunting, wordless story. When a farm girl discovers a runaway slave hiding in the barn, she is at once startled and frightened. But the stranger's fearful eyes weigh upon her conscience, and she must make a difficult choice. Will she have the courage to help him? Unspoken gifts of humanity unite the girl and the runaway as they each face a journey: one following the North Star, the other following her heart. Henry Cole's unusual and original rendering of the Underground Railroad speaks directly to our deepest sense of compassion. (henrycole.net)

Creech, Sharon, *Books*  
Sharon Creech writes some of the most wonderful realistic fiction stories. They are usually about friendship, family, and kids trying to find their place in the world. Recently, she has been writing books that have a bit of magic in them. Her most famous book is *Walk Two Moons*, which won a Newbery Award. It's about a girl named Sal whose only wish is to be reunited with her mother. While on a road trip with her grandparents, she tells the story of her classmate, Phoebe, whose mother mysteriously disappeared. My
favorite book by this author is Bloomability. I think it's the best book about friendship I've ever read. Dinnie is "kidnapped" and sent to a boarding school in Switzerland. While she's there, she struggles with homesickness, worry that her family will forget her, and trying to fit in. If you like realistic fiction, you simply must read some of Sharon Creech's books. You can find a complete list and other goodies at sharoncreech.com. (Ms. Bock)

DiCamillo, Kate, Because of Winn-Dixie

Ten-year-old India Opal Buloni’s mother walked out on her seven years ago, and she's been asking about her ever since — so that she won't forget her mom. But when she moves to Naomi, Florida, and befriends a lively stray dog, the canine helps her meet some unusual characters who teach her about love, life, and forgiveness. (scholastic.com)

Dorris, Michael, Guests

A story about Thanksgiving from the point of view of the hosts: the Native Americans who were kind enough to share what they had with the Pilgrims. Moss, a young boy who is unhappy with the white strangers' intrusion, sets out on a journey of self-discovery, which will change his life forever. (scholastic.com)

Draper, Sharon M., Stella by Starlight

Stella lives in the segregated South—in Bumblebee, North Carolina, to be exact about it. Some stores she can go into. Some stores she can’t. Some folks are right pleasant. Others are a lot less so. To Stella, it sort of evens out, and heck, the Klan hasn’t bothered them for years. But one late night, later than she should ever be up, much less wandering around outside, Stella and her little brother see something they're never supposed to see, something that is the first flicker of change to come, unwelcome change by any stretch of the imagination. As Stella’s community—her world—is upended, she decides to fight fire with fire. And she learns that ashes don’t necessarily signify an end. (books.simonandschuster.com)

Edwards, Julie Andrews, Mandy

Ten-year-old Mandy feels lost among the thirty children who live in the old stone orphanage. She dreams of a home of her own, a place where she belongs. When Mandy climbs over the high
orphanage wall to explore the outside, she is lucky enough to find a tiny deserted cottage hidden in the forest. With a few "borrowed" items, the cottage becomes a refuge. To guard her secret, Mandy even lies -- but when she falls terribly sick, no one knows where she is. No one, that is, except for a special admirer she didn’t know she had. (harpercollins.com)

**Enright, Elizabeth, Gone-Away Lake**

Summer has a magic all its own. When Portia sets out for a visit with her cousin Julian, she expects fun and adventure, but of the usual kind: exploring in the woods near Julian's house, collecting stones and bugs, playing games throughout the long, lazy days. But this summer is different. On their first day exploring, Portia and Julian discover an enormous boulder with a mysterious message, a swamp choked with reeds and quicksand, and on the far side of the swamp...a ghost town. Once upon a time the swamp was a splendid lake, and the fallen houses along its shore an elegant resort community. But though the lake is long gone and the resort faded away, the houses still hold a secret life: two people who have never left Gone-Away...and who can tell the story of what happened there. (goodreads.com)

**Erdrich, Louise, The Birchbark House**

In this story of a young Ojibwa girl, Omakayas, living on an island in Lake Superior around 1847, Louise Erdrich is reversing the narrative perspective used in most children’s stories about nineteenth-century Native Americans. Instead of looking out at ‘them’ as dangers or curiosities, Erdrich, drawing on her family’s history, wants to tell about ‘us’, from the inside. (books.disney.com) There is a sequel to this book called The Game of Silence.

**Farley, Walter, The Black Stallion**

The sole survivors of a devastating shipwreck, Alec Ramsay and the Black Stallion must learn to rely on each other to survive. As a strong bond develops between them, Alec gains the trust of the magnificent beast and eventually the Black allows Alec to ride. Finally, they are rescued, but will Alec and the Black be allowed to stay together? (penguinrandomhouse.com) This is the first book in the series.
Fitzhugh, Louise, *Harriet the Spy*

Harriet M. Welsch is a spy. In her notebook, she writes down everything she knows about everyone, even her classmates and her best friends. Then Harriet loses track of her notebook, and it ends up in the wrong hands. Before she can stop them, her friends have read the always truthful, sometimes awful things she’s written about each of them. Will Harriet find a way to put her life and her friendships back together? (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Gantos, Jack, *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*

Joey Pigza can't sit still. He can't pay attention, he can't follow the rules, and he can't help it -- especially when his meds aren't working. Joey’s had problems ever since he was born, problems just like his dad and grandma have. And whether he's wreaking havoc on a class trip or swallowing his house key, Joey's problems are getting worse. In fact, his behavior is so off the wall that his teachers are threatening to send him to the special-ed center downtown. Joey knows he's really a good kid, but no matter how hard he tries to do the right thing, something always seems to go wrong. Will he ever get anything right? (harpercollins.com)

Garza, Xavier, *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel: A Bilingual Lucha Libre Thriller*

Maximillian is just another 11 year-old lucha libre fan. He goes to the matches, watches the movies and collects the masks of his favorite wrestlers, especially the Guardian Angel. But when he tumbles over the railing at a lucha libre match in San Antonio Max makes a connection to the world of Mexican wrestling that will ultimately link him—maybe by blood!—to the greatest hero of all time: the Guardian Angel. What was shaping up to be one boring summer before 6th grade now seems like a story straight out of Max's beloved lucha libre movies! (cincopuntos.com)

Giblin, James Cross, *The Boy Who Saved Cleveland*

If not for Seth Doan, the city of Cleveland wouldn’t exist today... In 1798, Cleveland, Ohio, was in danger of being wiped out by a malaria epidemic. Based on fact, this book tells the remarkable story of Seth Doan,
a young boy whose heroic efforts kept his family and neighbors alive and ultimately put the city of Cleveland on the map. (books.google.com)

**Giff, Patricia Reilly, *Lily’s Crossing***

When Lily meets Albert, a refugee from Hungary, during the summer of 1944, they begin a special friendship. However, Lily and Albert have both told lies, and Lily has told a lie that may cost Albert his life. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

**Gownley, Jimmy, *The Whole World’s Crazy***

Meet Amelia Louise McBride. She’s been forced to move out of Manhattan after her parents decided to get divorced, and is now living in a small town (who cares which one) with her mom and her aunt, Tanner. Not to mention the fact that she’s dealing with being the new kid in school, many trips to the principal’s office, first kisses, etc. But you know what? She’s got her friends Reggie, Rhonda, and Pajamaman, and everything’s going to be okay. Except, of course, when it isn’t. This first volume in the hit series sees Amelia and her friends taking on bullies, barely surviving gym class, learning the truth about Santa, and the dubious merits of the elusive Sneeze Barf. (books.simonandschuster.com) (This is the first book in the Amelia Rules series. It is a graphic novel.)

**Graff, Lisa, *Absolutely Almost***

Albie has always been an almost. He’s almost good at tetherball. He’s almost smart enough to pass his spelling test. He almost makes his parents proud. And now that Albie is starting a brand new school for fifth grade, he’s never felt more certain that almost simply isn’t good enough. With everyone around him expecting him to be one thing or another, how is an almost like Albie ever supposed to figure out who he really wants to be? (lisagraff.com)

**Graff, Lisa, *The Thing About Georgie***

As far as Georgie is concerned, everyone has a "thing." The thing about poodles is that Georgie Bishop hates to walk them. The thing about Jeanie the Meanie is that she would rather write on her shoe than help Georgie with their Abraham Lincoln project. The
thing about Andy's nonna is that she kisses Georgie's cheeks and doesn't speak one word of English. The thing about Georgie's mom is that she's having a baby—a baby who will probably be taller than Georgie very, very soon. The thing about Georgie . . . well, what is the thing about Georgie? (harpercollins.com)

Gray, Dianne, *Together Apart*

Isaac, on the run from his oppressive stepfather, needs time to hammer out a plan for his future. Hannah needs space to mend the hurt of losing two brothers to the blizzard—space she can't find in her family's crowded soddie. Determination, a healthy dose of luck, and a handbill advertising a position for an “Apprentice in a Growing Business Concern” draw first one, then the other of these former schoolmates to the stately home of the unconventional Eliza Moore. Like the stumbled-upon haystack that sheltered Hannah and Isaac from the blizzard and saved their lives, Eliza’s house becomes a safe, if temporary, haven. One day Hannah and Isaac will need to face their lives again, out in the open. That day is coming all too soon. Author Dianne E. Gray based this fictional story on a real event in history: the “School Children’s Blizzard,” a fierce storm that engulfed the plains states on January 12, 1888. Striking many regions during the school day, the death toll included many rural children. In imagining the aftermath of this tragedy, Gray conceived two memorable young people whose stories are bound together by the storm. (books.google.com)

Greene, Stephanie, *Sophie Hartley, On Strike*

Sophie is supposed to help out around the house, and that’s bad enough. But then her mother comes up with a job chart, and all of a sudden Sophie has a whole list of new chores to do. Some of them, like cleaning the downstairs toilet, are gross! “Menial,” says big brother Thad, who somehow manages to avoid doing any of his own new jobs. “No fair!” says Sophie. Sophie’s father went on strike when his beliefs were on the line. Now Sophie sees no alternative but to stand up for what she believes in. The ensuing battle of wills threatens to defeat even the indomitable Sophie. Will the Hartleys have to eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for every meal from now on? Will they ever have happy family times together again? (hmhco.com) This is the first book in a series about Sophie Hartley.
Grimes, Nikki, *Words with Wings*

Gaby daydreams to tune out her parents’ arguments, but when her parents divorce and she begins a new school, daydreaming gets her into trouble. Her mother scolds her for it, her teacher keeps telling her to pay attention, and the other kids tease her...until she finds a friend who also daydreams and her teacher decides to work a daydreaming-writing session into every school day. With a notebook “thick with daydreams,” Gaby grows more confident about herself and her future. (boydsmillpress.com)

Hale, Nathan, *One Dead Spy*

Nathan Hale, the author’s historical namesake, was America’s first spy, a Revolutionary War hero who famously said “I regret that I have but one life to give for my country” before being hanged by the British. In the Nathan Hale’s Hazardous Tales series, author Nathan Hale channels his namesake to present history’s roughest, toughest, and craziest stories in the graphic novel format. One Dead Spy tackles the story of Hale himself, who was an officer and spy for the American rebels during the Revolutionary War. Author Hale highlights the unusual, gruesome, and just plain unbelievable truth of historical Nathan Hale—from his early unlucky days at Yale to his later unlucky days as an officer—and America during the Revolutionary War. (abramsbooks.com) This book is the first in a series. You can read them in any order.

Henry, Marguerite, *Justin Morgan Had a Horse*

In 1791, a Vermont schoolmaster by the name of Justin Morgan comes home with a two-year-old colt named Little Bub. Taken as payment for an outstanding debt, the little colt doesn’t seem like he’s worth much, but the teacher asks one of his students, Joel Goss, to train the horse. Joel knows that the horse has great potential, and soon word about Little Bub spreads throughout the entire Northeast for his ability to work harder, run faster, and perform better than any horse in the area! (books.simonandschuster.com)

Hesse, Karen, *Letters from Rifka*

Rifka knows nothing about America when she flees from Russia with her family in 1919. But she dreams she will at last be safe from
the Russian soldiers and their harsh treatment of the Jews in the new country. Throughout her journey, Rifka carries with her a cherished volume of poetry by Alexander Pushkin. In it, she records her observations and experiences in the form of letters to her beloved cousin she has left behind. Strong-hearted and determined, Rifka must endure a great deal: humiliating examinations by doctors and soldiers, deadly typhus, separation from all she has ever known and loved, murderous storms at sea--and as if this is not enough, the loss of her glorious golden hair. And even if she does make it to America, she’s not sure America will have her. (us.macmillan.com)

Hiaasen, Carl, Hoot

Unfortunately, Roy’s first acquaintance in Florida is Dana Matherson, a well-known bully. Then again, if Dana hadn’t been sinking his thumbs into Roy’s temples and mashing his face against the school-bus window, Roy might never have spotted the running boy. And the running boy is intriguing: he was running away from the school bus, carried no books, and—here’s the odd part—wore no shoes. Sensing a mystery, Roy sets himself on the boy’s trail. The chase introduces him to potty-trained alligators, a fake-fart champion, some burrowing owls, a renegade eco-avenger, and several extremely poisonous snakes with unnaturally sparkling tails. (books.google.com) If you like this book, you should definitely read Hiaasen’s other books. Just be aware that he mostly writes for adults. Discretion is advised.

Hill, Kirkpatrick, Bo at Ballard Creek

It’s the 1920s, and Bo was headed for an Alaska orphanage when she won the hearts of two tough gold miners who set out to raise her, enthusiastically helped by all the kind people of the nearby Eskimo village. Bo learns Eskimo along with English, helps in the cookshack, learns to polka, and rides along with Big Annie and her dog team. There’s always some kind of excitement: Bo sees her first airplane, has a run-in with a bear, and meets a mysterious lost little boy. Bo at Ballard Creek by Kirkpatrick Hill is an unforgettable story of a little girl growing up in the exhilarating time after the big Alaska gold rushes. (us.macmillan.com) This is a graphic novel.
Hirsch, Odo, *Hazel Green*

Each year, on Frogg Day, a parade fills the streets and children are not allowed to take part...but it hasn’t always been that way and it certainly doesn’t seem fair to Hazel Green. So she decides to rally the children of the Moody Building to build a float for the parade. But things go awry when she is accused of stealing a recipe from her favorite baker and giving it to his rival. At the same time, the children ban her from participating in the parade because she tried to convince them that their float would topple. But with the help of her friend Yakov, a.k.a. “The Yak,” Hazel proves her innocence and leads the children to glory on Frogg Day. (bloomsbury.com) This is the first book in the series.

Holm, Jennifer L., *Books*

You may know her as the author of the fabulous Babymouse series. Jennifer Holm also writes really great historical and realistic fiction for older readers. Her stories often feature girls who are trying to figure out changes in their families or solve problems in their community. These books are funny and full of lots of small adventures. She has won three Newbery Honor medals. Her most famous book (besides Babymouse) is probably *Turtle in Paradise*. You can find out more about all of her books at jenniferholm.com. (Ms. Bock)

Howe, James, *The Misfits*

Kids who get called the worst names oftentimes find each other. That’s how it was with us. Skeezie Tookis and Addie Carle and Joe Bunch and me. We call ourselves the Gang of Five, but there are only four of us. We do it to keep people on their toes. Make ‘em wonder. Or maybe we do it because we figure that there’s one more kid out there who’s going to need a gang to be a part of. A misfit, like us. Skeezie, Addie, Joe, and Bobby -- they’ve been friends forever. They laugh together, have lunch together, and get together once a week at the Candy
Kitchen to eat ice cream and talk about important issues. Life isn’t always fair, but at least they have each other -- and all they really want to do is survive the seventh grade. That turns out to be more of a challenge than any of them had anticipated. Starting with Addie’s refusal to say the Pledge of Allegiance and her insistence on creating a new political party to run for student council, the Gang of Five is in for the ride of their lives. Along the way they will learn about politics and popularity, love and loss, and what it means to be a misfit. After years of getting by, they are given the chance to stand up and be seen -- not as the one-word jokes their classmates have tried to reduce them to, but as the full, complicated human beings they are just beginning to discover they truly are. (books.simonandschuster.com) This is the first book in the series. The others are (in order): Totally Joe, Addie on the Inside, and Also Known As Elvis.

**Hunt, Lynda Mullaly, *Fish in a Tree***

“Everybody is smart in different ways. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid.” Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, how can you cure dumb? However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the trouble maker. With his help, Ally learns not to be so hard on herself and that dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of. As her confidence grows, Ally feels free to be herself and the world starts opening up with possibilities. She discovers that there’s a lot more to her—and to everyone—than a label, and that great minds don’t always think alike. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

**Johnson, Varian, *The Great Greene Heist***

Jackson Greene has reformed. No, really he has. He became famous for the Shakedown at Shimmering Hills, and everyone still talks about the Blitz at the Fitz.... But after the disaster of the Mid-Day PDA, he swore off scheming and conning for good. Then Keith Sinclair -- loser of the Blitz -- announces he’s running for school president, against Jackson’s former best friend Gaby de la Cruz. Gaby hasn’t talked to Jackson since the PDA, and he knows she won't welcome his involvement. But he also knows Keith has "connections" to the principal, which could win him the election whatever the vote count. So Jackson
assembles a crack team to ensure the election is done right: Hashemi Larijani, tech genius. Victor Cho, bankroll. Megan Feldman, science goddess and cheerleader. Charlie de la Cruz, point man. Together they devise a plan that will bring Keith down once and for all. Yet as Jackson draws closer to Gaby again, he realizes the election isn’t the only thing he wants to win. (arthuralevinebooks.com)

Kennedy, Marlene, *Me and the Pumpkin Queen*

It’s just something she has to do. Mildred has always dreamed of growing a one-thousand-pound pumpkin to enter in her town’s Pumpkin Show. Her aunt Arlene thinks she’s obsessed, but Mildred prefers to think of herself as focused. And growing giant pumpkins is way more interesting than boys or clothes or the other girly things Aunt Arlene wants her to like. She’s been trying for four long growing seasons—ever since her mama died—and every one has ended in disaster. It’s not easy, especially with dogs who don’t realize how delicate seedlings are, and tornadoes that could destroy months of work, and most people thinking that an eleven-year-old doesn’t stand a chance. But Daddy believes in Mildred, and so does her best friend, Jacob. Maybe this will finally be her year. (harpercollins.com)

King-Smith, Dick, *Books*

If you like animals, you should get to know Dick King-Smith’s books. He is an author from England, and he is a farmer, so he knows animals well. I like his books because the animals in them mostly act like regular animals. He is most famous for his book, *Babe, the Gallant Pig*, which was made into a movie. It was one of the first major movies to combine live-action animals and computer-generated special effects so it looked like the animals were talking. I think that’s my favorite of his, too, but he wrote about a million others, so you should take a look at them all. I also really like *Lady Lollipop*. (Ms. Bock)
Konigsburg, E.L., *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*

When suburban Claudia Kincaid decides to run away, she knows she doesn’t just want to run from somewhere she wants to run to somewhere—to a place that is comfortable, beautiful, and preferably elegant. She chooses the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Knowing that her younger brother, Jamie, has money and thus can help her with the serious cash flow problem she invites him along. Once settled into the museum, Claudia and Jamie, find themselves caught up in the mystery of an angel statue that the museum purchased at an auction for a bargain price of $250. The statue is possibly an early work of the Renaissance master Michelangelo, and therefore worth millions. Is it? Or isn’t it? Claudia is determined to find out. This quest leads Claudia to Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler, the remarkable old woman who sold the statue and to some equally remarkable discoveries about herself. (books.simonandschuster.com)

Levy, Dana Alison, *The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher*

Meet the Fletchers. Their year will be filled with new schools, old friends, a grouchy neighbor, hungry skunks, leaking ice rinks, school plays, wet cats, and scary tales told in the dark! There’s Sam, age twelve, who’s mostly interested in soccer, food, and his phone; Jax, age ten, who’s psyched for fourth grade and thinks the new neighbor stinks, and not just because of the skunk; Eli, age ten (but younger than Jax), who’s thrilled to be starting this year at the Pinnacle School, where everyone’s the smart kid; and Frog (not his real name), age six, who wants everyone in kindergarten to save a seat for his invisible cheetah. Also Dad and Papa. WARNING: This book contains cat barf, turtle pee, and some really annoying homework assignments. (goodreads.com)

Lin, Grace, *The Year of the Dog*

It's the Chinese Year of the Dog, and as Pacy celebrates with her family, she finds out that this is the year she is supposed to 'find herself.' Universal themes of friendship, family, and finding one's life passions make this novel appealing to readers of all backgrounds. (hatchettbookgroup.com)
Look, Lenore, **Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things**

Alvin, an Asian American second grader, is afraid of everything—elevators, tunnels, girls, and, most of all, school. He’s so afraid of school that, while he’s there, he never, ever, says a word. But at home he’s a very loud superhero named Firecracker Man, a brother to Calvin and Anibelly, and a gentleman-in-training, so he can be just like his dad.

(penguinrandomhouse.com) This is the first book in the series. I recommend reading them in order, but it’s probably okay if you don’t.

