



Teachers'

Choices

2012



Logo illustration © by Chris Van Allsburg

What Is the Teachers' Choices Project?

The Teachers' Choices logo that Chris Van Allsburg created (see below)

illuminates the idea that good books reach out and tap us on the shoulder to get our attention. Each year since 1989, the International Reading Association's Teachers' Choices project has identified outstanding trade books, published for children and adolescents, that teachers find exceptional for curriculum use. Parents, also, will find here books good for reading aloud and for help answering questions prompted by tours to a farm, aquarium, or museum or by other shared family activities such as television viewing.

See
page 7 for the
Teachers' Choices
2012 Reading List
bookmark!

Primary Readers

Grades K-2, Ages 5-8

All the Water in the World

George Ella Lyon. Ill. Katherine Tillotson. Atheneum/Richard Jackson.

Lyrical verse teaches the water cycle. Digital collage-like illustrations pair with the text as students learn how to use water wisely. A great read aloud for primary science classrooms.

All the Way to America: The Story of a Big Italian Family and a Little Shovel

Dan Yaccarino. Knopf Books for Young Readers.

This immigration story starts with a little shovel that first belonged to the author's great grandfather in Italy. Four generations of his Italian family came to America, and each had a unique use for the shovel.

Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade

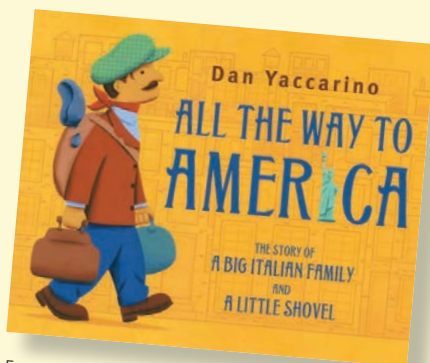
Melissa Sweet. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children.

This picture biography celebrates the life of Tony Sarg, who experimented with helium-filled balloons and started the tradition of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. Collage illustrations supplement the text to make this a delightful way to integrate art and history.

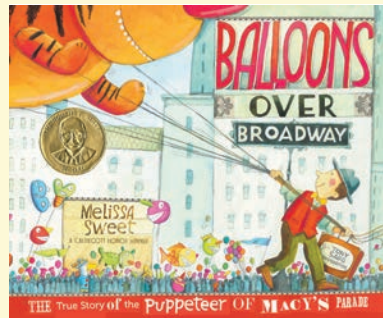
Emma Dilemma, Big Sister Poems

Kristine O'Connell George. Ill. Nancy Carpenter. Clarion.

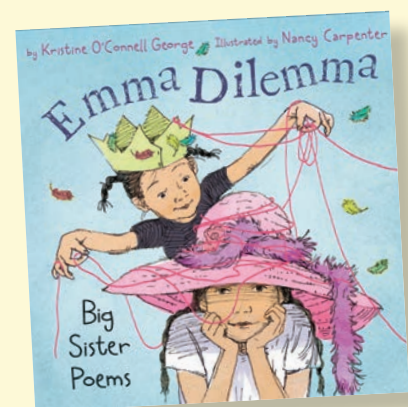
Thirty-four poems describe the ups and downs of sisterhood and provide clear models for budding poets. Told from older sister's perspective, the free-verse poems detail what it is like for a fourth grader to endure life with a preschool sister.



From *All the Way to America: The Story of a Big Italian Family and a Little Shovel* by Dan Yaccarino. Knopf Books for Young Readers.



From *Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade* by Melissa Sweet. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children.



From *Emma Dilemma, Big Sister Poems* by Kristine O'Connell George. Ill. Nancy Carpenter. Clarion.

Even an Octopus Needs a Home

Irene Kelly. Holiday House.

All animals need homes for a safe place to live and raise a family. Chimpanzees build sleeping platforms each night in the trees. Monk parakeets create treetop apartment buildings. Science students will learn about a variety of animal habitats.

Lots and Lots of Coins

Margarette S. Reid. Ill. True Kelley. Dutton Juvenile.

Curriculum connections abound with math, language arts, and social studies. A young boy studies coins with his dad. "A coin is a piece of history you can hold in your hand." Details provide a great introduction to young coin collectors.

My Name Is Not Alexander

Jennifer Fosberry. Ill. Mike Litwin. Sourcebooks Jabberwocky.

As young Alexander explores what it means to be a hero through the lives of men like Theodore Roosevelt, Thomas Edison, Chief Joseph, Jackie Robinson, and his own father—he finds that he might have the traits to become a hero himself.

My Uncle Martin's Words of Love for America: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Niece Tells How He Made a Difference

Angela Farris Watkins. Ill. Eric Velasquez. Abrams Books for Young Readers.

This is engaging text based on quotes from Dr. King combined with heart-warming illustrations by Eric Velasquez to help young children understand more about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and his commitment to nonviolence.

Ready, Set, 100th Day!

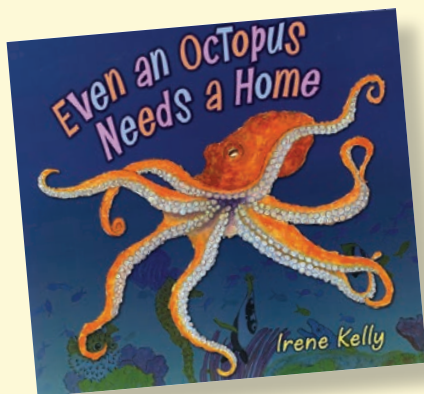
Nancy Elizabeth Wallace. Marshall Cavendish Children's Books.

Counting by 5s, 10s, 20s, 25s, and making patterns are all a part of Minna's counting process. Students will be inspired to see how she incorporates them all into her fabulous 100th-day project.

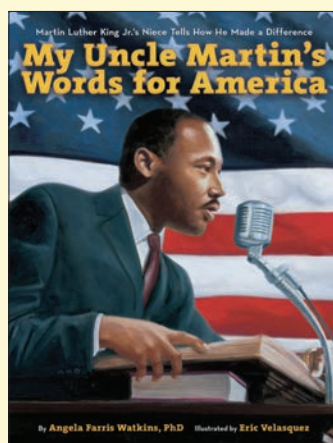
Zoola Palooza: A Book of Homographs

Gene Barretta. Henry Holt.