Lord, Bette Bao, **In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson**

Shirley Temple Wong sails from China to America with a heart full of dreams. Her new home is Brooklyn, New York. America is indeed a land full of wonders, but Shirley doesn’t know any English, so it’s hard to make friends. Then a miracle—baseball—happens. It is 1947, and Jackie Robinson, star of the Brooklyn Dodgers, is everyone’s hero. Jackie Robinson is proving that a black man, the grandson of a slave, can make a difference in America and for Shirley as well, on the ball field and off, America becomes the land of opportunity. (harpercollins.com)

Lord, Cynthia, **Half a Chance**

When Lucy’s family moves to an old house on a lake, Lucy tries to see her new home through her camera’s lens, as her father has taught her — he’s a famous photographer, away on a shoot. Will her photos ever meet his high standards? When she discovers that he’s judging a photo contest, Lucy decides to enter anonymously. She wants to find out if her eye for photography is really special — or only good enough. As she seeks out subjects for her photos, Lucy gets to know Nate, the boy next door. But slowly the camera reveals what Nate doesn’t want to see: his grandmother’s memory is slipping away, and with it much of what he cherishes about his summers on the lake. This summer, Nate will learn about the power of art to show truth. And Lucy will learn how beauty can change lives . . . including her own. (scholastic.com)
Lowry, Lois, *Number the Stars*

Ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen and her best friend Ellen Rosen often think of life before the war. It’s now 1943 and their life in Copenhagen is filled with school, food shortages, and the Nazi soldiers marching through town. When the Jews of Denmark are "relocated," Ellen moves in with the Johansens and pretends to be one of the family. Soon Annemarie is asked to go on a dangerous mission to save Ellen’s life. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Lupica, Mike, *Books*

Do you like stories about sports and kids who play them? Then Mike Lupica is an author that you should get to know. He is a well-respected sports writer for newspapers and ESPN, so he always gets the sports action just right. His books are more than simple "sports stories," though. He writes about kids who are trying to fit in, find their place, or deal with challenges in school or their family. He explores sportsmanship and what it means to be team player both on and off the field. You can find out more about Mike Lupica and his books at mikelupica.com. Some of his books are for high school students, so some discretion is advised. (Ms. Bock)

MacLachlan, Patricia, *Sarah, Plain and Tall*

This Newbery Medal–winning book is the first of five books in Patricia MacLachlan’s chapter book series about the Witting family. Set in the late nineteenth century and told from young Anna’s point of view, *Sarah, Plain and Tall* tells the story of how Sarah Elisabeth Wheaton comes from Maine to the prairie to answer Papa’s advertisement for a wife and mother. Before Sarah arrives, Anna and her younger brother Caleb wait and wonder. Will Sarah be nice? Will she sing? Will she stay? (harpercollins.com)
**Martin, Ann M., *P.S. Longer Letter Later***

Elizabeth and Tara*Starr are totally different. Tara* Starr wears glitter and sequins, loves to be the center of attention, and is the only child of young parents who are taking a long time to grow up. Elizabeth is shy and quiet, hates being the center of attention, and lives in a house in which possessions are more important than feelings. So of course they're best friends. Now that Tara*Starr has moved away, the girls continue their friendship through letters. Than life changes for both of them. While Tara*Starr's family settles down, Elizabeth's falls apart. Their letters chronicle these events, and the realization that they can depend on each other and on themselves. (scholastic.com) There is a sequel called Snail Mail No More. One of the cool things about this book was written by two authors- each one took a character and wrote letters to the other from their point of view. The book is the result of those letters!

**Martin, Ann M., *Rain Reign***

Rose Howard is obsessed with homonyms. She's thrilled that her own name is a homonym, and she purposely gave her dog Rain a name with two homonyms (Reign, Rein), which, according to Rose's rules of homonyms, is very special. Not everyone understands Rose's obsessions, her rules, and the other things that make her different - not her teachers, not other kids, and not her single father. When a storm hits their rural town, rivers overflow, the roads are flooded, and Rain goes missing. Rose's father shouldn't have let Rain out. Now Rose has to find her dog, even if it means leaving her routines and safe places to search. Hearts will break and spirits will soar for this powerful story, brilliantly told from Rose's point of view. (us.macmillan.com)

**Meyer, L. A., *Bloody Jack: Being an Account of the Curious Adventures of Mary "Jacky" Faber, Ship's Boy***

Life as a ship's boy aboard HMS Dolphin is a dream come true for Jacky Faber. Gone are the days of scavenging for food and fighting for survival on the streets of eighteenth-century London. Instead, Jacky is becoming a skilled and respected sailor as the crew pursues pirates on the high seas. There's only one problem: Jacky is a girl. And she must use every bit of her spirit, wit, and courage to keep the crew from discovering her secret. (harcourt.com)
Myers, Walter Dean, *Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam*
Vietnam. A young American soldier waits for his enemy, rifle in hand, finger on the trigger. He is afraid to move and yet afraid not to move. Gunshots crackle in the still air. The soldier fires blindly into the distant trees at an unseen enemy. He crouches and waits -- heart pounding, tense and trembling, biting back tears. When will it all be over? (harpercollins.com)

Myracle, Lauren, *Luv Ya Bunches*
What do Katie-Rose, Yasaman, Milla, and Violet all have in common? Other than being named after flowers, practically nothing. Katie-Rose is a film director in training. Yasaman is a computer whiz. Milla is third in command of the A list. And Violet is the new girl in school. They’re fab girls, all of them, but they sure aren’t friends. And if evil queen bee Medusa— ‘scuse me, Modessa—has her way, they never will be. But this is the beginning of a new school year, when anything can happen and social worlds can collide... (abramsbooks.com) (This is the first book in the series.)

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds, *Starting with Alice*
Eight-year-old Alice McKinley wants pierced ears, really long hair, a pet, and, most of all, a mother. Oh, and some friends would be nice. As the new girl in third grade, Alice doesn’t know a single kid in Takoma Park, Maryland, except her next-door neighbor Donald Sheavers, who is not only a boy, but seems a bit peculiar, too! Desperate to meet people, Alice learns that making friends is harder than it seems when she runs into a group of girls whom she nicknames the “Terrible Triplets” after they make it very clear that they do not want to get to know Alice. As Alice navigates the ins and outs of third grade, there are plenty of bumps, giggles, and surprises along the way. Every girl should grow up with Alice, and with this irresistible new look, a whole new generation will want to. (books.simonandschuster.com) This is the first book in the series, which is best read in order. The series follows Alice through high school.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds, *The Boys Start the War*
When a new family--with three daughters--moves into the neighborhood, the Hatford brothers decide to
make Caroline and her sisters so miserable that they’ll want to go back to Ohio. (scholastic.com) This is the first book in a hilarious series. They are best read in order.

**Nesbit, E., *The Railway Children***

When Father goes away unexpectedly, Roberta, Peter, Phyllis, and their mother have to leave their happy life in London for a small cottage in the country. The children seek solace in the nearby railway station, and make friends with Perks the Porter and the Station Master himself. But the mystery remains: where is Father, and will he ever return? (scholastic.com)

**Nye, Naomi Shihab, *The Turtle of Oman: A Novel***

Aref Al-Amri does not want to leave Oman. He does not want to leave his elementary school, his friends, or his beloved grandfather, Siddi. He does not want to live in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where his parents will go to graduate school. His mother is desperate for him to pack his suitcase, but he refuses. Finally, she calls Siddi for help. But rather than pack, Aref and Siddi go on a series of adventures. They visit the camp of a thousand stars deep in the desert, they sleep on Siddi's roof, they fish in the Gulf of Oman and dream about going to India, and they travel to the nature reserve to watch the sea turtles. At each stop, Siddi finds a small stone that he later slips into Aref's suitcase—mementos of home. (harpercollins.com)

**O'Connor, Barbara, *The Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester***

Owen Jester wishes his family hadn’t moved to his grandfather’s house after his dad lost his job. For one thing, his grandfather’s live-in nurse sure knows how to ruin anyone’s idea of a good time. And then there’s Viola, the girl next door, who can’t ever mind her own business. She even thinks Owen should put his freshly captured bullfrog back into the pond. Then late one night, Owen hears a curious noise when the train passes by his grandfather’s house. Something mysterious and wonderful has fallen off the train. When Owen finally discovers what it is, he realizes he just might need a know-it-all after all. But can he trust Viola keep the most fantastic secret to ever tumble into Carter, Georgia? (us.macmillan.com)
Park, Barbara, **Skinnybones**

For the smallest kid on the baseball team, Alex “Skinnybones” Frankovitch has a major-league big mouth! But when he brags his way into a pitching contest, this might be one mess that not even Alex can talk his way out of. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

There is a sequel called Almost Starring Skinnybones. This is the same author that wrote the Junie B. Jones books. If you like them when you were younger, you might enjoy these books.

Parr, Maria, **Adventures with Waffles**

Hardly a day passes without Trille and Lena inventing some kind of adventure that often ends in trouble. Whether it’s coaxing a cow onto a boat or sledding down the steepest and iciest hill with a chicken, there is always a thrill—and sometimes an injury—to be had. Trille loves to share everything with Lena, even Auntie Granny’s waffles. But when Lena has to move away and Auntie Granny leaves the world, it sometimes seems like nothing will ever be right again. The warmth of friendship and the support of family suffuse this lightly illustrated novel, proving that when times are tough, a little taste of sweetness can make all the difference. (candlewick.com)

Paulsen, Gary, **How Angel Peterson Got His Name: And Other Outrageous Tales About Extreme Sports**

When you grow up in a small town in the north woods, you have to make your own excitement. High spirits, idiocy, and showing off for the girls inspire Gary Paulsen and his friends to attempt: shooting waterfalls in a barrel; the first skateboarding; jumping three barrels like motorcycle daredevil Evel Knievel—except they only have bikes; hang gliding with an Army surplus target kite; bungee jumping; wrestling… a bear? Extreme sports lead to extreme fun in new tales from Gary’s boyhood! (books.google.com)

Peck, Richard, **Fair Weather**

Thirteen-year-old Rosie Beckett has never strayed further from her family’s farm than a horse can pull a cart. Then a letter from her Aunt Euterpe arrives, and everything changes. It’s 1893, the year of the World’s Columbian Exposition—the “wonder of the age”-a.k.a.
the Chicago World's Fair. Aunt Euterpe is inviting the Becketts to come for a visit and go to the fair! Award-winning author Richard Peck’s fresh, realistic, and fun-filled writing truly brings the World's Fair-and Rosie and her family-to life. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Peirce, Lincoln, Big Nate: In a Class by Himself
Big Nate is in a class by himself! But things don’t always go your way just because you’re awesome. Nate barely survives his dad’s toxic oatmeal before rushing off to school—minus his lunch. He body slams the no-nonsense principal. He accidentally insults his least favorite teacher, the horrifying Mrs. Godfrey (aka Godzilla). And school has barely started! Nate keeps his cool. He knows he’s destined for greatness. A fortune cookie told him so. (harpercollins.com)

Phelan, Matt, Bluffton: My Summers with Buster Keaton
In the summer of 1908, in Muskegon, Michigan, a visiting troupe of vaudeville performers is about the most exciting thing since baseball. They’re summering in nearby Bluffton, so Henry has a few months to ogle the elephant and the zebra, the tightrope walkers and — lo and behold — a slapstick actor his own age named Buster Keaton. The show folk say Buster is indestructible; his father throws him around as part of the act and the audience roars, while Buster never cracks a smile. Henry longs to learn to take a fall like Buster, “the human mop,” but Buster just wants to play ball with Henry and his friends. With signature nostalgia, Scott O’Dell Award–winning graphic novelist Matt Phelan visualizes a bygone era with lustrous color, dynamic lines, and flawless dramatic pacing. (candlewick.com) (This is a graphic novel.)

Pitchford, Dean, The Big One-Oh
Charley Maplewood has never been one for parties—that would require friends, which he doesn’t have. But now that he’s turning ten—the big one-oh—he decides to throw a birthday party for himself, complete with a “House of Horrors” theme and a big birthday cake. Of course things don’t work out as Charley plans. In trying to make friends, he ends up inviting the class bully Cougar to come, and that’s before he ruins the cake and burns down the garage. By the time of the big day, Charley’s home
really is a house of horrors. Will Charley be able to pull it together before the big one-oh becomes the big OH-NO!?
(penguinrandomhouse.com)

Rhodes, Jewell Parker, Sugar
Ten-year-old Sugar lives on the River Road sugar plantation along the banks of the Mississippi. Slavery is over, but laboring in the fields all day doesn’t make her feel very free. Thankfully, Sugar has a knack for finding her own fun, especially when she joins forces with forbidden friend Billy, the white plantation owner’s son. Sugar has always yearned to learn more about the world, and she sees her chance when Chinese workers are brought in to help harvest the cane. The older River Road folks feel threatened, but Sugar is fascinated. As she befriends young Beau and elder Master Liu, they introduce her to the traditions of their culture, and she, in turn, shares the ways of plantation life. Sugar soon realizes that she must be the one to bridge the cultural gap and bring the community together. Here is a story of unlikely friendships and how they can change our lives forever.
(hatchettebookgroup.com)

Roberts, Ken, Thumb in the Box
Leon and his friend Susan live in New Auckland, a small isolated fishing village on the coast of British Columbia. One day, the village receives an unexpected gift from the Government of Canada -- a fire truck. But New Auckland is surrounded by mountains and hugs a tiny beach. There are no roads, no cars, no fire hydrants. What will the village do with its new truck? The man who comes to build the fire station brings with him a practical joke that scares the wits out of Leon and Susan -- a real live wiggling thumb, completely detached from its owner. Which will leave the biggest mark on the village -- the first vehicle most villagers have ever seen, or a simple joke?
(houseofanansi.com)

Robinson, Barbara, The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
Funny, memorable, and outrageous, it is the story of a family of incorrigible children who discover the Christmas story for the first time and help everyone else rediscover its true meaning. (harpercollins.com)
Rockwell, Thomas, *How to Eat Fried Worms*

Because of a bet, Billy is in the uncomfortable position of having to eat fifteen worms in fifteen days. The worms are supplied by his opponent, whose motto is "The bigger and juicier, the better!" At first Billy's problem is whether or not he can swallow the worm placed before him, even with a choice of condiments from peanut butter to horseradish. But later it looks as if Billy will win, and the challenge becomes getting to the worm to eat it. Billy’s family, after checking with the doctor, takes everything in stride. They even help Billy through his gastronomic ordeal, which twists and turns with each new day, leaving the outcome of the bet continually in doubt.

(penguinrandomhouse.com)

Rosenthal, Amy Krouse, *Exclamation Mark*

From the bestselling creators of *Duck! Rabbit!* an exciting tale of self-discovery! He stood out here. He stood out there. He tried everything to be more like them. It’s not easy being seen. Especially when you’re NOT like everyone else. Especially when what sets you apart is YOU. Sometimes we squish ourselves to fit in. We shrink. Twist. Bend. Until -- a friend shows the way to endless possibilities. In this bold and highly visual book, an emphatic but misplaced exclamation point learns that being different can be very exciting! Period.

(scholastic.com)

Rumford, James, *Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad*

WHEN BOMBS BEGIN TO FALL, Ali drowns out the sound of war with a pen. Like other children living in Baghdad, Ali loves soccer, music and dancing, but most of all, he loves the ancient art of calligraphy. When bombs begin to fall on his city, Ali turns to his pen, writing sweeping and gliding words to the silent music that drowns out the war all around him. Gorgeously illustrated with collage, pencil and charcoal drawings and, of course, exquisite calligraphy, this timely and yet universal story celebrates art and history but also offers young children a way to understand all they see and hear on the news. (us.macmillan.com)

Ryan, Pam Munoz, *Esperanza Rising*

Esperanza thought she’d always live with her family on their ranch in Mexico — she’d always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home, and servants. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama
to flee to California during the Great Depression, and to settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. Esperanza isn’t ready for the hard labor, financial struggles, or lack of acceptance she now faces. When their new life is threatened, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances — Mama’s life, and her own, depend on it. (scholastic.com)

**Rylant, Cynthia, Gooseberry Park**

When Kona, a Labrador retriever, meets Stumpy, a squirrel in Gooseberry Park, they're best friends at first sight. But after Stumpy’s babies are born, disaster strikes in the form of a violent ice storm. Kona is not a fair-weather friend; he’s worried sick! How will Stumpy and her babies survive? With the help of Murray, a hilarious bat, and Gwendolyn, a wise hermit crab, Kona shows just how true—and heroic—a friend can be. (hmhco.com)

**Salisbury, Graham, Calvin Coconut: Trouble Magnet**

Calvin Coconut lives near the beach in Kailua, Hawaii, with his mom and his little sister. All his friends live there, too. Mom says: “You’re the man of the house, Cal.” Which means: Be responsible. Calvin tries, but fun—and trouble—follows him wherever he goes, even in the classroom, also known as Mr. Purdy’s Fourth-Grade Boot Camp. And how can he be the man of the house after teenage Stella-from-Texas arrives to be the live-in babysitter and steps all over Calvin’s turf? (penguinrandomhouse.com) This is the first book in the series.

**Schlitz, Laura Amy, A Drowned Maiden’s Hair: A Melodrama**

Maud Flynn is known at the orphanage for her impertinence, so when the charming Miss Hyacinth and her sister choose Maud to take home with them, the girl is as baffled as anyone. It seems the sisters need Maud to help stage elaborate séances for bereaved, wealthy patrons. As Maud is drawn deeper into the deception, playing her role as a "secret child," she is torn between her need to please and her growing conscience — until a shocking betrayal makes clear just how heartless her so-called guardians are. Filled with tantalizing details of turn-of-the-century spiritualism and page-turning suspense, this
lively historical novel features a winning heroine whom readers will not soon forget. (candlewick.com)

Schulz, Charles M., *Peanuts It's Tokyo, Charlie Brown*

The Peanuts gang touches down in Tokyo! Charlie Brown and Snoopy lead the charge as the gang’s baseball team is selected for an international tournament in Japan. The Peanuts gang hops on a plane to Japan when their Little League team is chosen to represent the United States in an international baseball game in Tokyo! Between seeing the sights and taking in the best of Japanese culture, Snoopy, Charlie Brown, Peppermint Patty and the rest of everyone’s favorite characters still manage to be their incorrigible selves. (books.simonandschuster.com) This is a comic book.

Selznick, Brian, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*

Words and cinematic pencil drawings are used to tell the story of twelve year-old orphan Hugo who lives in the walls of a busy Paris train station. When his world interlocks with an eccentric, bookish girl and a bitter old man who runs a toy booth in the train station, Hugo's undercover life and his most precious secret are put in jeopardy. A cryptic drawing, a treasured notebook, and a stolen key, a mechanical man, and a hidden message from Hugo's dead father form the backbone of this intricate, tender, and spellbinding mystery. (scholastic.com)

Sewall, Anna, *Black Beauty*

Follow the famous stallion as he meets many masters, from Squire Gordon, whose wife Black Beauty saves nearly at the cost of his own life; to the cruel Nicholas Skinner, who drives horses to death; and finally to a reunion with Joe, the kind groom he knew as a colt. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Sonnenblick, Jordan, *Dodger and Me*

What would you do if your best friend was:
1. Imaginary?
2. An oversize blue chimp in surfer shorts? (Potentially embarrassing, but hey, no one else can see him . . . right?)
3. Proposing a plan to help you improve your life?
4. Did we say imaginary?
5. Driving you crazy?!?! Now you have an idea of what Willie Ryan's life is like when he meets Dodger. It's the beginning of a lot of trouble—and a friendship you'll never forget! (us.macmillan.com)

Stead, Rebecca, *Liar & Spy*

Seventh grader Georges moves into a Brooklyn apartment building and meets Safer, a twelve-year-old self-appointed spy. Georges becomes Safer’s first spy recruit. His assignment? Tracking the mysterious Mr. X, who lives in the apartment upstairs. But as Safer becomes more demanding, Georges starts to wonder: what is a lie, and what is a game? How far is too far to go for your only friend? (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Turnage, Sheila, *Three Times Lucky*

This is the story of quirky characters in a tiny town with a mystery. The main character is Moses LoBeau, who is determined to save her makeshift family before any of them get blamed for a murder. There is a ton of humor in this book. Mo is a bit like Ramona and a bit like Clementine and a bit like Anne Shirley, and a bit like Opal from *Because of Winn-Dixie*. In fact, this book reminded me a lot of that book, but funnier. There is a sequel, *Ghosts of Tupelo Landing*, which I also enjoyed very much. (Ms. Bock)

Twain, Mark J., *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

The adventures and pranks of a mischievous boy growing up in a nineteenth-century Mississippi River town as he plays hookey on an island, witnesses a crime, hunts for pirate treasure, and becomes lost in a cave. (books.google.com)

Varon, Sara, *Bake Sale*

Cupcake's life is pretty good. He’s got his bakery, and his band, and his best friend, Eggplant. His days are full of cooking, socializing, and playing music. But lately, Cupcake has been struggling in the kitchen. He’s sure the solution to all his problems is out there somewhere. But maybe that solution is hiding closer to home. (us.macmillan.com) This is a graphic novel.
Wait, Lea, *Stopping to Home*

What do you do when you don't have a home or a family to call your own anymore? Eleven-year-old Abigail is not entirely sure how she'll do it, but after losing her mother to smallpox and her father to the sea, she knows that it is up to her to build a new life for herself and her little brother, Seth. But carving a future out of the harsh realities of life in Wiscasset, a nineteenth-century Maine seaport, proves difficult, and Abigail fears that there will always be more questions than answers. How long will they be able to stay and work for the young Widow Chase? Will Seth be able to let go of the past? As the months roll by like waves on the sea, Abigail searches tirelessly for a solution and for an answer to the question she holds most dear: Will they ever find a place to call home again? (books.simonandschuster.com)

Wallace, Bill, *Coyote Autumn*

Brad has always wanted a dog, so when he catches the little coyote, he decides to keep it. He couldn't have a dog when his family lived in a Chicago apartment, but now that they've moved to rural Oklahoma anything seems possible. Even rescuing an orphaned coyote pup...and keeping it a secret from his parents. With his friend Nolan's help, Brad is determined to tame Scooter, train him, play with him, and hide him in an old dog pen behind the barn. It almost works...until Mom and Dad discover his secret -- and Scooter steals their hearts and gives them all a coyote's-eye view of what it's like to live in the dangerous world of men. (simonandschuster.net)

Warner, Sally, *Only Emma*

Eight-year-old Emma McGraw is an only child who lives with her mom in their “cozy” condo. When four-year-old Anthony Scarpetto moves in for a week while his parents are away, Emma is not happy. He’s loud, he smells, and he touches her stuff. And that’s only half of it! Emma has started at a new school, and has finally begun to make friends. But how can she invite anyone over when annoying Anthony is there? Emma is in for a surprise, though. As the week goes by, she starts to realize that having a “little brother” may not be as bad as she thought. (penguinrandomhouse.com)
Wilder, Laura Ingalls, *Little House on the Prairie*

The adventures continue for Laura Ingalls and her family as they leave their little house in the Big Woods of Wisconsin and set out for Kansas. They travel for many days in their covered wagon until they find the best spot to build their little house on the prairie. Soon they are planting and plowing, hunting wild ducks and turkeys, and gathering grass for their cows. Sometimes pioneer life is hard, but Laura and her folks are always busy and happy in their new little house. (harpercollins.com) This is the most famous book in the Little House series. You can read this one first, or *Little House in the Big Woods*, which is where the story really begins.

Wiles, Deborah, *The Aurora County All-Stars*

Twelve-year-old House Jackson--star pitcher and team captain of the Aurora County All-Stars--has been sidelined for a whole sorry year with a broken elbow. He's finally ready to play, but wouldn't you know that the team's only game of the year has been scheduled for the exact same time as the town's 200th-anniversary pageant. Now House must face the pageant's director, full-of-herself Frances Shotz (his nemesis and perpetrator of the elbow break), and get his team out of this mess. There's also the matter of a mysterious old recluse who has died and left House a wheezy old dog named Eudora Welty--and a puzzling book of poetry by someone named Walt Whitman. Through the long, hot month of June, House makes surprising and valuable discoveries about family, friendship, poetry . . . and baseball. (books.google.com)

Williams-Garcia, Rita, *One Crazy Summer*

Eleven-year-old Delphine is like a mother to her two younger sisters, Vonetta and Fern. She's had to be, ever since their mother, Cecile, left them seven years ago for a radical new life in California. When they arrive from Brooklyn to spend the summer with her, Cecile is nothing like they imagined. While the girls hope to go to Disneyland and meet Tinker Bell, their mother sends them to a day camp run by the Black Panthers. Unexpectedly, Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern learn much about their family, their country, and themselves during one truly crazy summer. (harpercollins.com) This is the first book in the series. They are best read in order.
Woodson, Jacqueline, *Show Way*

Soonie’s great-grandma was just seven years old when she was sold to a big plantation without her ma and pa, and with only some fabric and needles to call her own. She pieced together bright patches with names like North Star and Crossroads, patches with secret meanings made into quilts called Show Ways — maps for slaves to follow to freedom. When she grew up and had a little girl, she passed on this knowledge. And generations later, Soonie — who was born free — taught her own daughter how to sew beautiful quilts to be sold at market and how to read. From slavery to freedom, through segregation, freedom marches and the fight for literacy, the tradition they called Show Way has been passed down by the women in Jacqueline Woodson’s family as a way to remember the past and celebrate the possibilities of the future. Beautifully rendered in Hudson Talbott’s luminous art, this moving, lyrical account pays tribute to women whose strength and knowledge illuminate their daughters’ lives. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Yep, Laurence, *When the Circus Came to Town*

Can Ursula ever show her face again? Ursula always wanted to see the circus. That is, until she caught smallpox. Now all she wants is to hide her scarred face from everyone. But Ah Sam, her parents’ Chinese cook, has other ideas. One day Ah Sam surprises Ursula by bringing a circus to town, but there’s one problem -- there’s no music. Ursula is the only one who can play the harmonica, but that means she’ll have to go outside and face the world again. Will Ursula save the circus or will she hide forever? (books.google.com)
Unlikely Stories

**Avi, Who Stole the Wizard of Oz?**

The mystery revolves around a rare edition of The Wizard of Oz missing from the local library. When Becky is accused of stealing it, she and her twin brother Toby set out to catch the real thief and prove her innocence. Clues cleverly hidden in four other books lead to a hidden treasure—and a gripping adventure. (randomhousekids.com)

**Balliett, Blue, Chasing Vermeer**

When a book of unexplainable occurrences brings Petra and Calder together, strange things start to happen: Seemingly unrelated events connect; an eccentric old woman seeks their company; an invaluable Vermeer painting disappears. Before they know it, the two find themselves at the center of an international art scandal, where no one is spared from suspicion. As Petra and Calder are drawn clue by clue into a mysterious labyrinth, they must draw on their powers of intuition, their problem solving skills, and their knowledge of Vermeer. Can they decipher a crime that has stumped even the FBI? (scholastic.com) This is the first book in the series. They are best read in order.

**Broach, Elise, Masterpiece**

Marvin lives with his family under the kitchen sink in the Pompadays’ apartment. He is very much a beetle. James Pompaday lives with his family in New York City. He is very much an eleven-year-old boy. After James gets a pen-and-ink set for his birthday, Marvin surprises him by creating an elaborate miniature drawing. James gets all the credit for the picture and before these unlikely friends know it they are caught up in a staged art heist at the Metropolitan Museum of Art that could help recover a famous drawing by Albrecht Dürer. But James can’t go through with the plan without Marvin’s help. And that’s where things get really complicated (and interesting!). This fast-paced mystery will have young readers on the edge of their seats as they root for boy and beetle. (us.macmillan.com)
Butterworth, Oliver, The Enormous Egg

Young Nate Twitchell is surprised when one of the hens on his family farm lays a giant egg. After a painstaking wait, Nate is even more surprised when it hatches and out pops a baby triceratops that he names Uncle Beazley! But when Nate decides to keep the dino and raise it on his own, he has no idea what he's getting himself into. As Uncle Beazley grows, Nate and his family realize they are not equipped to take care of a full-sized dinosaur, and so with the help of their scientist friend, Nate and Uncle Beazley set off for the National Museum in Washington, D.C., on the hunt for the perfect home for a modern-day dinosaur---then the real trouble begins! (hachettebookgroup.com)

Cammuso, Frank, Knights of the Lunch Table

Artie King just wants to ease into life at Camelot Middle School. He's got new lunch buddies, Percy and Wayne, and his science teacher, Mr. Merlyn, is pretty cool. But then there's scary Principal Dager and big bad Joe and The Horde, a bunch of brawny bullies who rule the school. The real trouble starts when Artie opens a funky old locker that no one, not even Joe, has ever been able to open — and finds it full of mysterious, but useful stuff. Percy and Wayne are high-fiving, Joe is fuming, and the next think you know a challenge is laid down: a do-or-die dodgeball game — The Horde Vs. The Knights of the Lunch Table. Losers get creamed! (scholastic.com) (This is a graphic novel, and it is the first book in the Dodgeball Chronicles series.)

Dahl, Roald, Books

Roald Dahl is one of the most famous children's authors of all time. His stories are set in our world, but usually have some sort of magic or unexplainable events. They are always funny. Many of his stories are about kids or small creatures standing up to greedy
adults. His most famous book is probably Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. My personal favorite is Danny, the Champion of the World. You can find all of his books, plus extra goodies, at roalddahl.com. (Ms. Bock)

**Feiffer, Jules, The Man in the Ceiling**
Although not very good at sports or in his schoolwork, Jimmy can draw and dreams of being a great cartoonist; that dream seems within reach when star athlete Charley Beemer suggests they create comics together. (books.google.com)

**Fitzgerald, Laura Marx, Under the Egg**
When Theodora Tenpenny spills a bottle of rubbing alcohol on her late grandfather’s painting, she discovers what seems to be an old Renaissance masterpiece underneath. That’s great news for Theo, who’s struggling to hang onto her family’s two-hundred-year-old townhouse and support her unstable mother on her grandfather’s legacy of $463. There’s just one problem: Theo’s grandfather was a security guard at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and she worries the painting may be stolen. With the help of some unusual new friends, Theo’s search for answers takes her all around Manhattan, and introduces her to a side of the city—and her grandfather—that she never knew. To solve the mystery, she’ll have to abandon her hard-won self-reliance and build a community, one serendipitous friendship at a time. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

**Fleischman, Paul, The Dunderheads**
Miss Breakbone hates kids. Especially the time-squandering, mind-wandering, doodling, dozing dunderheads in her class. But each kid’s special talent is crucial to a spectacular display of teamwork that teaches Miss Breakbone a lesson she won’t soon forget. From the incomparable Paul Fleischman comes a winning cast of underdogs—and one of the most terrifying teachers you’ll ever meet—brought to vivid life in David Roberts’s quirky, hilarious illustrations. (candlewick.com)

**Grabenstein, Chris, Escape from Mr. Lemoncello’s Library**
Kyle Keeley is the class clown and a huge fan of all games—board games, word games, and particularly video games. His hero, Luigi Lemoncello, the most notorious and creative gamemaker in the
world, just so happens to be the genius behind the construction of the new town library. Lucky Kyle wins a coveted spot as one of twelve kids invited for an overnight sleepover in the library, hosted by Mr. Lemoncello and riddled with lots and lots of games. But when morning comes, the doors stay locked. Kyle and the other kids must solve every clue and figure out every secret puzzle to find the hidden escape route! (randomhousekids.com)

Grant, K. M., How the Hangman Lost His Heart
What’s a nice girl like Alice doing with a hangman called Dan Skinslicer? He likes a good clean killing and a hearty supper afterwards. She likes pretty dresses and riding a well-bred horse. But fate throws them together on a mission of mercy—to save Alice’s poor uncle Frank’s head and restore his dignity. Soon they find themselves on the run from every soldier in London. It could be their necks next! (walkerbooks.com)

Guibert, Emmanuel, Just a Donkey Like You and Me
Ariol is your everyday tween donkey. He lives in the suburbs with his mom and dad. His best friend is a pig. He’s in love with a beautiful cow in his class. His teacher is a dog. His gym teacher is a huge rooster. In short, Ariol is just like you and me. (papercutz.com) This is the first book in a series. You can read them in any order. This is a graphic novel.

Gutman, Dan, Babe & Me: A Baseball Card Adventure
On October 1, 1932, during Game Three of the Chicago Cubs--New York Yankees World Series, Babe Ruth belted a long home run to straightaway centerfield. According to legend, just before he hit, Babe pointed to the centerfield bleachers and boldly predicted he would slam the next pitch there. Did he call that shot, or didn’t he? Witnesses never agreed. Joe Stoshack knows there’s one way to solve the mystery—slip back seventy years and see for himself. (harpercollins.com) This is part of the Baseball Card Adventure series. They can be read in any order.
Gutman, Dan, *The Kid Who Ran For President*

Hi! My name is Judson Moon. I'm twelve years old and I'm running for President of the YOU-nited States. That's how I introduced myself to about a zillion people. I must have kissed a zillion babies, said a zillion hellos, shaken a zillion hands . . . Will I get a zillion votes? The answer might surprise you. Can you picture a kid as President? Imagine what we can accomplish — together — in a country where parents listen. Where teachers give no homework. Where every lawmaker obeys a single kid — me! How am I going to pull this off? Who knows! Read the book to find out. (scholastic.com)

Hamiton, Virginia, *The People Could Fly*

“The well-known author retells 24 black American folk tales in sure storytelling voice: animal tales, supernatural tales, fanciful and cautionary tales, and slave tales of freedom. All are beautifully readable. With the added attraction of 40 wonderfully expressive paintings by the Dillons, this collection should be snapped up.”—(starred) School Library Journal. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Hicks, Deron R., *Secrets of Shakespeare's Grave*

Twelve-year-old Colophon Letterford has a serious mystery on her hands. Will she discover the link between her family’s literary legacy and Shakespeare’s tomb before it’s too late? Antique paintings, secret passages, locked mausoleums, a four-hundred-year-old treasure, and a cast of quirky (and some ignoble) characters all add up to a fun original adventure. Readers will revel in a whirlwind journey through literary time and space in real-world locales from Mont St. Michel to Stratford-Upon-Avon to Central Park! (hmhco.com) This is the first book in the Letterford Mysteries, also called The Shakespeare Mysteries. They are best read in order.

Holm, Jennifer L., *Comics Squad: Recess!*

Wowza! Calling all kidz! Do you like comics? Do you like laughing till milk comes out of your nose?! Look no further—do we have the book for you! All your favorite comic creators are right here in this handy-dandy hilarious book! This all-star tribute to classic Sunday comics includes eight sidesplitting, action-packed
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stories about every kid’s favorite subject—RECESS! With popular characters from Babymouse and Lunch Lady and brand-new soon-to-be favorite characters from superstars including Dav Pilkey! Raina Telgemeier! Gene Yang! and many more! Comics Squad also features Pizza Monsters! Secret ninja clubs! Aliens! Talking desserts! Dinozilla! Death-defying escapes! Bad guys! Good guys! Medium guys! Superheroes! Bullies! Mean girls! Epic battles! True love! Outlandish schemes! Evil plans! Fun! Jokes! Terrible puns! And other surprises that will tickle your funny bone! WARNING: THIS BOOK MAY CAUSE EXCESSIVE LAUGHTER AND POSSIBLE SILLINESS. No assembly required. (Pizzatron 2000 not included.) (penguinrandomhouse.com) This is a graphic novel.

Horvath, Polly, The Pepins and Their Problems

Whether it’s waking up to find toads in their shoes, becoming trapped on the roof, or searching for cheese when their cow makes only lemonade, the Pepin family always seem to get into the most bizarre scrapes. Lucky for them, they have an author with large psychic antennae and great problem-solving readers who can join the Pepins on their hilarious adventures. And they need all the help they can get! (us.macmillan.com)

Hurston, Zora Neale, Lies and Other Tall Tales

While traveling in the Gulf States in the 1930s, Zora Neale Hurston collected and recorded some real whoppers told by folks from all walks of life. Not “dog ate my homework” kind of lies, but tales so wild you didn’t ever want to hear the truth. And now today’s picture book readers can enjoy these far-fetched fibs with Christopher Myers’s spirited adaption and bold, expressive collages. (harpercollins.com)

Keene, Carolyn, The Secret of the Old Clock

There are at least four different Nancy Drew series, going all the way back to the 1930s. Nancy Drew has been described as a kind of girl superhero- she can do anything! If you’re in the mood for adventure and mystery, try this famous series. (Ms. Bock)

Kibuishi, Kazu, Explorer: The Mystery Boxes

Seven clever stories answer one simple question: what’s in the box? Funny, fantastic, spooky, and suspenseful, each of these
unique and beautifully illustrated short graphic works revolves around a central theme: a mysterious box and the marvels—or mayhem—inside. Artists include middle school favorites Kazu Kibuishi, Raina Telgemeier (Smile), and Dave Roman (Astronaut Academy), as well as Jason Caffoe, Stuart Livingston, Johane Matte, Rad Sechrist (all contributors to the groundbreaking comics anthology series Flight), and upcoming artist Emily Carroll. (abramsbooks.com) This is a graphic novel.

**Klise, Kate, Dying to Meet You**

Ignatius B. Grumply moves into the Victorian mansion at 43 Old Cemetery Road hoping to find some peace and quiet so he can crack a wicked case of writer's block. But 43 Old Cemetery Road is already occupied by eleven-year-old Seymour, his cat Shadow, and an irritable ghost named Olive. It's hard to say who is more outraged. But a grumpy old ghost just might inspire this grumpy old man—and the abandoned kid? Well, let's just say his last name's Hope. (hmhco.com) This is an epistolary novel- it is told completely through letters, drawings, newspaper clippings, and even the occasional tombstone engraving. (hmhco.com) This is the first book in the 43 Old Cemetery Road series. They are best read in order.

**Klise, Kate, Letters from Camp**

Mom and Dad,

You've got to get us out of here! When you get this letter, COME IMMEDIATELY!
-- Charlie

The brother-sister pairs who arrive for the summer at Camp Happy Harmony are almost too busy fighting with each other to notice how strange the camp really is. Not only are the campers forced to wear bizarre uniforms, eat gross food, and do chores all day, but the members of the family that runs the camp fight constantly--with each other. Are the campers in danger? Or--in spite of sibling wars--do they need to stick together to solve the mystery humming under the surface of Camp Happy Harmony? (harpercollins.com)

**Klise, Kate, Regarding the Fountain**

The Dry Creek Middle School drinking fountain has sprung a leak, so principal Walter Russ dashes off a request to Flowing Waters Fountains, Etc. asking
"...We need a new drinking fountain. Please send catalog."
Florence Waters responds:
"I'd be delighted. . . But please understand that all of my fountains are custom-made."

And so begins the hilarious chronicle, in letters, cards, transcripts, and official town documents, as collected by Mr. Sam N.'s fifth-grade class...

Flo Waters, an artist who looks everywhere for inspiration, solicits suggestions from the fifth graders--...a fountain big enough to splash around in; ...a glass-sided fountain with fish; . . . buttons for dispensing lemonade and root beer; and from Mr. Sam N.--...a hot tub and whirlpool for the teachers.

Flo is thrilled. Mr. Russ is beside himself--. . . "We don't need a fountain like you create for palaces and hotels. Send bid as soon as possible, or sooner."

But it's too late. The fountain project has taken on a life of its own.
Flo is supplying designs from all over the world. The school board president is up in arms. So is her friend, Dee Eel, of the water-supply company. A scandal is brewing, and the fifth-grade class is researching Dry Creek's history. Something very fishy is going on...and the secrets are buried beneath the fountain and within this delightful, thoroughly original novel. (harpercollins.com) This is the first book in a series. You can read them in any order.

**Macaulay, David, Black and White**

Four stories are told simultaneously, with each double-page spread divided into quadrants. The stories do not necessarily take place at the same moment in time, but are they really one story? (hmhco.com)

**Mass, Wendy, Books**

Wendy Mass writes great realistic fiction. Well, it's *almost* realistic. Her stories often have just a tiny twist of magic or impossibility. Her characters are usually girls and boys who are trying to figure out changing
friendships, or find their place in a changing world. Her most famous books are probably the Willow Falls series, which starts with The Last Present, and which you don’t have to read in order, but you might want to. You can find out more about all of her books, and other goodies, at wendymass.com. (Ms. Bock)

Olson, Arielle North, Ask the Bones: Scary Stories from Around the World

What is real and what is imaginary? Do evil creatures lurk in the shadows? Do demons attack the helpless? Are there such things as invisible men? For generations, storytellers have given substance to our worst fears. In Ask the Bones, master storytellers Arielle North Olson and Howard Schwartz retell a varied selection of the world’s most frightening folktales. Be warned—these stories could scare you to death! (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Perkins, Lynne Rae, Nuts to You

The squirrels Jed, TsTs, and Chai are the very best of friends. So when Jed is snatched up by a hawk and carried away to another realm, TsTs and Chai resolve to go after him. New communities are discovered, new friends are made, huge danger is encountered (both man-made and of the fox and bobcat variety) and mysteries are revealed. Nuts to You is wholly original, funny, lively, and thought-provoking. It is a deeply satisfying piece of storytelling about the power of stories to save the world; about the power of friendship and the importance of community. (harpercollins.com)

Pinkwater, Daniel, 5 Novels

If you liked Captain Underpants when you were younger, you should get to know Daniel Pinkwater’s books. They are hilarious adventures with all sorts of strange characters. He frequently writes about people who don’t feel like they fit in with the rest of the world. This particular book contains five of his most famous novels: Alan Mendelsohn, the Boy from Mars; Slaves of Spiegel; The Last Guru; Young Adult Novel; The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death. (Ms. Bock)
Pinkwater, Daniel, *The Hoboken Chicken Emergency*
When Arthur Bobowicz is sent out to bring home the family's Thanksgiving turkey, he returns instead with Henrietta -- a 266 pound chicken with a mind of her own. Feathers fly when this colossal clucker descends upon Hoboken, New Jersey. Thus begins the hilarious hen-tastic tall tale that has kept readers in stitches since Henrietta first pecked her way onto the scene in 1977. (books.simonandschuster.com)

Riddell, Chris, *Ottoline and the Yellow Cat*
Introducing Miss Ottoline Brown, an exceptionally inquisitive Mistress of Disguise, and her partner in crime, Mr. Munroe. No puzzle is ever too tricky for the two of them to solve... Ottoline lives in a stylish apartment in Big City with a small hairy creature called Mr. Munroe. Together they look after the Brown family's eclectic collections - and dabble in a spot of detective work. So they are the first to the scene of the crime when a string of high-society dog-nappings and jewel thefts hits Big City. Ottoline (who luckily has a diploma from the Who-R-U Academy of Disguise) and Mr. Munroe go undercover - and expose an ingenious scam masterminded by furry feline crook, the Yellow Cat. A quirky mystery-adventure which is perfectly packaged and highly collectable. (harpercollins.com) There are several books about Ottoline. This is not a graphic novel, but it has as many pictures as words.

Riordan, Rick, *The Maze of Bones*
Minutes before she died Grace Cahill changed her will, leaving her descendents an impossible decision: "You have a choice - one million dollars or a clue." Grace is the last matriarch of the Cahills, the world's most powerful family. Everyone from Napoleon to Houdini is related to the Cahills, yet the source of the family power is lost. 39 Clues hidden around the world will reveal the family's secret, but no one has been able to assemble them. Now the clues race is on, and young Amy and Dan must decide what's important: hunting clues or uncovering what REALLY happened to their parents. (scholastic.com) This is the first book in the 39 Clues series. They are best read in order. There are playing cards associated with these books, as well as a web site where you can play along at the39clues.com.
Rylant, Cynthia, *The Van Gogh Cafe*  
Clara and her dad run The Van Gogh Café in Flowers, Kansas. It’s in an old theater, so it still has some magic in it. No one knows that better than Clara, who sees how it makes people’s lives better. Each chapter is a story about something magical, or something not-quite-explainable that happens in or near the Café. It is a charming book that you will want to read again and again. (Ms. Bock)

Scieszka, Jon, *Math Curse*  
When the teacher tells her class that they can think of almost everything as a math problem, one student acquires a math anxiety which becomes a real curse. (scholastic.com) If you like this book, you should read Science Curse by the same author.

Seidler, Tor, *A Rat's Tale*  
Although young Montague Mad-Rat lives in--or rather, under--New York City, he know very few rats besides his mother, who makes hats, his father, who builds mud castles, and his globe-trotting Aunt Elizabeth. But Montague's life takes an abrupt turn for the eventful the stormy day he meets Isabel Moberly-Rat on his way home from Central Park. Home, for Montague, is an old sewer pipe. He now learns that there is a cityful of other rats out there who inhabit abandoned piers and lead considerably less eccentric and more luxurious lives than his family. What's more, these rats are in the midst of a grave crises. A human being has decided to turn their piers into parking lots, and an extermination campaign is already under way. As Montague stumbles into this wider, bewildering world, he long to help ratdom (and impress Isabel). But what can he do, when his only talent is painting the seashells his Aunt Elizabeth brings him from her travels? And to make matters worse, it turns out that a drunken uncle of his, Montague Mad-Rat the Elder, has made their name a standing joke in the rat world. For the first time in his life, young Montague finds out what it is to feel helpless and alone--little realizing that he has not only Isabel and his seashells on his side but his despised drunken uncle as well. (us.macmillan.com)

Selden, George, *The Cricket in Times Square*  
Tucker is a streetwise city mouse. He thought he’d seen it all. But he’s never met a cricket before, which really isn’t surprising,
because, along with his friend Harry Cat, Tucker lives in the very heart of New York City—the Times Square subway station. Chester Cricket never intended to leave his Connecticut meadow. He'd be there still if he hadn't followed the entrancing aroma of liverwurst right into someone's picnic basket. Now, like any tourist in the city, he wants to look around. And he could not have found two better guides—and friends—than Tucker and Harry. The trio have many adventures—from taking in the sights and sounds of Broadway to escaping a smoky fire. Chester makes a third friend, too. It is a boy, Mario, who rescues Chester from a dusty corner of the subway station and brings him to live in the safety of his parents' newsstand. He hopes at first to keep Chester as a pet, but Mario soon understands that the cricket is more than that. Because Chester has a hidden talent and no one—not even Chester himself—realizes that the little country cricket may just be able to teach even the toughest New Yorkers a thing or two. (us.macmillan.com)

**Sharp, Margery, The Rescuers**

Miss Bianca is a white mouse of great beauty and supreme self-confidence, who, courtesy of her excellent young friend, the ambassador's son, resides luxuriously in a porcelain pagoda painted with violets, primroses, and lilies of the valley. Miss Bianca would seem to be a pampered creature, and not, you would suppose, the mouse to dispatch on an especially challenging and extraordinarily perilous mission. However, it is precisely Miss Bianca that the Prisoners' Aid Society picks for the job of rescuing a Norwegian poet imprisoned in the legendarily dreadful Black Castle (we all know, don't we, that mice are the friends of prisoners, tending to their needs in dungeons and oubliettles everywhere). Miss Bianca, after all, is a poet too, and in any case she is due to travel any day now by diplomatic pouch to Norway. There Miss Bianca will be able to enlist one Nils, known to be the bravest mouse in the land, in a desperate and daring endeavor that will take them, along with their trusty companion Bernard, across turbulent seas and over the paws and under the maws of cats into one of the darkest places known to man or mouse. It will take everything they've got and a good deal more to escape with their own lives, not to mention the poet. (penguinrandomhouse.com)
Shiga, Jason, *Meanwhile: Pick Any Path. 3,856 Story Possibilities.* Chocolate or Vanilla? This simple choice is all it takes to get started with Meanwhile, the wildly inventive creation of comics mastermind Jason Shiga, of whom Scott McCloud said “Crazy + Genius = Shiga.” Jimmy, whose every move is under your control, finds himself in a mad scientist’s lab, where he’s given a choice between three amazing objects: a mind-reading device, a time-travel machine, or the Killitron 3000 (which is as ominous as it sounds). Down each of these paths there are puzzles, mysterious clues, and shocking revelations. It’s up to the reader to lead Jimmy to success or disaster. (abramsbooks.com) This is a graphic novel. Sort of.

Snicket, Lemony, *The Bad Beginning* Violet, Klaus, and Sunny Baudelaire are intelligent children. They are charming, and resourceful, and have pleasant facial features. Unfortunately, they are exceptionally unlucky. In the first two books alone, the three youngsters encounter a greedy and repulsive villain, itchy clothing, a disastrous fire, a plot to steal their fortune, a lumpy bed, a deadly serpent, a large brass reading lamp, a long knife, and a terrible odour. In the tradition of great storytellers, from Dickens to Dahl, comes an exquisitely dark comedy that is both literary and irreverent, hilarious and deftly crafted. Never before has a tale of three likeable and unfortunate children been quite so enchanting, or quite so uproariously unhappy. (harpercollins.com) (This is the first in the Series of Unfortunate Events. They are best read in order.)

Thompson, Kate, *Highway Robbery* The rider sprang off as light as a cat and pulled the reins over the horse’s head. Then he marched straight over to me and put them into my hand. “Hold the mare for me, lad. And when I come back, I’ll give you a golden guinea.” A dark stranger leaves his magnificent horse in the care of a boy he’s never met. As dusk falls, others offer to pay the boy handsomely for the animal. Then soldiers arrive, demanding to know where the horse’s owner has gone. Could the stranger be the notorious Dick Turpin, known for his daring holdups and amazing exploits? Is the horse the legendary Black Bess? And will the boy ever see the reward he’s been promised? There’s mischief in the air, but it isn’t entirely clear who’s causing it. (harpercollins.com)
Varon, Sara, *Robot Dreams*

This moving, charming graphic novel about a dog and a robot shows us in poignant detail how powerful and fragile relationships are. After a Labor Day jaunt to the beach leaves the robot rusted, immobilized in the sand, the dog must return alone to the life they shared. But the memory of their friendship lingers, and as the seasons pass, the dog tries to fill the emotional void left by the loss of his closest friend, making and losing a series of friends, from a melting snowman to epicurean anteaters. But for the robot, lying rusting on the beach, the only relief from loneliness is in dreams. (us.macmillan.com)

Wise, William, *Christopher Mouse: The Tale of a Small Traveler*

Though his life begins "in a commonplace way," Christopher Mouse is not the least bit common. From his birth in an ordinary wire cage, to his various young owners who range from bad to worse, his escape from a youthful taxidermist, and finally his close encounter with a large cat in the Egyptian room at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Christopher proves an adventurer of the most intrepid sort - and a budding poet as well. With the delightful feel of a lost (and found) classic, this is the story of a rather extraordinary mouse who, through the force of will, and indeed, good luck, finds his own small way in a very large world. (bloomsbury.com)

Wright, Carmen Agra Deedy and Randall, *The Cheshire Cheese Cat*

Skilley, an alley cat with an embarrassing secret, longs to escape his street-cat life. Tired of dodging fishwives' brooms and carriage wheels, he hopes to trade London's damp alleyways for the warmth of ye olde Cheshire Cheese Inn. He strikes a bargain with Pip, an erudite mouse: Skilley will protect the mice who live at the inn, and in turn, the mice will provide Skilley with the thing he desires most. But when Skilley and Pip are drawn into a crisis of monumental proportions involving a tyrannical cook, an unethical barmaid, and a malevolent tomcat, their new friendship is pushed to its limits. The escalating crisis threatens the peace not only of the Cheshire Cheese Inn but also the British Monarchy! (peachtree-online.net) This book has an interactive website at cheshirecheesecat.com.
Fantasy Stories

Aguirre, Jorge, Giants Beware!
Make way for Claudette the giant slayer in this delightful, fantastical adventure! Claudette’s fondest wish is to slay a giant. But her village is so safe and quiet! What’s a future giant slayer to do? (books.google.com) This is the first book in the series. It is a graphic novel.

Alexander, Lloyd, The Wizard in the Tree
Mallory notices there’s something funny about an old oak tree, takes a closer look, and before she knows it, she’s broken a magical spell. Arbican the wizard has been trapped in the oak for thousands of years, and his powers are gone. Will he get them back in time to save Mallory’s village from greedy Squire Scrupner? (goodreads.com) This book is out of print; look for it at the local library.

Alexander, Lloyd, Time Cat
Gareth’s definitely no ordinary cat. For one thing, he can talk. For another, he’s got the power to travel through time. And the instant he tells this to Jason, the two of them are in ancient Egypt, on the first of nine amazing adventures that Jason will never forget. (us.penguinrandomhouse.com)

Allison, Jennifer, Gilda Joyce, Psychic Investigator
Ever since her father died, quirky Gilda Joyce has been working hard to sharpen her psychic skills. She’s determined to communicate with spirits from the Other Side and become a crack investigator of spooky, twisted mysteries. After wrangling an invitation to visit relatives in San Francisco, Gilda discovers that her dreary, tight-lipped uncle and his strange, delicate daughter need her help to uncover the terrible family secret that has a tortured ghost stalking their home. From poignant to hair-raising and hilarious, this is a behind-the-scenes, tell-all account of the very first case in the illustrious career of Gilda Joyce, Psychic Investigator. This is the first book in the Gilda Joyce series. You can read them in any order. (us.penguinrandomhouse.com)
**Angeli, Marguerite De, The Door in the Wall**
As the son of a nobleman, Robin’s destiny is changed suddenly when he falls ill and loses the use of his legs. When the great castle of Lindsay is in danger, Robin discovers that there is more than one way to serve his king. (randomhouse.com)

**Barrows, Annie, The Magic Half**
Miri is the non-twin child in a family with two sets of them—older brothers and younger sisters. The family has just moved to an old farmhouse in a new town, where the only good thing seems to be Miri’s ten-sided attic bedroom. But when Miri gets sent to her room after accidentally bashing her big brother on the head with a shovel, she finds herself in the same room . . . only not quite. Without meaning to, she has found a way to travel back in time to 1935 where she discovers Molly, a girl her own age very much in need of a loving family. A highly satisfying classic-in-the-making full of spine-tingling moments, this is a delightful time-travel novel for the whole family. (bloomsbury.com)

**Barry, Dave, Peter and the Starcatchers**
Don’t even think of starting this book unless you’re sitting in a comfortable chair and have lots of time. A fast-paced, impossible-to-put-down adventure awaits as the young orphan Peter and his mates are dispatched to an island ruled by the evil King Zarboff. They set sail aboard the Never Land, a ship carrying a precious and mysterious trunk in its cargo hold—and the journey quickly becomes fraught with excitement and danger. (books.disney.com) (This is the first book in the series.)

**Bellairs, John, The House With a Clock In Its Walls**
Lewis had always wanted to live in a house like Uncle Jonathan’s—full of marble fireplaces and secret passageways and dozens of unused, unexplored rooms. And living with Uncle Jonathan, a real wizard, was full of fun and surprises. But while Uncle Jonathan practiced funny and comfortable white magic, the original owner of the old house, Isaac Izard, had been an evil sorcerer. Isaac Izard had devised a plan for bringing about the end of the world. Somewhere in the walls of the house he had hidden a clock. Every night Lewis and Uncle Jonathan could hear it ticking—sometimes loud, sometimes soft—marking off the
minutes until doomsday. Lewis knew they had to find the clock before it was too late. Then he decided to dabble in a little magic of his own, and their time almost ran out. (bellairsia.com) Be forewarned that John Bellairs is famous for writing really scary stories!

**Boniface, William, The Hero Revealed**

In the town of Superopolis, everyone has a superpower. Everyone, that is, except Ordinary Boy. But things are not so super in Superopolis these days with the evil Professor Brain-Drain on the loose! To make matters worse, Ordinary Boy and his friends are thrown into the middle of a baffling mystery. Forget the regular superheroes. In a city where everyone is extraordinary, this just might be a job for... Ordinary Boy. (harpercollins.com) This is the first book in the Adventures of Ordinary Boy series.

**Bosch, Pseudonymous, The Name of this Book is Secret**

This is the story about a secret, but it also contains a secret story. When adventurous detectives, Cass, an ever-vigilant survivalist, and Max-Ernest, a boy driven by logic, discover the Symphony of Smells, a box filled with smelly vials of colorful ingredients, they accidentally stumble upon a mystery surrounding a dead magician's diary and the hunt for immortality. Filled with word games, anagrams, and featuring a mysterious narrator, this is a book that won't stay secret for long. (hatchettbookgroup.com)

**Boyce, Frank Cottrell, Cosmic**

Liam has always felt a bit like he's stuck between two worlds. This is primarily because he's a twelve-year-old kid who looks like he's about thirty. Sometimes it's not so bad, like when his new principal mistakes him for a teacher on the first day of school or when he convinces a car dealer to let him take a Porsche out on a test drive. But mostly it's just frustrating, being a kid trapped in an adult world. And so he decides to flip things around. Liam cons his way onto the first spaceship to take civilians into space, a special flight for a group of kids and an adult chaperone, and he is going as the adult chaperone. It's not long
before Liam, along with his friends, is stuck between two worlds again—only this time he’s 239,000 miles from home.

Brown, Calef, *Hypnotize a Tiger: Poems About Just About Everything*

Hypnotize a Tiger is chock-full of Calef’s zany black-and-white artwork and features his wonderfully inventive characters and worlds—from the "completely nonviolent and silent" Lou Gnome to Percival, the impetuous (and none-too-sensible) lad who believes he is invincible, to Hugh Jarm (who has a huge arm, natch!). It’s a whimsical world: creative, fun, and inspiring!

Brown, Jeffrey, *Star Wars: Jedi Academy*

Roan’s one dream is to leave home and attend Pilot Academy like his older brother, father, and grandfather. But just as Roan is mysteriously denied entrance to Pilot School, he is invited to attend Jedi Academy—a school that he didn’t apply to and only recruits children when they are just a few years old. That is, until now... This inventive novel follows Roan’s first year at Jedi Academy where, under the tutelage of Master Yoda, he learns that he possesses more strength and potential than he could have ever dreamed. Oh, and he learns other important things too—like how to make a baking soda volcano, fence with a lightsaber, slow dance with a girl, and lift boulders with the Force.

Buckley, Michael, *The Fairy Tale Detectives*

The Sisters Grimm (Book One): The Fairy Tale Detectives introduces us to two orphaned sisters, Sabrina and Daphne, who are sent to live with their mysterious grandmother, Relda Grimm. Grandmother Grimm lives in a strange town in New York State, known for it’s extraordinary number of unexplained and unusual crimes. As soon as the sisters arrive, they begin to unravel a mystery that leads to their ancestors’ magical beginnings. Sabrina and Daphne learn they are descendants of the Brothers Grimm, who were actually detectives of the magical phenomenon perpetrated by the Everafters, a parallel race of magical beings. They soon discover it is the Grimm family’s legacy to keep the Everafters in line and the two sisters are the sole heirs to this
challenge! In this first book in the series, the girls are pitted against giants, who have been rampaging through town in their search for an Englishman named Jack, currently working at the Big & Tall store. In a new breed of mystery that intermingles humor, excitement, adventure and imagination, The Sisters Grimm Book One: The Fairy Tale Detectives will inject the legends of fairytale with modern day sensibilities and suspense, creating an irresistible combination young readers will love! (abramsbooks.com) This is the first book in the Sisters Grimm series. They can be read in any order.

Byng, Georgia, Molly Moon’s Incredible Book of Hypnotism
Molly Moon has spent her entire life in a miserable orphanage run by the hairy, snaggletoothed Miss Adderson. But when she finds a mysterious book, Molly discovers an extraordinary talent—as she can hypnotize anyone! Accompanied by Petula the pug, Molly hypnotizes her way to New York and Broadway stardom. But hot on her trail is the sinister professor, who is determined to use Molly to stage the crime of a century... (harpercollins.com)

Carman, Patrick, The Dark Hills Divide
Inquisitive twelve-year-old Alexa Daley is spending another summer in the walled town of Bridewell. This year, she is set on solving the mystery of what lies beyond the walls. Legend says the walls were built to keep out an unnamed evil that lurks in the forests and The Dark Hills. But what exactly is it that the townspeople are so afraid of? As Alexa begins to unravel the truth, pushing beyond the protective barrier she’s lived behind all her life, she discovers a strange and ancient enchantment—and exposes a danger that could destroy everything she holds dear. (scholastic.com) This is the first book in the Land of Elyon series. They are best read in order.

Colfer, Eoin, Artemis Fowl
Twelve-year-old Artemis Fowl is a millionaire, a genius—and, above all, a criminal mastermind. But even Artemis doesn’t know what he’s taken on when he kidnaps a fairy, Captain Holly Short of the LEPrecon Unit. These aren’t the fairies of bedtime stories; these fairies are armed and dangerous. Artemis thinks he has them right where he wants them…but then they stop
playing by the rules. (books.disney.com) This is the first book in the series. They are best read in order. The first four books have been adapted into graphic novels.

Collins, Suzanne, Gregor the Overlander
When Gregor falls through a grate in the laundry room of his apartment building, he hurtles into the dark Underland, where spiders, rats, cockroaches coexist uneasily with humans. This world is on the brink of war, and Gregor's arrival is no accident. A prophecy foretells that Gregor has a role to play in the Underland's uncertain future. Gregor wants no part of it until he realizes it's the only way to solve the mystery of his father's disappearance. Reluctantly, Gregor embarks on a dangerous adventure that will change both him and the Underland forever. (scholastic.com) This is the first book in the series. They are best read in order.

Coombs, Kate, The Runaway Princess
“A dragon darkens our dells. A witch haunts our woods. Bandits roam our moors” . . . King Stromgard swept on. “In the tradition of so many monarchs, I offer my daughter’s hand in marriage and half my kingdom to the prince who can rid us of these evils, restoring peace and prosperity to our realm.” And so the contest in the Kingdom of Greeve begins. But Princess Margaret is not your traditional princess. Meg firmly objects to her parents’ giving her away, and she certainly has no intention of remaining in the tower where she is sequestered. Instead, she sets out to win the contest herself by enlisting the help of her good friend, her loyal maid, an eager guardsman, a young wizard, and a tenacious witch. Does Meg find her distinct place in the kingdom, or is she doomed to fulfill her royal duties? (us.macmillan.com)

Cooper, Susan, The Boggart
When Emily and Jess Volnik's family inherits a remote, crumbling Scottish castle, they also inherit the Boggart -- an invisible, mischievous spirit who's been playing tricks on residents of Castle Keep for generations. Then the Boggart is trapped in a rolltop desk and inadvertently shipped to the Volniks' home in Toronto, where nothing will ever be the same -- for the Volniks or the Boggart. In a world that doesn't believe in magic, the
Boggart’s pranks wreak havoc. And even the newfound joys of peanut butter and pizza and fudge sauce eventually wear thin for the Boggart. He wants to go home – but his only hope lies in a risky and daring blend of modern technology and ancient magic. (books.simonandschuster.com)

Cooper, Susan, *The Dark Is Rising*

On the Midwinter Day that is his eleventh birthday, Will Stanton discovers a special gift — that he is destined to seek the six magical Signs of Light. He is the last of the Old Ones, immortals dedicated to keeping the world from domination by the forces of evil, the Dark. And for the twelve days of Christmas, while the Dark is rising, life for Will is full of wonder, terror, and delight. (scholastic.com) This is the first book in the series. They are best read in order.

Corder, Zizou, *Lionboy: The Truth*

When his parents are kidnapped, what’s ten-year-old Charlie Ashanti to do? Rescue them, that’s what! He doesn’t know who has taken his parents, or why. But he does know that one special talent will aid him on his journey- his amazing ability to speak Cat. Charlie calls on his clever feline friends- from stray city cats to magnificent caged lions- for help. With them by his side, Charlie uses wit and courage to try to find his parents before it’s too late. (penguinrandomhouse.com) (This is the first in a trilogy.)

Davis, Eleanor, *The Secret Science Alliance and the Copycat Crook*

Super-smart Julian Calendar thinks starting junior high at a new school will mean he can shed his nerdy image-but then he meets Ben and Greta, two secret scientists like himself! The three form a secret club, complete with a high-tech lair. There, they can work to their hearts content on projects like the Stink-O-Meter, the Kablovsky Copter, and the Nightsneak Goggles. All that tinkering comes in handy when the trio discovers an evil scientist’s dastardly plan to rob a museum. Can three inventors, armed with their wacky creations, hope to defeat this criminal mastermind? (bloomsbury.com) This is a graphic novel.
DiCamillo, Kate, Books
Kate DiCamillo is a favorite of students, teachers, and librarians alike. She is one of the most popular authors around today. She is known for creating endearing and memorable characters who go on important adventures. Her books are almost always fantasy or involve some sort of impossibility. It's really hard to say which book is her most famous one. It could be The Tale of Despereaux, or The Journey of Edward Tulane. My favorite is her first, Because of Winn-Dixie. (Ms. Bock)

Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee, The Conch Bearer
In a dingy shack in the less-than-desirable Indian neighborhood he calls home, twelve-year-old Anand is entrusted with a conch shell that possesses mystical powers. His task is to return the shell to its rightful home many hundreds of miles away. Accompanying him are Nisha, a headstrong but resourceful child of the streets, and a mysterious man of indeterminate age and surprising resources named Abadhyatta. His quest will take him farther from home than he's ever been and will teach him more than he ever imagined -- and it will force him to make a poignant decision that will change him forever. (books.simonandschuster.com) (This is the first book in the Brotherhood of the Conch series.)

Doherty, Berlie, The Famous Adventures of Jack
It all starts when the storyteller tells Jill that it's high time she met Jack. The question is: Which Jack? 'They're all called Jack around here,' Mother Greenwood tells her. There's Great-grandfather Jack, Uncle Jack, Daft Jack, Jack the Giant Killer, and more, including, of course, Mother Greenwood's lazy, good-for-nothing, waste-of-a-wishbone son, Jack. The Jack stories are brimming with giants, magicians, dragons, brave deeds, clever tricks, princesses, and funny surprises, and Jill thinks each one is better than the last. But what does Mother Greenwood mean when she says that the storyteller puts everyone he meets into a
story? What's with those beans Mother Greenwood tossed out her window? And what will happen when Jill meets her Jack? (harpercollins.com)

Durham, Paul, The Luck Uglies

Rye O’Chanter has seen a lot of strange things happen in Village Drowning: children are chased through the streets. Families are fined for breaking laws that don’t even exist. Girls aren’t allowed to read anymore, and certain books—books that hold secrets about Drowning’s past—have been outlawed altogether. Now a terrifying encounter has eleven-year-old Rye convinced that the monstrous, supposedly extinct Bog Noblins have returned. Before the monsters disappeared, there was only one way to defeat them—the Luck Uglies. But the Luck Uglies have long since been exiled, and there’s nobody left who can protect the village. As Rye dives into Drowning’s maze of secrets, rules, and lies, she begins to question everything she’s been told about the village’s legend of outlaws and beasts . . . and what she’ll discover is that it may take a villain to save them from the monsters. (harpercollins.com)

Dyer, Heather, Ibby’s Magic Weekend

When straight-arrow Ibby visits her two trouble-making cousins in their chaotic country house, she learns of an old box of magic tricks they found hidden in the attic. Ibby thinks magic is nothing but sleight of hand...until her cousin Francis shrinks to the size of her thumb! The trio gets into all sorts of hijinks, from levitating to turning invisible. Then they uncover the mystery of Uncle Godfrey, a professional magician who disappeared years ago. After some sleuthing, the kids decide Godfrey's Vanishing Act must have gone wrong. Now it’s up to Ibby to be the magician — and find him! (scholastic.com)

Eager, Edward, Half Magic

Half Magic is the uproarious tale of four siblings who discover a charm that grants exactly half of whatever they wish for—with results that are twice as predictable (and hilarious) as you might expect. Jane, Mark, Katharine, and Martha manage to cope with an unexpected trip to the Sahara and nearly a disastrous trip to the time of King Arthur. But can these plucky and resourceful children deal with the changes magic is bringing
to their tight-knit family? (penguinrandomhouse.com) This is the first book in the series. I suggest you read this one first, but then you can read the others in any order.

**Ende, Michael, Momo**

At the edge of the city, in the ruins of an old amphitheatre, there lives a little homeless girl called Momo. Momo has a special talent which she uses to help all her friends who come to visit her. Then one day the sinister men in grey arrive and silently take over the city. Only Momo has the power to resist them, and with the help of Professor Hora and his strange tortoise, Cassiopeia, she travels beyond the boundaries of time to uncover their dark secrets. (us.penguingroup.com)

**Fardell, John, The 7 Professors of the Far North**

When Sam visits Zara and Ben and their great-uncle, the quirky inventor Professor Ampersand, he never expects to embark on a fantastical adventure. But when Professor Ampersand and his group of professor friends are kidnapped by the evil Professor Murdo, it’s up to Sam, Zara, and Ben to save them. They have only three days in which to journey to an icy, desolate land and uncover Murdo’s sinister plot. Only then can they save the professors and the fate of the whole world.... (us.penguingroup.com)

**Farmer, Nancy, The Sea of Trolls**

Jack was eleven when the berserkers loomed out of the fog and nabbed him. "It seems that things are stirring across the water," the Bard had warned. "Ships are being built, swords are being forged."
"Is that bad?" Jack had asked, for his Saxon village had never before seen berserkers.
"Of course. People don't make ships and swords unless they intend to use them."
The year is A.D. 793. In the next months, Jack and his little sister, Lucy, are enslaved by Olaf One-Brow and his fierce young shipmate, Thorgil. With a crow named Bold Heart for mysterious company, they are swept up into an adventure-quest that follows in the spirit of The Lord of the Rings.
Other threats include a willful mother Dragon, a giant spider, and a troll-boar with a surprising personality — to say nothing of Ivar the Boneless and his wife, Queen Frith, a shape-shifting half-troll, and
several eight foot tall, orange-haired, full-time trolls. But in stories by award-winner Nancy Farmer, appearances do deceive. She has never told a richer, funnier tale, nor offered more timeless encouragement to young seekers than "Just say no to pillaging." (scholastic.com) This is the first book in a trilogy. You should read them in order.

**Gaiman, Neil, The Dangerous Alphabet**

![Dangerous Alphabet cover](image)

A is for Always, that's where we embark . . . Two children, treasure map in hand, and their pet gazelle sneak past their father, out of their house, and into a world beneath the city, where monsters and pirates roam. Will they find the treasure? Will they make it out alive? The Dangerous Alphabet is a tale of adventure, piracy, danger, and heroism told in twenty-six alphabetical lines—although even the alphabet is not to be relied upon here. A delightfully dangerous journey from national bestselling author Neil Gaiman and the monstrously talented Gris Grimly, The Dangerous Alphabet is sure to captivate and chill young readers. (harpercollins.com)

**Gidwitz, Adam, A Tale Dark and Grimm**

![Tale Dark and Grimm cover](image)

Hansel and Gretel walk out of their own story and into eight other classic Grimm (and Grimm-inspired) fairy tales. An irreverent, witty narrator leads us through encounters with witches, warlocks, dragons, and the devil himself. As the siblings roam a forest brimming with menacing foes, they learn the true story behind the famous tales, as well as how to take charge of their destinies and create their own happily ever after. Because once upon a time, fairy tales were awesome. (penguinrandomhouse.com) This is the first book in the series.

**Haddix, Margaret Peterson, Among the Hidden**

![Among the Hidden cover](image)

Luke has never been to school. He's never had a birthday party, or gone to a friend's house for an overnight. In fact, Luke has never had a friend. Luke is one of the shadow children, a third child forbidden by the Population Police. He's lived his entire life in hiding, and now, with a new housing development replacing the woods next to his family's farm, he is no longer even allowed to go outside. Then, one day Luke sees a girl's face in the window of a house where he knows two other children already live. Finally, he's met a shadow child like himself. Jen is willing to risk everything to come out of the shadows -- does Luke
dare to become involved in her dangerous plan? Can he afford not to? (books.simonandschuster.com) (This is the first book in the Shadow Children series. You should read them in order.)

**Hagen, George, Gabriel Finley and the Raven's Riddle**

How can twelve-year-old Gabriel find his missing father, who seems to have vanished without a trace? With the help of Paladin—a young raven with whom he has a magical bond that enables them to become one creature—he flies to the foreboding land of Aviopolis, where he must face a series of difficult challenges and unanswerable riddles that could lead to his father... or to his death. (penguinrandomhouse.com) This is the first book in the series.

**Hale, Shannon, Book of a Thousand Days**

When Dashti, a maid, and Lady Saren, her mistress, are shut in a tower for seven years for Saren’s refusal to marry a man she despises, the two prepare for a very long and dark imprisonment. As food runs low and the days go from broiling hot to freezing cold, it is all Dashti can do to keep them fed and comfortable. But the arrival outside the tower of Saren’s two suitors—one welcome, and the other decidedly less so—brings both hope and great danger, and Dashti must make the desperate choices of a girl whose life is worth more than she knows. (bloomsburyusa.com)

**Hale, Shannon, Princess Academy**

Fourteen-year-old Miri dreams of working at the quarry like the rest of the villagers, despite her small size. Then a royal decree arrives that changes life in quiet Mount Eskel. The king has decided that all eligible girls will study at an academy to train them in a noble education, and one girl will be chosen as the prince’s bride. Can Miri, a mountain girl with dreams as big as her heart, become a princess? (scholastic.com)

**Hale, Shannon, Rapunzel’s Revenge**

Rapunzel escapes her tower-prison all on her own, only to discover a world beyond what she’d ever known before. Determined to rescue her real mother and to seek revenge on her kidnapper would-be mother, Rapunzel and her very long braids team up with Jack (of Giant killing fame) and together they
preform daring deeds and rescues all over the western landscape, eventually winning the justice they so well deserve. (bloomsbury.com) This is a graphic novel.

**Hart, J. V., Capt. Hook: The Adventures of a Notorious Youth**

With his long black curls, a shadowy family tree, and an affinity for pet spiders, James Matthew bears little resemblance to his starched-collar, blue-blooded peers at Eton. Dubbed King Jas., he stops at nothing to become the most notorious underclassman in the prestigious school’s history. For James, sword fighting, falling in love with an Ottoman Sultana, and challenging the Queen of England are all in a day’s skullduggery. But when he sets sail on a ship with a mysterious mission, King Jas.’ dream of discovering a magical island quickly turns into an unimaginable nightmare. (harpercollins.com)

**Hearn, Lian, Across the Nightingale Floor**

In his black-walled fortress at Inuyama, the warlord Iida Sadamu surveys his famous nightingale floor. Constructed with exquisite skill, it sings at the tread of each human foot. No assassin can cross it unheard. The youth Takeo has been brought up in a remote mountain village among the Hidden, a reclusive and spiritual people who have taught him only the ways of peace. But unbeknownst to him, his father was a celebrated assassin and a member of the Tribe, an ancient network of families with extraordinary, preternatural skills. When Takeo’s village is pillaged, he is rescued and adopted by the mysterious Lord Otori Shigeru. Under the tutelage of Shigeru, he learns that he too possesses the skills of the Tribe. And, with this knowledge, he embarks on a journey that will lead him across the famed nightingale floor—and to his own unimaginable destiny… (penguinrandomhouse.com) This is the first book in the Tales of the Otori series.

**Hoeye, Michael, Time Stops for No Mouse**

Hermux Tantamoq is an average mouse who works in his watch shop by day and spends his evenings at home with Terfle, his pet ladybug. But all that changes when Linka Perflinger, daredevil aviatrix, steps into his shop, drops off her watch for repair, and walks out with Hermux’s heart. When a shady-looking rat tries to claim Linka’s watch, Hermux knows that something
must be terribly wrong, and embarks on a dramatic quest to find her... (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Ibbotson, Eva, Books

Eva Ibbotson is one of the most famous and beloved fantasy authors in England. She has a knack for creating marvelous magical creatures, and her characters have fantastic adventures around the world and to imaginary lands. Her most famous book is probably Journey to the River Sea, which actually has no magic in it! There was some controversy over The Secret of Platform 13, because the Harry Potter books are so similar to it. I think my favorite is Island of the Aunts, or maybe Which Witch. (Ms. Bock)

Isaacs, Anne, Swamp Angel

Swamp Angel can lasso a tornado, and drink an entire lake dry. She single-handedly defeats the fearsome bear known as Thundering Tarnation, wrestling him from the top of the Great Smoky Mountains to the bottom of a deep lake. Caldecott Medal-winning artist Paul O. Zelinsky’s stunning folk-art paintings are the perfect match for the irony, exaggeration, and sheer good humor of this original tall tale set on the American frontier. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Jacques, Brian, Redwall

This enthralling tale is jam-packed with the things we long for in a great adventure: danger, laughter, hairbreath escapes, tragedy, mystery, a touch of wonder, a truly despicable villain, and a hero we can take to heart. That hero is Matthias, a young mouse who must rise above his fears and failures to save his friends at Redwall Abbey. The villain is Cluny the Scourge, one of the most deliciously despicable rats of all time. The unforgettable cast of supporting characters includes the stalwart badger Constance, an irrepressible hare named Basil Stag
Hare, and the elderly wisemouse Brother Methuselah. But most of all there is Matthias, seeking his true destiny in a journey that will lead through danger and despair to true wisdom. (penguinrandomhouse.com) This was the first book published in the Redwall series. It’s a good one to start with. You can also start with Lord Brocktree, which is the first book chronologically.

**Jansson, Tove, Finn Family Moomintroll**

It is spring in the valley and the Moomins are ready for adventure! Moomintroll and his friends Snufkin and Sniff find the Hobgoblin’s top hat, all shiny and new and just waiting to be taken home. They soon realize that his is no ordinary hat; it can turn anything—or anyone—into something else! (us.macmillan.com)

(This is the second book in the Moomintrolls series. They can be read in any order. You can find both novels and comics about the Moomins.)

**Jones, Diana Wynne, Witch Week**

There are good witches and bad witches, but the law says that all witches must be burned at the stake. So when an anonymous note warns, "Someone in this class is a witch," the students in 6B are nervous—especially the boy who’s just discovered that he can cast spells and the girl who was named after the most famous witch of all. Witch Week features the debonair enchanter Chrestomanci, who also appears in Charmed Life, The Magicians of Caprona, and The Lives of Christopher Chant. Someone in the class is a witch. At least so the anonymous note says. Everyone is only too eager to prove it is someone else—because in this society, witches are burned at the stake. (harpercollins.com)

**Kessler, Liz, The Tail of Emily Windsnap**

For as long as she can remember, twelve-year-old Emily Windsnap has lived on a boat. And, oddly enough, for just as long, her mother has seemed anxious to keep Emily away from the water. But when Mom finally agrees to let her take swimming lessons, Emily makes a startling discovery — about her own identity, the mysterious father she’s never met, and the thrilling possibilities and perils shimmering deep below the water’s surface. With a sure sense of suspense and richly imaginative details, first-time author Liz Kessler lures us into a glorious undersea
world where mermaids study shipwrecks at school and Neptune rules with an iron trident -- an enchanting fantasy about family secrets, loyal friendship, and the convention-defying power of love. (candlewick.com) (This is the first book in the Emily Windsnap series. They are best read in order.)

**Kibuishi, Kazu, The Stonekeeper**

After the tragic death of their father, Emily and Navin move with their mother to the home of her deceased great-grandfather, but the strange house proves to be dangerous. Before long, a sinister creature lures the kids' mom through a door in the basement. Em and Navin, desperate not to lose her, follow her into an underground world inhabited by demons, robots, and talking animals. Eventually, they enlist the help of a small mechanical rabbit named Miskit. Together with Miskit, they face the most terrifying monster of all, and Em finally has the chance to save someone she loves. (books.google.com) This is the first book in The Amulet series. They are best read in order and they are graphic novels.

**Knudsen, Michelle, The Dragon of Trelian**

The hundred-year war with Kragrnir is over, and Meg will soon be named the princess-heir of Trelian. But her connection to her dragon, Jakl, is making her parents' subjects uneasy. Will they ever accept this dragon princess as their future queen? It doesn’t help that Meg is suffering horrible nightmares and sudden, uncontrollable rages—and with the link joining them, Jakl is feeling the rages, too. Meg is desperate to talk to Calen, to see if he can help her figure out what is happening and how to stop it before she or her dragon does something terrible. Meanwhile, Calen is having troubles of his own. He’s far away, gone off with Mage Serek to receive his first true mage’s mark. But his marking ceremony is disrupted by a mysterious magical attack, and ominous prophecies predict a terrifying new danger. The Magistratum’s greatest enemy may soon reappear—and the other mages believe that Calen himself may have a hand in his return! (candlewick.com)

**Krosoczka, Jarrett J., Lunch Lady and the Cyborg Substitute**

Serving justice . . . and lunch! Hector, Terrence, and Dee have always wondered about their school lunch lady. What does she do when she isn’t dishing out the daily special? Where does she live?
Does she have a lot of cats at home? Little do they know, Lunch Lady doesn’t just serve sloppy joes—she serves justice! Whatever danger lies ahead, it’s no match for LUNCH LADY! (penguinrandomhouse.com) This is a graphic novel. It is the first of ten books in the series. You don’t really have to read them in order, but you might want to.

Langton, Jane, *The Diamond in the Window*  
A very unusual house... Eddy and Eleanor Hall have always known that their family was a bit out of the ordinary. After all, they live in one of the most remarkable houses in all of Concord. But they never guessed just how extraordinary their house really is, or what tremendous secrets about their family's past it holds. That is, until they discover the magical attic room with its beautiful stained-glass window, abandoned toys, and two perfectly made-up, empty beds that seem to be waiting—perhaps for two children just like themselves.... (books.google.com) This is the first book in The Hall Family Chronicles.

Larios, Julie, *Imaginary Menagerie: A Book of Curious Creatures*  
Who is half gallop, half walk? Who can turn you to stone with one look? Whose voice do you hear in the splash on the shore? Centaurs, mermaids, and other curious creatures populate these wondrous poems and paintings, inspired by a mythological world full of imagination and mystery. (books.google.com)

Lethcoe, Jason, *The Misadventures of Benjamin Bartholomew Piff: You Wish*  
On his eleventh birthday, sad, orphaned Benjamin Bartholomew Piff accidentally adheres to all of the wishing rules and, in wishing for the mother lode of limitless wishes, he unknowingly sets into a motion a chain of events that threatens to disrupt the balance between the magical realm of wishes and curses. Before long, Benjamin has been recruited by the Wishworks Factory director himself to fight the evil henchmen of the Curseworks Factory. In the process, Benjamin will reclaim his original wish giving new credence to the old adage: 'Be careful what you wish for...' (us.penguingroup.com)
Levine, Gail Carson, *Ella Enchanted*
At birth, Ella of Frell was given the gift of obedience by a fairy. Ella soon realizes that this gift is little better than a curse, for how can she truly be herself if at any time anyone can order her to hop on one foot, or cut off her hand, or betray her kingdom — and she'll have to obey? Spunky Ella does not tamely accept her fate and embarks on a quest to break this curse once and for all. (scholastic.com)

Lewis, C. S., *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
Air-raids over London during WWII compel four siblings — Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy — to be sent away from the city to the house of a kindly, but remote Professor "who lived in the heart of the country." There is much to discover in the country: woods, mountains, owls, eagles, maybe even hawks and snakes. But the children will soon discover that the Professor's large house, staffed by three servants, holds even more mystery. It is a house filled with unexpected places, including a room which holds nothing but a large wardrobe, which Lucy opens one rainy day, never dreaming that the wardrobe is a passageway into Narnia. A once peaceful world inhabited by Fauns, Dwarves, Giants, and Talking Beasts, Narnia has been frozen into perpetual winter by the fiendish White Witch who rules over it. Before long, Edmund steps into the wardrobe, and, in spite of himself, into Narnia, where he has a chilling encounter with the seductive White Witch. Soon, all of the children become embroiled in an adventure that includes themes of betrayal, forgiveness, death, and rebirth. (scholastic.com) (This is either the first or the second book in the Chronicles of Narnia, depending on who you ask. It was published first, but the story in The Magician’s Nephew happens first. The author preferred The Magician's Nephew to be first.)

Lloyd, Natalie, *A Snicker of Magic*
Midnight Gulch used to be a magical place, a town where people could sing up thunderstorms and dance up sunflowers. But that was long ago, before a curse drove the magic away. Twelve-year-old Felicity knows all about things like that; her nomadic mother is cursed with a wandering heart. But when she arrives in Midnight Gulch, Felicity thinks her luck’s about to change. A "word collector," Felicity sees words everywhere — shining above strangers, tucked into church eves, and tangled up
her dog's floppy ears — but Midnight Gulch is the first place she's ever seen the word "home." And then there's Jonah, a mysterious, spiky-haired do-gooder who shimmers with words Felicity's never seen before, words that make Felicity's heart beat a little faster. (scholastic.com)

MacAllister, M.I., Urchin of the Riding Stars
A group of animals, led by an orphaned squirrel, learns about friendship and loyalty when they band together to defend their island kingdom against evil forces. (books.google.com) This is the first in the Mistmantle Chronicles.

MacHale, D. J., The Merchant of Death
Bobby Pendragon was living the life of a normal 14 year old guy, until his Uncle Press appeared with a mission: protect all of time and space from a demon named Saint Dane, a cold-blooded villain who wants nothing less than the dismantling of humanity. The only force standing in Saint Dane's way is a mysterious group of people called Travelers, and Bobby is surprised to discover that he is one of them. (djmachalebooks.com) (This is the first in the Pendragon series. They are best read in order.)

MacLachlan, Patricia., Tomorrow's Wizard
Tomorrow's Wizard is angry that he has been assigned an apprentice; Murdoch is too happy-go-lucky and can't even hear the High Wizard's warnings. However, while Tomorrow is teaching Murdoch about granting wishes, Murdoch is teaching Tomorrow about people. (scholastic.com)

Maihack, Mike, Target Practice
When a young Cleopatra (yes, THAT Cleopatra) finds a mysterious tablet that zaps her to the far, REALLY far future, she learns of an ancient prophecy that says she is destined to save the galaxy from the tyrannical rule of the evil Xaius Octavian. She enrolls in Yasiro Academy, a high-tech school with classes like algebra, biology, and alien languages (which Cleo could do without), and combat training (which is more Cleo's style). With help from her teacher Khensu, Cleo learns what it takes to be a great leader, all while trying to figure out how she's going
to get her homework done, make friends, and avoid detention! (scholastic.com) (This is a graphic novel.)

**McCranie, Stephen, Mal and Chad: the Biggest, Bestest Time Ever!**

Mal is a super kid genius and Chad is a talking dog, but no one knows it. What’s it like to be so extraordinary and yet so invisible? Not even Megan, Mal’s secret crush, has any idea that Mal is anything more than a dork. Fortunately, Mal and Chad are best friends with a penchant for adventure... even if the time-traveling does get them grounded by Mal’s mom. (penguin.com) This is a graphic novel.

**Merryweather, Michael, The Door To Time**

Eleven-year-old twins Jason and Julia have just moved from London to an old mansion on the English coast. Their new home is filled with twisting tunnels and strange artifacts from around the world, and the twins can’t wait to discover all its secrets. Before long, Jason, Julia, and their friend Rick stumble upon a mysterious-looking door hidden behind an old wardrobe. But none of the keys in the house will open it. What lies behind the door? And why has someone tried to conceal it? Jason, Julia, and Rick are determined to find out, no matter what it takes.... (scholastic.com) This is the first book in the Ulysses Moore series.

**Morris, Gerald, The Adventures of Sir Lancelot the Great**

Many years ago, the storytellers say, the great King Arthur brought justice to England with the help of his gallant Knights of the Round Table. Of these worthy knights, there was never one so fearless, so chivalrous, so honorable, so...shiny as the dashing Sir Lancelot, who was quite good at defending the helpless and protecting the weak, just as long as he’d had his afternoon nap. Behold the very exciting and very funny adventures of Lancelot the Great, as only acclaimed Arthurian author Gerald Morris can tell them. (hmhco.com) This is the first book in the series.

**Morris, Gerald, The Squire’s Tale**

Growing up an orphan in an isolated cottage in the woods, young Terence never expected much adventure. But upon the arrival of Gawain, his life takes a surprising turn. Gawain is destined to become one of the most famous knights of the Round Table.
Terence becomes Gawain’s squire and leaves his secluded life for one of adventure in King Arthur’s court. In no time Terence is plunged into the exciting world of kings, wizards, knights, wars, magic spells, dwarfs, damsels in distress, and enchanters. As he adjusts to his new life, he proves to be not only an able squire but also a keen observer of the absurdities around him. His duties take him on a quest with Gawain and on a journey of his own, to solve the mystery of his parentage. Filled with rapier-sharp wit, jousting jocularity, and chuckleheaded knights, this is King Arthur’s court as never before experienced. (hmhco.com) This is the first book in the series. They are best read in order.

Napoli, Donna Jo, Books
Donna Jo Napoli has written many, many books, but my favorites are her fairy tale retellings. If you enjoyed Ella Enchanted or The Princess Academy, you should take a look at her books. She takes a fairy tale, such as Cinderella, sets it in ancient China, and makes a powerful novel out of it. She also rewrote the Beauty and the Beast story from the Beast’s perspective. I have a special place in my heart for fairy tales, and Donna Jo Napoli’s retellings honor the traditional stories while bringing new perspectives to them. You might just feel like you finally found the “real” version of the story. Zel or Beast are good ones to start with, but my favorite is The Magic Circle. If you can resist, don’t read the back of the book where it tells you what tale she’s retelling. It’s especially fun to figure it out in the middle of the book! (Ms. Bock)

Napoli, Donna Jo, Treasury of Greek Mythology: Classic Stories of Gods, Goddesses, Heroes & Monsters
The new National Geographic Treasury of Greek Mythology offers timeless stories of Greek myths in a beautiful new volume. Brought to life with lyrical text by award-winning author Donna Jo Napoli and stunning artwork by award-winning illustrator Christina Balit,
the tales of gods and goddesses such as Zeus, Aphrodite, Apollo, and Athena and heroes and monsters such as Helen of Troy, Perseus, and Medusa will fascinate and engage children’s imaginations. (ngchildrensbooks.org)

Nesbit, E., Books
E. Nesbit is one of the most famous authors in English history. Many people say she invented the children’s adventure story, particularly those that have characters who find magical objects in our own world (not a separate fantasy world). Her books were first published in the early 1900s and have been in print and loved by people ever since. Her most famous book is probably The Story of the Treasure Seekers, or perhaps The Railway Children. Both books feature siblings who appear in several books. I think my favorite is Five Children and It, in which some kids find a creature that grants wishes. (Ms. Bock)

Nimmo, Jenny, Midnight for Charlie Bone
Charlie doesn’t want to believe it when he can hear people speaking through their photographs. But his horrible aunts are delighted; it means that he is one of the chosen. Sent to a special school that is filled with hidden secrets and mysterious rooms, Charlie must use his wits, as well as his powers, to escape from the clutches of the evil Dr. Bloor. (scholastic.com)

O’Connor, George, Zeus: King of the Gods
Retells in graphic novel format stories from Greek mythology about the exploits of the young Zeus and how he rallied an army and overthrew his father, Kronos, to become king of the gods. (books.google.com) This book is part of a series. You can read them in any order.
Oppel, Kenneth, *The Boundless*
Will Everett has always wished for an adventure. Little does he know his started the moment he boarded *The Boundless*. The longest, most glamorous locomotive in the world, it stretches more than eleven kilometres long and pulls an astounding 987 cars: passenger cars, shooting galleries, gardens, an onboard swimming pool, cinema and much more. But its maiden voyage won’t be a smooth ride for Will. After witnessing a murder during a station stop, he barely makes it back onto the train (with a running leap!), then must work his way from the caboose forward to his father in first class - with the murderer and his cronies on his tail. Luckily, a clever and nimble friend is perfecting her act in *The Boundless*’s circus car, and there the real thrill ride begins. Sasquatches, bog-dwelling hags and illusions abound in this outsized adventure aboard the Titanic of trains! (kennethoppel.ca)

Pearce, Philippa, *Tom’s Midnight Garden*
Tom is furious. His brother, Peter, has measles, so now Tom is being shipped off to stay with Aunt Gwen and Uncle Alan in their boring old apartment. There’ll be nothing to do there and no one to play with. Tom just counts the days till he can return home to Peter. Then one night the landlady’s antique grandfather clock strikes thirteen times leading Tom to a wonderful, magical discovery and marking the beginning of a secret that’s almost too amazing to be true. But it is true, and in the new world that Tom discovers is a special friend named Hatty and more than a summer’s worth of adventure for both of them. Now Tom wishes he could stay with his relatives and Hatty -- forever… (harpercollins.com)

Pearson, Luke, *Hilda and the Troll*
While on an expedition to seek out the magical creatures of the mountains around her home, Hilda spots a mountain troll. As she draws it the blue-haired explorer starts to nod off… when she wakes, she finds herself lost in a snowstorm and her troll has totally disappeared. On her way home, Hilda ventures deep into the woods, befriends a lonely wooden man and narrowly avoids getting squashed by a lost giant. (flyingeyebooks.com) This is a graphic novel.
Petersen, David, *Mouse Guard: Fall 1152*
In *Mouse Guard*, mice struggle to live safely and prosper among all of the world’s harsh conditions and predators. Thus the Mouse Guard was formed. They are not simply soldiers that fight off intruders; rather, they are guides for commonmice looking to journey without confrontation from one hidden mouse village to another. The Guard patrol borders, find safeways and paths through dangerous territories and treacherous terrain, watch weather patterns, and keep the mouse territories free of predatory infestation. They do so with fearless dedication so that they might not just exist, but truly live. Saxon, Kenzie, and Lieam, members of the fearless Mouse Guard, are dispatched to find a missing merchant mouse. Their search through dangerous terrain for the missing mouse reveals much more than they expect, as they stumble across a traitor in the Guard’s own ranks. (archaia.com)
This is the first book in this graphic novel series. They are best read in order.

Pommaux, Yvan, *Theseus and the Minotaur*
Son of both a god and a man, Theseus was destined for greatness. How did he become both the king of Athens and the creator of democracy? And why did he abandon Ariadne after she risked her life to save him? Thanks to the unique flair of writer and artist Yvan Pommaux, this classic tale is brought vividly to life in a glorious retelling of the original myth. (toon-books.com)
This is a graphic novel.

Pope, Paul, *Battling Boy*
The adventure begins in the new graphic novel by comics legend Paul Pope. Monsters roam through Arcopolis, swallowing children into the horrors of their shadowy underworld. Only one man is a match for them - the genius vigilante Haggard West. Unfortunately, Haggard West is dead. Arcopolis is desperate, but when its salvation comes in the form of a twelve-year-old demigod, nobody is more surprised than Battling Boy himself. (us.macmillan.com)

Reinhart, Matthew, *Encyclopedia Mythologica: Dragons and Monsters Pop-Up*
Lurking behind this intriguing cover, a Kraken grapples with a ship on the high seas; dragons from Eastern and Western traditions
spring to life; and a Medusa, snake-hair twisting and hissing, turns the reader to stone. Deeper inside, an ancient, decrepit vampire rises from his coffin; a lycanthrope is caught in the light of the full moon and transforms; and Bigfoot hides behind a tree, ducking his human pursuer. Master paper engineers Matthew Reinhart and Robert Sabuda unfold the legends and lore of cultures around the world to reveal these stunning creatures and many more. Pop-up fans and fantasy lovers will be equally enthralled by the dynamic creatures depicted in this astonishing volume, the climax of the Encyclopedia Mythologica trilogy. (candlewick.com)

Reinhart, Matthew, Encyclopedia Mythologica: Fairies and Magical Creatures Pop-Up

In the first of a thrilling new pop-up trilogy, the masterminds behind the phenomenal Encyclopedia Prehistorica explore the characters of magic and myth with glittering special effects. Fairies take to the air on fluttering wings, while pixies, gnomes, goblins and trolls career across the pages. Peer through the windows of the Elven Castle to see the magical interior and marvel at the enchanted tree and transforming flowers. Unicorns, griffins, merfolk and other fantastical beasts from all around the world are also covered in this breath-taking start to the series. (books.google.com) This is part of a series of pop-up books. Others include: Gods & Heroes, and Dragons & Monsters. You might also enjoy the Encyclopedia Prehistorica series, which includes Dinosaurs, and Sharks & Other Sea Monsters.

Reinhart, Matthew, Encyclopedia Mythologica: Gods and Heroes Pop-Up

For all of recorded history, humans have sought to understand Earth’s mysteries in the realm of the divine -- and aspired to conduct themselves as heroes. Only gods, of course, could push the sun across the sky, forge entire continents, and impel mountains to touch the clouds. In this stunning volume, the incomparable team of Matthew Reinhart and Robert Sabuda take us to Ra-Atum’s land in Ancient Egypt; above the Grecian clouds to Zeus’s Mount Olympus; up to Norse god Odin’s frozen north; to the Far East, where the Jade Emperor sits in the heavens; into the wilds of Oceania, where Pele’s volcanic rage simmers below the
earth; and to many more lands and times, all rich with sacred myths and legends. (candlewick.com)

**Rex, Adam, *Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich***

Being a monster isn’t all frightening villagers and sucking blood. Monsters have their trials, too. Poor Frankenstein’s cupboard is bare, Wolfman is in need of some household help, and it’s best not to get started on Dracula’s hygiene issues. What could be scarier? Nineteen hilarious poems delve into the secret lives of the Creature from the Black Lagoon, Bigfoot, Godzilla, and others. In a range of styles that pay homage to everyone from Charles Schulz to John James Audubon, the monstrously talented Adam Rex uncovers horrific--and clever--truths you won’t want to miss. (hmhco.com)

**Rex, Michael, *Fangbone! Third-Grade Barbarian***

Eastwood Elementary has a new student, and he’s nothing like the other kids in 3G. Fangbone is a barbarian warrior from another world! And he’s been charged with the task of keeping a deadly weapon from Skullbania’s vilest villain, Venomous Drool. Can Fangbone’s new classmates team up to help him triumph over hound-snakes, lava-ferrets, and his first pop quiz? (penguin.com) This is a graphic novel.

**Sachar, Louis, *Sideways Stories from Wayside School***

There’d been a terrible mistake. Wayside School was supposed to be built with thirty classrooms one on top of the other...thirty stories tall! (The builder said he was very sorry.) That may be why all kinds of funny things happen at Wayside School...especially on the thirteenth floor. You’ll meet Mrs. Gorf, the meanest teacher of all, terrible Todd, who always gets sent home early, and John who can read only upside down--along with all the other kids in the crazy mix-up school that came out sideways. But you’ll never guess the truth about Sammy, the new kid...or what’s in store for Wayside School on Halloween! (books.google.com) There are several books about Wayside School. You can read them in any order.

**Sage, Angie, *Magyk***

The seventh son of the seventh son, aptly named Septimus Heap, is stolen the night he is born by a midwife who pronounces him dead. That same night, the baby’s father, Silas Heap, comes across
a bundle in the snow containing a new born girl with violet eyes. The Heaps take this helpless newborn into their home, name her Jenna, and raise her as their own. But who is this mysterious baby girl, and what really happened to their beloved son Septimus? (harpercollins.com) This is the first in the Septimus Heap series. They are best read in order.

Samworth, Kate, Aviary Wonders Inc. Spring Catalog and Instruction Manual

Since 2031, Aviary Wonders Inc. has offered bird lovers a unique opportunity: Assemble your own bird from stunningly beautiful and carefully hand-crafted parts. The birds can even be taught to fly and to sing! This slyly satirical crafter's delight is offered as the perfect antidote to extinction of birds in the wild. Brilliantly illustrated with oil paintings and filled with laugh-aloud asides as well as sobering facts about extinct species, this mock catalog is a clever send-up of contemporary sales spin and a thought-provoking look into an all-too-possible future. (hmhco.com)

Schlitz, Laura Amy, The Bearskinner: A Tale of the Brothers Grimm

Man or bear? When a person gives up hope, is he still human? Such is the story of a soldier who has lost everything to war: his childhood home, his family and friends, his youth, and his innocence. Enter that sly opportunist, the devil, who wraps the soldier in the armor of a dead bear’s skin, fills its pockets with gold, and makes a dangerous and horrible wager. An unforgettable retelling of a classic Grimm tale, THE BEARSKINNER is a story about the struggle between the two sides of our selves, and the heroic strength it takes to claim a victory. (candlewick.com)

Selfors, Suzanne, To Catch a Mermaid

Boom Broom doesn’t think his life could get any worse. Ever since his mother was swept away by a twister, his family has gone crazy. They refuse to leave the house and Halvor, the Viking descendant who rents the room over their garage, will only cook fish for Boom and his sister Mertyle to eat. When Boom finds a baby mermaid who seems to grant unlimited wishes, he thinks his luck has turned around. That is, until his sister is hit by the curse of the merfolk and starts to turn green. Now Boom and his best friend Winger must find a way to return the foul-
tempered merbaby to its mother and save Mertyle before it is too late. (hachettebookgroup.com)

Sfar, Joann, *Little Vampire*

Living in a house filled with grown-up ghouls and monsters, Little Vampire is so lonely that he’s even willing to go to school if that’s what it takes to find friends. Unfortunately, school seems to be filled with children who are still alive. Little Vampire finds friendship with a boy named Michael, and they embark on adventures in the three stories in this collection. Included in this book are *Little Vampire Goes to School* (a New York Times Bestseller), *Little Vampire Does Kung Fu*, and *Little Vampire and the Society of Canine Defenders* (now published in the United States for the first time). Insightful and inventive, Joann Sfar brings Little Vampire and Michael’s fantastical world to young readers in stories that both feed the imagination and resonate with emotional truth. (books.google.com) (This is a graphic novel.)

Skye, Obert, *Leven Thumps and the Gateway to Foo*

Fourteen-year-old Leven Thumps lives a wretched life in Burnt Culvert, Oklahoma. But his life is about to change and his destiny be fulfilled as he learns about a secret gateway that bridges two worlds -- the real world and Foo, a place created at the beginning of time in the folds of the mind that makes it possible for mankind to dream and hope, aspire and imagine. But Foo is in chaos, and three transplants from that dream world have been sent to retrieve Leven. Their mission: to convince Leven Thumps that he alone has the unique power to save Foo. Can Leven even find the gateway in time? Will belief overcome doubt? Will fate make up the difference? (books.simonandschuster.com)

Stone, Jeff, *Tiger*

Twelve-year-old Fu and his temple brothers Malao, Seh, Hok, and Long don’t know who their parents were. Raised from infancy by their grandmaster, they think of their temple as their home and their fellow warrior monks—their “temple brothers”—as their family. Then one terrible night, the temple is destroyed. Fu and his brothers are the only survivors. Charged by their grandmaster to uncover the secrets of their past, the five flee into the countryside and go their separate ways. Book #1 follows Fu as he struggles to find out more and prove himself in the
process. (penguinrandomhouse.com) This is the first book in the Five Ancestors series. They are best read in order.

**Sturm, James, Adventures in Cartooning: How to Turn Your Doodles Into Comics**

In this action-packed cartooning adventure, kids will have as much fun making comics as reading them! Once upon a time . . . a princess tried to make a comic. And with the help of a magical cartooning elf, she learned how – well enough to draw her way out of an encounter with a dangerous dragon, near-death by drowning, and into her very own adventure! Like the princess, young readers will discover that they already have the drawing and writing skills it takes to make a comic – they just need a little know-how. And Adventures in Cartooning supplies just that. (us.macmillan.com) (This is the first books in the series.)

**Tan, Shaun, The Arrival**

In a heartbreaking parting, a man gives his wife and daughter a last kiss and boards a steamship. He’s embarking on the most difficult journey -- he's leaving home to build a better future for his family. In this wordless graphic novel, Shaun Tan captures the immigrant experience through clear, mesmerizing images. The reader enters a strange new world, participating in the main character's isolation -- and ultimately his joy. (arthuralevinebooks.com)

**Weigel, Jeff, Dragon Girl: The Secret Valley**

Eleven-year-old Alanna and her brother, Hamel, are orphans doing their best to make their way in a grim world until Alanna stumbles upon a cave full of dragon eggs. When the eggs hatch and a mother comes to claim the babies, Alanna is swept along on an adventure beyond her wildest imaginings as they journey to Dragon Rock, whose mysterious force draws dragons of all shapes and sizes to a magical, untouched valley. But when the valley is threatened by outsiders, Alanna must join forces with a mysterious explorer to save the dragons’ homeland. Kids will love this graphic novel adventure, filled with action, adventure, suspense and humor. (jeffweigel.com)
Wiesner, David, Books

David Wiesner creates some of the most amazing picture books I’ve ever seen. He is one of only two illustrators in the whole world who has won the Caldecott Medal three times. He is particularly known for wordless (or nearly wordless) stories that have some sort of magical or impossible creature or event. His most famous books are probably Tuesday and The Three Pigs (the one where they jump out of the story). I can’t possibly choose just one favorite, but I would add Flotsam as one of the top three. Really, you should just plan to read them all, preferably more than once. (Ms. Bock)

Williams, Mark London, Ancient Fire

Eli Sands is a twelve-year-old boy from the twenty-first century whose father has created time sphere experiments. Eli accidentally becomes part of the experiments and makes an unlikely team with a dinosaur from another planet and a girl from ancient Egypt. (scholastic.com) (This is the first book in the Ancient Fire series.)

Yolen, Jane, Here There Be Dragons

In Here There Be Dragons, dragons appear in every guise—ghastly, ghoulish, gentle, gargantuan—always endowed with the author’s ingenious touches. Each piece is introduced with the fascinating, and often revealing, story of its making and is illustrated with the intricate, moody pencil drawings of David Wilgus. (books.google.com) This book can be hard to find; check the local library.

Yolen, Jane, Passager

A boy is abandoned in the woods of medieval England. A year passes—a year of terror and hunger, of sleeping in trees and foraging for food, of outrunning packs of wild dogs—until one day a falconer captures and tames the boy as he would any passager, a young bird caught in the wild and trained.
The falconer adopts the boy and teaches him all of the things he’s forgotten, including the boy’s true name—and the legacy of magic that will be his when he comes of age. (books.google.com) This is the first book in the Young Merlin trilogy. They should be read in order.
Nonfiction

Ashman, Linda, *Come to the Castle!: A Visit to a Castle in Thirteenth-Century England*
Welcome to the 13th-century banquet at the castle of the Earl of Daftwood! Here young readers will meet all of the lords and ladies, the servants and the squires. They will discover surprises: flying silverware and mystery meat made of animal feet for dinner--life in the castle isn’t always elegant. Linda Ashman’s clever rhyming text and S.D. Schindler’s intricate illustrations look at life in a medieval castle from multiple eye-opening perspectives. (us.macmillan.com)

Ashman, Linda, *M Is For Mischief: An A to Z of Naughty Children*
Clever cautionary poems, raucously illustrated, about 26 children you’d rather read about than meet. Here are twenty-six brats you’d never want to babysit: Catastrophic Coco, Gluttonous Griffin, Impolite Irma, and Quarrelsome Quincy, just to name a few. Linda Ashman’s perfectly crafted ditties about kids from Angry Abby, who is "apt to argue at any time and any place," to Zany Zelda, who "zigs and zags through all the rooms," are paired with hilariously energetic digital collages by Nancy Carpenter. Kids will relish the chaos these naughty tykes create—and also the comeuppance many of them justly receive. Wickedly witty wordplay and fiendishly fresh artwork make this a standout in the field of alphabet books. (penguinrandomhouse.com) If you like this book, you will also like Edward Gorey’s Gashlycrumb Tinies.

Bang, Molly, *Nobody Particular: One Woman’s Fight to Save the Bays*
Sometimes we have to take a stand and do what’s right. That’s what Diane Wilson thinks. An independent shrimper in Texas, she ekes out a living in the same waters that her family has worked hard in for generations. When Diane learns that the chemical plants in Texas give out more pollution than in any other state, she decides to stop them. One woman against a powerful industry is not much of a fair fight, but Diane educates herself, lobbies, protests, writes letters, and never gives up. Based on real events, this is an inspiring, heartfelt story of one woman’s struggle to take a stand against injustice and indifference. (books.google.com)
Barton, Chris, *The Day-Glo Brothers*

Joe and Bob Switzer were very different brothers. Bob was a studious planner who wanted to grow up to be a doctor. Joe dreamed of making his fortune in show business and loved magic tricks and problem-solving. When an accident left Bob recovering in a darkened basement, the brothers began experimenting with ultraviolet light and fluorescent paints. Together they invented a whole new kind of color, one that glows with an extra-special intensity—Day-Glo. (charlesbridge.com) You can find out more about the science behind Day-Glo at charlesbridge.com/day-glo-animation.html.

Borden, Louise, *Sea Clocks: The Story of Longitude*

For hundreds of years ships had been sailing to places far and near without really knowing where they were! Sailors knew how to measure latitude, their location north or south of the equator, but they could not measure longitude, their location east or west of their home port. Because of this, many lives were lost worldwide. The key to solving this problem lay in devising a clock that could keep absolutely accurate time while at sea, unaltered by rough water or weather conditions. With such a timekeeper sailors would be able to know the time back at their home port and calculate the longitude. But no one knew how to design such a clock. John Harrison (1693-1776), an Englishman without any scientific training, worked tirelessly for more than forty years to create a perfect clock. The solution to this problem was so important that an award of 20,000 pounds sterling (equal to several million dollars today) was established by the English Parliament in 1714. Harrison won recognition for his work in 1773. Together with beautifully detailed pictures by Erik Blegvad, Louise Borden’s text takes the reader through the drama, disappointments, and successes that filled Harrison’s quest to invent the perfect sea clock. (simonandschuster.com)

Borden, Louise W., *Across the Blue Pacific: A World War II Story*

When the United States enters World War II, Molly is attending Beechwood Elementary. But her thoughts are with Ted Walker, her neighbor, who is serving aboard a cruiser in the South Atlantic. Three years later, the war is still going on and Molly is in the fourth grade. Ted is still at sea, as a naval officer of the USS Albacore, a submarine in
the Pacific Ocean. Orchard Road feels like the safest place on earth, but somewhere on the other side of the world, Ted and his crew are carrying out dangerous missions. No one knows when they will come home, and young Molly must find a way to live with fear during wartime. (hmhco.com)

Brown, Don, All Stations! Distress!: April 15, 1912: The Day the Titanic Sank

It took 4,000 men to build it, 23 tons of animal grease to slide it into the ocean, 100,000 people to wave bon voyage, but only one wrong move to tear the Titanic apart, sinking it into the pages of history. On a cold moonless night in April of 1912, 2,000 passengers--both the uber-rich enjoying a luxury cruise and the dirt-poor hoping to find a new life in America--struggled to survive. Only 700 succeeded. Lifeboats were launched half-full; women were forced to leave their husbands and sons behind; and even those who made it out alive were forever haunted, constantly wondering "why me?" Told through captivating prose and chilling first-hand accounts, Don Brown take the pieces of the broken Titanic and gives it such a vivid shape that you'd swear you've never heard the story before. (us.macmillan.com)

Campbell, Sarah C., Growing Patterns: Fibonacci Numbers in Nature

This title deals with the biggest mathematical mystery in nature - Fibonacci numbers! Named after a famous mathematician, the number pattern is simple: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13...Each number in the sequence comes from adding the two numbers before it. What's the mystery? The pattern crops up in the most unexpected places. You'll find it in the disk of a sunflower, the skin of a pineapple, and the spiral of a nautilus shell. No one knows how nature came up with the sequence. Sarah C. and Richard P. Campbell introduce the Fibonacci sequence through a series of stunning photographs. Young readers will soon be seeing nature through new eyes, looking for Fibonacci numbers in daisies, pinecones, leaf patterns, seashells, and more. (goodreads.com)

Cummins, Julia, Women Daredevils: Thrills, Chills, and Frills
Annie Edson Taylor went over Niagara Falls in a barrel. Mabel Stark wrestled with tigers. Sonora Webster Carver plummeted forty feet on horseback into a tank of water. These and the eleven other women profiled in this book performed between 1880 and 1929,
when females were expected to stay home and raise families, not entertain crowds with acts of derring-do. Their bravado, equal to that of any male thrill-seeker, made them inspiring at a time when women were testing the waters of equality and freedom. Julie Cummins’s conversational text and Cheryl Harness’s posterlike illustrations bring a colorful era in history to life. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Curlee, Lynn, Ballpark: The Story of America’s Baseball Fields
If you love baseball, chances are you love one particular ballpark. Boston fans wax poetic about Fenway Park. Cubs fans are adamant that Wrigley Field is the classic ballfield. Busch Stadium is a hit with folks from Missouri, and Yankee fans are passionate about the House That Ruth Built.... Besides passionate fans, there’s one other thing all ballparks -- from the Union Grounds in Brooklyn built in 1862 to the Baltimore Oriole’s Camden Yards built in 1992 -- have in common: Each has its own vibrant and unique history. In Ballpark, Sibert Honor Award winner Lynn Curlee explores both the histories and the cultural significances of America’s most famous ballparks. Grand in scope and illustrations, and filled with nifty anecdotes about these “green cathedrals,” Ballpark also explores the changing social climate that accompanied baseball’s rise from a minor sport to the national pastime. This is a baseball book like no other. (books.simonandschuster.com)

Davies, Nicola, What’s Eating You?: Parasites -- The Inside Story
Mites and lice, fleas, ticks, and tapeworms -- most living creatures that have a habitat also are a habitat, including you (are you itchy yet?). Unwelcome guests -- parasites -- are everywhere, from the barnacles hitching a ride on a humpback whale’s head to the tiny flies that control a bee’s brain and make it literally dig its own grave. Now an expert team returns for an in-depth look at how these insidious critters do it, whether it’s leaping aboard moving targets or morphing their body shapes, and what their unwitting hosts have learned to do to fight back and reclaim their space. (candlewick.com)

Floca, Brian, Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11
Simply told, grandly shown, here is the flight of Apollo 11. Here for a new generation of readers and explorers are the steady astronauts, clicking themselves into
gloves and helmets, strapping themselves into sideways seats. Here are their great machines in all their detail and monumentality, the ROAR of rockets, and the silence of the Moon. Here is a story of adventure and discovery -- a story of leaving and returning during the summer of 1969, and a story of home, seen whole, from far away. (books.simonandschuster.com)

Florian, Douglas, Books

Douglas Florian writes fun poetry that is usually about animals, although sometimes about other things, like the Solar System. His poems are often funny and use wordplay, made-up words, and rhymes to describe different topics. His most famous book is probably Dinothesaurus. I also like Comets, Stars, the Moon, and Mars. (Ms. Bock)

Fradin, Dennis Brindell, Let It Begin Here!: Lexington & Concord: First Battles of the American Revolution

One day that changed a nation! A 26-year-old King George II found himself in financial turmoil after crushing the French, Austrians, and Spanish in battle. Luckily money was no object since he could easily get it back by raising taxes on his American colonies...but what King George didn't realize was the colonies were beginning to have a mind of their own and had started to set their sights on freedom. The cast of characters includes those we know—the famous silversmith, turned messenger, Paul Revere—and many we haven't heard of like "Flinty Whittemore," a 78-year-old who fought off the British with a musket, two pistols, a sword, was bayoneted 14 times and still lived another 18 years to brag about it. Detailed, yet accessible, Don Brown's award winning nonfiction style brilliantly comes to life in this fascinating account of the start of the American Revolution. (us.macmillan.com)

French, Jackie, How to Scratch a Wombat: Where to Find It . . . What to Feed It . . . Why It Sleeps All Day

What's the best way to scratch a wombat? Well, if it's a wombat that's familiar with humans, says author Jackie French, you rub the
bony ridge along its back or behind its ears. And the harder you scratch, the better the wombat likes it. For more than thirty years, Jackie French has lived in the Australian bush, coexisting with wild wombats. In this cross between memoir and natural history, Jackie shares her often hilarious adventures with her wombats neighbors and describes their physiology, history, and habits. Bruce Whatley adds pencil drawings in both comic and realistic styles. It's a book that's perfect for the budding naturalist. It's an easy read. It's full of funny stories. It's science with a heart. (hmhco.com)

Fritz, Jean, Around the World in a Hundred Years
The Unknown- that was the name mapmakers in 1400 gave to the space they left around the edges after they had drawn the world as they knew it. The Unknown would suck you under or burn you up or leave you to rot, they said. And if you tried to go down the west coast of Africa?watch out! The water boiled and turned people black. This was too bad, for as everyone knew, China and Japan were on the other side of the world, and there was gold there. Spices too. Adventurers from Portugal thought they could get there by sailing down the west coast of Africa and around the tip, and one by one they got up the nerve to try. In 1498, Vasco de Gama finally reached India, but he was one tough sailor. Christopher Columbus decided to take a shortcut west, straight across the ocean. He found land all right, but no gold. Others followed Columbus but discovered there was a continent smack in their way. So they looked for a strait through the continent. Year after year they looked, and who finally made it to the other side? The most stubborn, most daring of them all?Ferdinand Magellan. He was killed before he reached home, but one of his ships reached all around the world. They were a brave, cruel, ambitious lot, these explorers. In a hundred years they not only changed the map of the world, they left behind stories no one would want to miss. Jean Fritz brings these men to life and obviously has a good time doing it. (books.google.com)

Greenberg, Jan, Ballet for Martha: Making Appalachian Spring
Award-winning authors Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan tell the story behind the scenes of the collaboration that created APPALACHIAN SPRING, from its inception through the score's composition to Martha's intense rehearsal process. The authors'
collaborator is two-time Sibert Honor winner Brian Floca, whose vivid watercolors bring both the process and the performance to life. (us.macmillan.com)

**Greenfield, Eloise, *The Great Migration: Journey to the North***

Around the time of WWI, large numbers of African Americans began leaving their homes in the rural South in search of employment in the industrial cities of the North. In 1940, Lawrence chronicled their journey of hope in a flowing narrative sequence of paintings. "This stirring picture book brings together the sixty panels of Lawrence’s epic narrative Migration series, which he created in 1940-1941. They tell of the journey of African-Americans who left their homes in the South around World War I and traveled in search of better lives in the northern industrial cities. Lawrence is a storyteller with words as well as pictures: his captions and introduction to this book are the best commentary on his work. A poem at the end by Walter Dean Myers also reveals [as do the paintings] the universal in the particulars. (harpercollins.com)

**Harrington, Jane, *Extreme Pets***

Filled with fast facts about all kinds of cool animals, from snakes to ferrets to frogs, this book includes the pros and cons of ownership, as well as hilarious tips on how to convince parents to allow an extreme pet into the house. (scholastic.com)

**Heiligman, Deborah, *The Boy Who Loved Math: The Improbable Life of Paul Erdos***

Most people think of mathematicians as solitary, working away in isolation. And, it’s true, many of them do. But Paul Erdos never followed the usual path. At the age of four, he could ask you when you were born and then calculate the number of seconds you had been alive in his head. But he didn’t learn to butter his own bread until he turned twenty. Instead, he traveled around the world, from one mathematician to the next, collaborating on an astonishing number of publications. With a simple, lyrical text and richly layered illustrations, this is a beautiful introduction to the world of math and a fascinating look at the unique character traits that made "Uncle Paul" a great man. (us.macmillan.com)
Jenkins, Steve, Books

Steve Jenkins writes and illustrates really cool nonfiction books about animals. He often looks at things that animals have in common, like tails, and shows how different animals use them differently. One of his more famous books is What Do You Do With a Tail Like This. In that book, you get to guess the animals by their tails, while you read about them. I love reading all of the animal facts in his books, but what really makes his books stand out are the illustrations. Steve Jenkins creates very detailed collages out of cut paper that look almost like photographs. Somehow, he is able to make scientifically accurate pictures of animals using tiny scraps of paper. You can’t go wrong with any of his books, but some of my favorites are Actual Size and Eye To Eye. On his website, stevejenkinsbooks.com, you can see a video about how he creates his illustrations. (Ms. Bock)

Joubert, Dereck, Face to Face With Elephants

You’re in the Land Rover, observing elephants from a safe, respectful distance. It’s a hot, hot day in the African bush, and the windows are down. But what’s this? Suddenly, you’ve got company! An elephant trunk is nosing around in your luggage for some water. Nothing new to Beverly and Dereck Joubert, the wildlife writers and filmmakers who get up close and personal with elephants of all sizes, experience their complex social structure, and witness first-hand their deepest emotions. Through Beverly’s stunning photographs and Dereck’s engaging narration, readers can follow the plight of a trapped baby elephant, discover the compassion of these gentle giants, and learn of the threats they face. The Jouberts take readers face to face with the elephants as they come under attack from lions...and from mankind. Learn how to help protect these animals and prevent shrinking herds being driven into ever smaller parcels of land. (ngchildrensbooks.org)

Judge, Lita, Yellowstone Moran: Painting the American West

Follow Tom Moran on an unbelievable real-life adventure! In the summer of 1871, a young painter named Thomas Moran joined a
team of scientists heading for the untamed land called the Yellowstone. He couldn’t believe what he found there: steaming cauldrons of sulfur, belching geysers, even a thousand-foot-deep canyon. Tom had never ridden a horse or slept under the stars before, but the paintings he created on his journey from city boy to seasoned explorer would lead to the founding of America’s first national park. (books.google.com)

**Kelly, David A., *Babe Ruth and the Baseball Curse***
Before 1918, the Boston Red Sox were unstoppable. They won World Series after World Series, thanks in part to their charismatic pitcher-slugger Babe Ruth. But some people on the Red Sox felt the Babe was more trouble than he was worth, and he was traded away to one of the worst teams in baseball, the New York Yankees. From then on, the Yankees became a golden team. And the Red Sox? For over 80 years, they just couldn’t win another World Series. Then, in 2004, along came a scruffy, scrappy Red Sox team. Could they break Babe Ruth’s curse and win it all? (penguinrandomhouse.com)

**Kerley, Barbara, *The Extraordinary Mark Twain (According To Susy)*
Susy Clemens thought the world was wrong about her papa. They saw Mark Twain as "a humorist joking at everything." But he was so much more, and Susy was determined to set the record straight. In a journal she kept under her pillow, Susy documented her world-famous father — from his habits (good and bad!) to his writing routine to their family's colorful home life. Her frank, funny, tender biography (which came to be one of Twain's most prized possessions) gives rare insight and an unforgettable perspective on an American icon. Inserts with excerpts from Susy's actual journal give added appeal. (scholastic.com)

**Krull, Kathleen, *The Boy Who Invented TV: The Story of Philo Farnsworth***
An inspiring true story of a boy genius. Plowing a potato field in 1920, a 14-year-old farm boy from Idaho saw in the parallel rows of overturned earth a way to “make pictures fly through the air.” This boy was not a magician; he was a scientific genius and just eight years later he made his brainstorm in the potato field a reality by transmitting the world’s first television
This fascinating picture-book biography of Philo Farnsworth covers his early interest in machines and electricity, leading up to how he put it all together in one of the greatest inventions of the 20th century. The author’s afterword discusses the lawsuit Farnsworth waged and won against RCA when his high school science teacher testified that Philo’s invention of television was years before RCA’s. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Larkin, Eric-Shabazz, A Moose Boosh: A Few Choice Words About Food

In more than 40 exuberant poems and “vandalized” photographs, you’ll meet a city kid who fantasizes about farming on a stoop, a girl with crumpets and crêpes in her head, and a boy with a pet cabbage. “Doctor Food” prescribes good food as medicine and “Dancing Kitchen” will have you shimmying with your skillet. From the amuse-bouche to the very last pea on the plate, A Moose Boosh celebrates food—growing it, making it, slurping it and especially sharing it with loved ones at the dinner table. Bon appétit! (readerstoeaters.com)

Laroche, Giles, What's Inside?

As it takes us on a tour of some of the most unique and beautiful structures, this book shows how the purpose of each structure dictated its design, or location. Here are soaring glass skyscrapers (for working people) and a humble stone barn (for working animals); a sealed tomb hewn out of a limestone hillside (for buried treasure) and a majestic marble building, honoring a goddess. As it reveals what lies inside each structure, this book gives insight into the people who designed these buildings -- into their hopes, their lives, and their concepts of beauty. Included -- for budding engineers and architects -- are statistics such as the year built, square footage, materials used, height, and other little known statistics. Structures included are: Tomb of Tutankamummn in Thebes, Egypt The Parthenon in Athens, Greece Temple of Kukulcan in Chichen Itza, Mexico Buddha's Place in Shanxi Province, China Walled city of Toldeo in Spain Alcazar Castle in Segovia, Spain Independence Hall in Philadelphia Shaker dairy barn in Hancock, MA A Circus big top tent, which traveled to many American cities The Guggenhem Museum in NYC The Sydney Opera House in Sydney, Australia The Petrona Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia The Georgia Aquarium in Georgia, Atlanta (books.google.com)
Lasky, Kathryn, *The Man Who Made Time Travel*
This dramatic picture-book biography brings to life—with illustrations that glow with wit and inspiration—the fascinating story of the quest to measure longitude. While the scientific establishment of the eighteenth century was certain that the answer lay in mapping the heavens, John Harrison, an obscure, uneducated clockmaker, dared to imagine a different solution: a seafaring clock. How Harrison held fast to his vision and dedicated his life to the creation of a small jewel of a timepiece that would change the world is a compelling story—as well as a memorable piece of history, science, and biography. (us.macmillan.com)

Low, Alice, *The Fastest Game on Two Feet: And Other Poems About How Sports Began*
Have you ever wondered how your favorite sports began? Skiing got its start when our ancestors, tired of crashing through snowdrifts, strapped animal bones to their feet. The history of other sports is just as surprising—the original soccer ball was a skull; bowling was part of an early religious ritual; and lacrosse games initially stretched for miles and lasted for days. Alice Low's witty and fascinating poems are vividly illustrated by John O'Brien's clever and hilarious cartoons—hitting a true home run for young readers. Includes a time line of sports history. (holidayhouse.com)

Lutes, Jason, *Houdini: The Handcuff King*
Painting a bold portrait of the legendary escape artist, this graphic biography traces Houdini's fascinating life, from the anti-Semitism he dealt with to the adulation he received from the American public, and reveals the secret behind his most amazing trick (books.google.com) This is a graphic novel.

Macaulay, David, *The New Way Things Work*
The information age is upon us, baffling us with thousands of complicated state-of-the-art technologies. To help make sense of the computer age, David Macaulay brings us The New Way Things Work. This completely updated and expanded edition describes twelve new machines and includes more than seventy new pages detailing the latest innovations. With an entirely new section that guides us through the complicated world of digital machinery, where masses of
electronic information can be squeezed onto a single tiny microchip, this revised edition embraces all of the newest developments, from cars to watches. Each scientific principle is brilliantly explained--with the help of a charming, if rather slow-witted, woolly mammoth. (hmhco.com)

**Macaulay, David, The Way We Work**

In this comprehensive and entertaining resource, David Macaulay reveals the inner workings of the human body as only he could. In order to present this complicated subject in an accurate and entertaining way, he put in years of research. He sat in on anatomy classes, dissections, and even reached inside the rib cages of two cadavers to compare their spleen sizes. He observed numerous surgeries, including a ten-hour procedure where a diseased pancreas was removed, as well as one where a worn-out old knee was replaced by a brand new one. This hands-on investigation gives Macaulay a unique perspective to lead his readers on a visual journey through the workings of the human body. The seven sections within the book take us from the cells that form our foundation to the individual systems they build. Each beautifully illustrated spread details different aspects of our complex structure, explaining the function of each and offering up-close glimpses, unique cross-sections and perspectives, and even a little humor along the way. (hmhco.com)

**Marrin, Albert, Oh Rats! The Story of Rats and People: The Story of Rats and People**

Able to claw straight up a brick wall, squeeze through a pipe the width of a quarter, and gnaw through iron and concrete, rats are also revealed in this fascinating book to be incredibly intelligent and capable of great compassion. Weaving science, history, culture, and folklore, awardwinning writer Albert Marrin offers a look at rats that goes from curious to repulsive, horrifying to comic, fearsome to inspiring. Arresting black-and-white scratchboard illustrations with bold red accents add visual punch to this study of a creature that has annoyed, disgusted, nourished, and intrigued its human neighbors throughout the centuries. (us.penguingroup.com)

**Marsalis, Wynton, Jazz ABZ: An A to Z Collection of Jazz Portraits**

A is for “almighty” Louis Armstrong, whose amazing artistry unfolds in an accumulative poem shaped like
the letter he stands for. As for sax master Sonny Rollins, whose "robust style radiates roundness," could there be a better tribute than a poetic rondeau? In an extraordinary feat, Pulitzer Prize-winning jazz composer Wynton Marsalis harmonizes his love and knowledge of jazz's most celebrated artists with an astounding diversity of poetic forms -- from simple blues (Count Basie) to a complex pantoum (Charlie Parker), from a tender sonnet (Sarah Vaughan) to a performance poem snapping the rhythms of Art Blakey to life. Matching Wynton Marsalis's musical cadences note for note is the bold, poster-style art of Paul Rogers, highlighted in two phenomenal foldout spreads. The art's vibrant nostalgic feel is echoed in an exquisite design, with its size simulating an old 78 LP and its endpapers die-cut to mimic a vintage record sleeve. Complete with a discography and brief biographies of the featured musicians as well as notes on the various poetic forms, this is truly an incomparable gift book -- for older children learning about jazz, longtime jazz aficionados, lovers of poetry, and readers of all ages who appreciate the finest in book design. (candlewick.com)

McDonough, Yona Zeldis, *Louisa: The Life of Louisa May Alcott*
When Louisa May Alcott's Little Women was published in 1868, it was an instant success. Louisa drew on her experiences in writing the novel, but there's a lot more to her rags-to-riches story. Louisa came from a family that was poor but freethinking, and she started teaching when she was only seventeen years old. But writing was her passion. This informative biography captures the life of a compassionate woman who left an indelible mark on literature for all ages. (us.macmillan.com)

Mochizuki, Ken, *Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story*
As a Japanese diplomat in Lithuania in the 1940s, Chiune Sugihara had a chance to help thousands of Jews escape the Holocaust through Japan, but it was against his government's orders. When his five-year-old son Hiroki asked, "If we don't help them, won't they die?" Sugihara decided to assist the refugees. Based on Hiroki Sugihara's own words, Passage to Freedom is the first fully illustrated children's book to tell Sugihara's heroic story, highlighting his courageous humanity, and the importance of a child's opinion in his father's decision. (leeandlow.com)
Murphy, Glenn, *Why Is Snot Green?*  
Scientific answers to mysteries kids really want to know. Sure a lot of kids want to grow up to be astronauts, but according to scientist Glenn Murphy, even MORE kids want to know what happens to astronaut farts. (Short answer: Not good things!) And they want to know: Why don’t all fish die from lightning storms? Why haven’t we all been sucked into a black hole? Do animals talk? Told in a back-and-forth conversational style, *Why is Snot Green?* presents science just the way kids want to learn it—with lots of laughter. (us.macmillan.com)

Myers, Walter Dean, *Ida B. Wells: Let the Truth Be Told*  
Ida B. Wells was an extraordinary woman. Long before boycotts, sit-ins, and freedom rides, Ida B. Wells was hard at work to better the lives of African Americans. An activist, educator, writer, journalist, suffragette, and pioneering voice against the horror of lynching, she used fierce determination and the power of the pen to educate the world about the unequal treatment of blacks in the United States. Award-winning, New York Times bestselling author Walter Dean Myers tells the story of this legendary figure, which blends harmoniously with the historically detailed watercolor paintings of illustrator Bonnie Christensen. (harpercollins.com)

Nelson, Kadir, *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans*  
The story of America and African Americans is a story of hope and inspiration and unwavering courage. This is the story of the men, women, and children who toiled in the hot sun picking cotton for their masters; it’s about the America ripped in two by Jim Crow laws; it’s about the brothers and sisters of all colors who rallied against those who would dare bar a child from an education. It’s a story of discrimination and broken promises, determination, and triumphs. Told through the unique point of view and intimate voice of a one-hundred-year-old African-American female narrator, this inspiring book demonstrates that in gaining their freedom and equal rights, African Americans helped our country achieve its promise of liberty and justice—the true heart and soul of our nation. (harpercollins.com)
Nelson, Kadir, *Nelson Mandela*

In this picture book biography, award-winning author and illustrator Kadir Nelson tells the story of Mandela, a global icon, in poignant free verse and glorious illustrations. It is the story of a young boy's determination to change South Africa, and of the struggles of a man who eventually became the president of his country by believing in equality for all people, no matter the color of their skin. Readers will be inspired by Mandela's triumph and his lifelong quest to create a more just world. An author's note at the back retells the story of Mandela's fight against apartheid in simple prose, and takes the story further, including Mandela's Nobel Peace Prize. A short bibliography lists additional sources for readers who want to find out more. (harpercollins.com)

Neri, G., *Hello, I'm Johnny Cash*

There's never been anyone like music legend Johnny Cash. His deep voice is instantly recognizable, and his heartfelt songs resonate with listeners of all ages and backgrounds. G. Neri captures Johnny's story in beautiful free verse, portraying an ordinary boy with an extraordinary talent who grew up in extreme poverty, faced incredible challenges, and ultimately found his calling by always being true to the gift of his voice. A. G. Ford's luscious paintings of the dramatic southern landscape of Johnny Cash's childhood illuminate this portrait of a legend, taking us from his humble beginnings to his enormous success on the world stage. (candlewick.com)

Osborne, Mary Pope, *Pompeii: Lost and Found*

The famous eruption of Mount Vesuvius that snuffed out life in Pompeii and buried the town has long been a fascinating moment in history for children. This book presents that dramatic story with Mary Pope Osborne’s brief text and with stunning frescoes created by Bonnie Christensen, using the same colors, style, and technique as the ancient frescoes unearthed at Pompeii. In addition to the destruction of Pompeii and the rediscovery of the ruins nearly 1,700 years later, the book shows what daily life was like in this prosperous Roman town in the year 79 A.D. (penguinrandomhouse.com)
Ottaviani, Jim, *T-Minus: The Race to the Moon*

In *T-Minus* the exciting story of two world superpowers racing to land a man on the moon is depicted through compelling comics artwork, taking readers through the history of the race and turning the engineers and astronauts involved into vivid and real characters. The story unfolds through the eyes of the figures working behind the scenes to make this miracle happen, showing every triumph and catastrophe along the way, and culminating in the dramatic event itself. (books.simonandschuster.com) (This is a graphic novel)

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw, *Dogs on Duty: Soldiers' Best Friends on the Battlefield and Beyond*

When the news of the raid on Osama Bin Laden’s compound broke, the SEAL team member that stole the show was a highly trained canine companion. Throughout history, dogs have been key contributors to military units. Dorothy Hinshaw Patent follows man’s best friend onto the battlefield, showing readers why dogs are uniquely qualified for the job at hand, how they are trained, how they contribute to missions, and what happens when they retire. With full-color photographs throughout and sidebars featuring heroic canines throughout history, *Dogs on Duty* provides a fascinating look at these exceptional soldiers and companions. (bloomsbury.com)

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw, *When the Wolves Returned: Restoring Nature’s Balance in Yellowstone*

Yellowstone National Park’s majestic geologic wonders and remarkable wildlife draw millions of visitors each year. But there was a time when these natural treasures were in great danger, all because after years of unrestricted hunting, one key piece of the puzzle had been eliminated—the wolf. Now, more than a decade after scientists realized the wolves’ essential role and returned them to Yellowstone, the park’s natural balance is gradually being restored. The informative dual-level text and spectacular full-color photographs show the wolves in the natural habitat that was almost lost without them. Readers of all ages will be inspired by the delicate natural system that is Yellowstone. (books.google.com) For a really cool short video about this topic, search for "How Wolves Change Rivers" by Sustainable Man.
In the early 1900s, Robert Miller, a.k.a. “Count Victor Lustig,” moved to Paris hoping to be an artist. A con artist, that is. He used his ingenious scams on unsuspecting marks all over the world, from the Czech Republic, to Atlantic ocean liners, and across America. Tricky Vic pulled off his most daring con in 1925, when he managed to “sell” the Eiffel Tower to one of the city’s most successful scrap metal dealers! Six weeks later, he tried to sell the Eiffel Tower all over again. Vic was never caught. For that particular scam, anyway.... Kids will love to read about Vic’s thrilling life, and teachers will love the informational sidebars and back matter. Award-winner Greg Pizzoli’s humorous and vibrant graphic style of illustration mark a bold approach to picture book biography. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

What was it really like to live in a castle? Step back to the Middle Ages with CASTLE DIARY: THE JOURNAL OF TOBIAS BURGESS. Eleven-year-old Toby’s vivid diary entries offer an insider’s view of day-to-day castle life, including tips on etiquette (where do you spit at a feast?) and exciting descriptions of hunting, jousting, and harvesting. Complete with glossary, index, and detailed endnotes, this is a rich look at medieval life that informs as much as it entertains. (candlewick.com)

In exuberant verse and stirring pictures, Patricia Hruby Powell and Christian Robinson create an extraordinary portrait for young people of the passionate performer and civil rights advocate Josephine Baker, the woman who worked her way from the slums of St. Louis to the grandest stages in the world. Meticulously researched by both author and artist, Josephine’s powerful story of struggle and triumph is an inspiration and a spectacle, just like the legend herself. (chroniclebooks.com)

Have you ever tried to write a poem about a pizza? How about a pig? How about a pigeon, penguin, potato, Ping-Pong, parrot, puppy, pelican, porcupine, pie, pachyderm, or your parents? Jack

Pizzoli, Greg, Tricky Vic: The Impossibly True Story of the Man Who Sold the Eiffel Tower

Platt, Richard, Castle Diary: The Journal of Tobias Burgess

Powell, Patricia Hruby, Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker

Prelutsky, Jack, Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry: How to Write a Poem
Prelutsky has written more than one thousand poems about all of these things—and many others. In this book he gives you the inside scoop on writing poetry and shows you how you can turn your own experiences and stories about your family, your pets, and your friends into poems. He offers tips, advice, and secrets about writing and provides some fun exercises to help you get started (or unstuck). You'll also get a behind-the-scenes look at the ingredients of some of his most popular poems. If you are a poet, want to be a poet, or if you have to write a poem for homework and you just need some help, then this is the book for you! (harpercollins.com)

Prelutsky, Jack, The New Kid on the Block
Open this book to any page to begin your exploration. Here are poems about things that you may never have thought about before. You'll be introduced to jellyfish stew, a bouncing mouse, a ridiculous dog, and a boneless chicken. You'll learn why you shouldn't argue with a shark, eat a dinosaur, or have an alligator for a pet. You'll meet the world's worst singer and the greatest video game player in history. You'll even find an invitation to a dragon's birthday party....Your friends are invited too. (harpercollins.com)

Prelutsky, Jack, The Swamps of Sleethe: Poems From Beyond the Solar System
Jack Prelutsky's exploration of outer space is not for the faint of heart. No friendly little E.T.-type aliens await your arrival. There are many imaginative ways to perish in these darkly comedic cautionary verses about unexplored worlds so far beyond our solar system. The final poem is an environmental tour de force that packs a wallop. Here are poems the older reader will find great fun to memorize and rattle off to anyone who will listen! And there is a special bonus: anagrams for the kid who loves word puzzles. (penguinrandomhouse.com)

Rappaport, Doreen, Lady Liberty: A Biography
Soon America will be one hundred years old. I share my dream of a birthday gift. It begins in 1865 as a romantic idea, but ten years later Édouard Laboulaye’s dream catches fire and takes shape. Sculptor Auguste Bartholdi gives the dream the form
of a lady, holding a torch to "enlighten the world." Engineers, plasterers, carpenters, coppersmiths -- many of them immigrants -- work together to turn the lady into a monument over 100 feet tall. Joseph Pulitzer calls on readers to help fund a pedestal, and hundreds send in nickels, dimes, and even roosters for the cause. Doreen Rappaport’s historically accurate, poetic vignettes and Matt Tavares’s magnificent images remind us of the true origins of a national symbol -- and show that it took a lot of people to make the Lady. (candlewick.com)

Roche, Art, Comic Strips: Create Your Own Comic Strips from Start to Finish

Kids love comic strips...and now they can devise their own imaginative illustrations and stories with the help of a professional artist who designs for the Cartoon Network. He provides advice on the basic tools and materials; demonstrates how to construct bodies and faces; explains how to come up with appealing characters and build an ensemble cast; and provides ideas for fine-tuning the finished work with proper inking techniques, shading, and colour use. There are loads of practical tips and hands-on activities to hone technique, along with tutorials on writing jokes. Plus, Roche gives the low-down on the big business of comic strips, including suggestions for getting published. To top it off, readers watch as the author produces a brand-new strip, from start to finish. (books.google.com)

Rumford, James, Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta 1325-1354

Ibn Battuta was the traveler of his age—the fourteenth century, a time before Columbus when many believed the world to be flat. Like Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta left behind an account of his own incredible journey from Morocco to China, from the steppes of Russia to the shores of Tanzania, some seventy-five thousand miles in all. James Rumford has retold Ibn Battuta’s story in words and pictures, adding the element of ancient Arab maps—maps as colorful and as evocative as a Persian miniature, as intricate and mysterious as a tiled Moroccan wall. Into this arabesque of pictures and maps, James Rumford has woven the story not just of a traveler in a world long gone but of a man on his journey through life. (books.google.com)
Shaskan, Kathy, *How Underwear Got Under There: A Brief History*

I see London, I see France...here’s a book about underpants! Did you know that warriors at the time of Genghis Khan invented arrow-resistant silk underwear? Or that the recommended age to begin wearing a corset in the late 1800s was four years old? Or that King Tut had a particular fondness for underwear? He was buried with 145 pairs! This lively text consists of ten chapters on various aspects of underwear, including the social and historical ramifications of different undergarments and their development for warmth, support, protection, cleanliness, and status. Regan Dunnick’s clever illustrations and Kathy Shaskan’s accessible text is giggle-worthy, page-turning, and well-researched. From boxers to bustles to briefs, from history to humor, from support to society, the story of underwear is the story of humanity itself. ([penguinrandomhouse.com](http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com))

Sidman, Joyce, *Red Sings from Treetops: A Year in Colors*

In spring, Red sings from tree-tops: cheer-cheer-cheer, each note dropping like a cherry into my ear. With original and spot-on perceptions, Joyce Sidman’s poetry brings the colors of the seasons to life in a fresh light, combining the senses of sight, sound, smell and taste. In this Caldecott Honor book, illustrator Pam Zagarenski’s interpretations go beyond the concrete, allowing us to not just see color, but feel it. ([hmhco.com](http://www.hmhco.com))

Sis, Peter, *Starry Messenger: Galileo Galilei*

In every age there are courageous people who break with tradition to explore new ideas and challenge accepted truths. Galileo Galilei was just such a man--a genius--and the first to turn the telescope to the skies to map the heavens. In doing so, he offered objective evidence that the earth was not the fixed center of the universe but that it and all the other planets revolved around the sun. Galileo kept careful notes and made beautiful drawings of all that he observed. Through his telescope he brought the stars down to earth for everyone to see. By changing the way people saw the galaxy, Galileo was also changing the way they saw themselves and their place in the universe. This was very exciting, but to some it was deeply disturbing. Galileo has upset the harmonious view of heaven and earth that had been accepted since ancient times. He had turned the world upside down. ([us.macmillan.com](http://www.us.macmillan.com))
Sis, Peter, *The Tree of Life: Charles Darwin*

Charles Darwin was, above all else, an independent thinker who continues even now to influence the way we look at the natural world. His endless curiosity and passion for detail resulted in a wealth of notebooks, diaries, correspondence, and published writings that Peter Sís transforms into a visual treasure trove. A multilayered journey through Darwin’s world, *The Tree of Life* begins with his childhood and traces the arc of his life through university and career, following him around the globe on the voyage of the Beagle, and home to a quiet but momentous life devoted to science and family. Sís uses his own singular vision to create a gloriously detailed panorama of a genius’s trajectory through investigating and understanding the mysteries of nature. In pictures executed in fine pen and ink and lush watercolors - cameo portraits, illustrated pages of diary, cutaway views of the Beagle, as well as charts, maps, and a gatefold spread - Peter Sís has shaped a wondrous introduction to Charles Darwin. (us.macmillan.com)

Sis, Peter, *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*

“I was born at the beginning of it all, on the Red side—the Communist side—of the Iron Curtain.” Through annotated illustrations, journals, maps, and dreamscapes, Peter Sís shows what life was like for a child who loved to draw, proudly wore the red scarf of a Young Pioneer, stood guard at the giant statue of Stalin, and believed whatever he was told to believe. But adolescence brought questions. Cracks began to appear in the Iron Curtain, and news from the West slowly filtered into the country. Sís learned about beat poetry, rock ’n’ roll, blue jeans, and Coca-Cola. He let his hair grow long, secretly read banned books, and joined a rock band. Then came the Prague Spring of 1968, and for a teenager who wanted to see the world and meet the Beatles, this was a magical time. It was short-lived, however, brought to a sudden and brutal end by the Soviet-led invasion. But this brief flowering had provided a glimpse of new possibilities—creativity could be discouraged but not easily killed. By joining memory and history, Sís takes us on his extraordinary journey: from infant with paintbrush in hand to young man borne aloft by the wings of his art. (us.macmillan.com)
If America Were a Village: A Book about the People of the United States

America, with all its diversity, is not easily defined. David J. Smith’s If America Were a Village takes a snapshot - past, present and future - to help define America for children. Using the same successful metaphor of the international bestseller If the World Were a Village, the book shrinks down America to a village of 100. The metaphor helps children easily understand American ethnic origins, religions, family profiles, occupations, wealth, belongings and more. Shelagh Armstrong’s expansive illustrations imagine America as a classic, vibrant small town. Who are the people living in this vast and varied nation? Where did they come from? What are they like today? How do they compare with people in other countries? The book’s simple statistical analysis provides a new way of learning about where people live in America, the state of their health, the shapes and sizes of families, what they use and more - forming a concise picture of a country. (kidscanpress.com) If you enjoyed this book, you will also like If the World Were a Village by the same author.

Bard of Avon: The Story of William Shakespeare

Nobody knows exactly when or why William Shakespeare left his boyhood home of Stratford-on-Avon for the great city of London, but it didn’t take long for him to make a name for himself. His plays are now performed almost every day in just about every part of the world; even people who’ve never seen them use words and phrases he introduced into the English language. How did a man from an unremarkable family create a legacy that the world, even 400 years after his death, has never forgotten? There will always be unsolved mysteries about Shakespeare, but what we do know of his life, his times, and his theater makes for a very dramatic story. (harpercollins.com)

Cleopatra

Queen of Egypt at the age of eighteen, Cleopatra’s passion was to untie the world under Egyptian rule. Legendary leaders risked their kingdoms to win her heart, and her epic life has inspired countless tales throughout history. A timeless story of love, war, and ambition, their pictorial biography is sure to entertain and educate. (harpercollins.com)
Stanley, Diane, Good Queen Bess: The Story of Elizabeth I of England

She was a queen whose strong will, shrewd diplomacy, religious tolerance and great love for her subjects won the hearts of her people and the admiration of her enemies. Elizabeth was born into an age of religious strife, in which plots and factions were everywhere and private beliefs could be punished by death. When she became queen, her counselors urged her to marry quickly and turn the responsibilities of governing over to her husband. But she outwitted them by stalling, changing her mind; and playing one side against another, as she steered her country to the glorious era of peace and security that would be called the Elizabethan Age. (harpercollins.com)

Stanley, Diane, Joan of Arc

Against the fascinating tapestry of France’s history during the Hundred Years’ War, Diane Stanley unfolds the story of the simple thirteen-year-old village girl who in just a few years would lead France to independence from English rule, and thus become a symbol of France’s national pride. It is a story of vision and bravery, fierce determination, and tragic martyrdom. Diane Stanley’s extraordinary gift to present historical information in an accessible and child-friendly format has never been more impressive, nor her skillful, beautifully realized illustrations (here imitating medieval illuminated manuscripts) more exquisite. (harpercollins.com)

Thimmesh, Catherine, Scaly Spotted Feathered Frilled: How do we know what dinosaurs really looked like?

No human being has ever seen a triceratops or velociraptor or even the mighty Tyrannosaurus rex. They left behind only their impressive bones. So how can scientists know what color dinosaurs were? Or if their flesh was scaly or feathered? Could that fierce T.rex have been born with spots? In a first for young readers, the Sibert medalist Catherine Thimmesh introduces the incredible talents of the paleoartist, whose work reanimates gone-but-never-forgotten dinosaurs in giant full-color paintings that are as strikingly beautiful as they aim to be scientifically accurate, down to the smallest detail. Follow a paleoartist through the scientific process of ascertaining the appearance of various dinosaurs from millions of
years ago to learn how science, art, and imagination combine to bring us face-to-face with the past.(hmhco.com)

**Thomas, Lyn, 100% Pure Fake: Gross Out Your Friends and Family with 25 Great Special Effects!**

Parents, beware of this book. With 100% Pure Fake, the art of scaring the pants off friends and family reaches new levels of ease and sophistication. Pranksters can now amaze, alarm and totally disgust everyone with these easy-to-make Pure Fakes. These 25 safe, kid-tested recipes that can be made with ingredients found in most households, including corn syrup, rolled oats, makeup and pasta. Other ingredients, such as school glue, food coloring, tempera paint and gelatin, are widely available in grocery or craft stores. Each project is presented with step-by-step instructions and includes warnings for allergy and mess alerts, non-edible and edible projects, and when kids should get adult help. Parents, beware of this book. With 100% Pure Fake, the art of scaring the pants off friends and family reaches new levels of ease and sophistication. Pranksters can now amaze, alarm and totally disgust everyone with these easy-to-make Pure Fakes. These 25 safe, kid-tested recipes that can be made with ingredients found in most households, including corn syrup, rolled oats, makeup and pasta. Other ingredients, such as school glue, food coloring, tempera paint and gelatin, are widely available in grocery or craft stores. Each project is presented with step-by-step instructions and includes warnings for allergy and mess alerts, non-edible and edible projects, and when kids should get adult help. (kidscanpress.com)

**Thorne-Thomsen, Kathleen, Greene & Greene for Kids**

Greene & Greene for Kids: Art, Architecture, and Activities is a unique children's book that explores a fascinating period in American history. Children learn what it was like to live in turn-of-the-century America. They learn things like what they read, what games they played, even what their homes and schools looked like. This book also tells the story of the brothers Greene, including how they got their starts in architecture, how their lives and careers were changed as they traveled across the country, and the people they met along the way. With an entertaining variety of activities, questions, photographs, and vignettes for children to ponder, this book is a fascinating look into the lives of Charles and Henry Green, and also a close-up look the Industrial
Revolution and the birth of the Arts & Crafts movement. Arts & Crafts enthusiasts will love this book, as will lovers of architecture, bungalow owners, and anyone who wants to learn more about this period in American history. It's a book the whole family will enjoy! (books.google.com)

**Various, Scientists in the Field Series**
I couldn’t choose just one (or even a few) books from this award-winning series to recommend. There are over 30 books and they are all great. Each one follows a group of scientists as they work with animals or in a certain habitat. You’ll learn about how the scientists work, what questions they are trying to answer, and what problems they are trying to solve. If you are interested in animals or nature, you must read some of these books. Some of the titles include Chasing Cheetahs: the Race to Save Africa’s Fastest Cat; Stronger Than Steel : Spider Silk DNA and the Quest for Better Bulletproof Vests, Sutures, and Parachute Rope; The Hive Detectives : Chronicle of a Honey Bee Catastrophe; Diving to a Deep-Sea Volcano. Don’t those sound amazing? You can find the entire series listed at sciencemeetsadventure.com. They also have videos, information about enhanced ebooks, and additional information about the authors. (Ms. Bock)

**Various, Who Was...? Biographies**
There are over 30 books in this series. You can see the whole list and keep track of which ones you’ve read at whowasbookseries.com. There are biographies about athletes, musicians, writers, artists, world leaders, adventurers, scientists... You name it, they have it. They are easily distinguishable by the enormous heads the people have on the covers. Some biographies are boring, but not these ones! They tell the stories of people’s lives in a fun, interesting way. See if you can read them all! (Ms. Bock)
How to Build Your Own Country is an interactive and totally original learning experience that shows kids how to build their very own country from scratch. This book, the only one of its kind, offers children the expertise and advice they'll need to plant their flag in the backyard, in the bedroom or online. Kids will be amazed to discover that anyone can do it. Nation-building advice is peppered with examples of events that have shaped countries throughout history, teaching young readers about government, elections, geography and global issues. Backed up with lots of amazing examples of real micronations - some established or ruled by kids - How to Build Your Own Country promises to inspire, entertain and inform young nation-builders. (kidscanpress.com)
About Ms. Bock

Amanda Bock is the Library Teacher at the Angier School in Newton, MA. She has been a Librarian for 14 years and a children’s bookseller for nearly as long. Ms. Bock has Masters degrees in Library Science and Children’s Literature, which means she went to school for 4 extra years after college. A voracious reader as a younger person, Ms. Bock now identifies more with reluctant readers. She spends more time carrying books around to look cool instead of actually reading them. But, she’s trying to get back in the habit of reading and has made a goal to read 100 books this year. You can see how far behind she is at goodreads.com/amandabock.

My Notes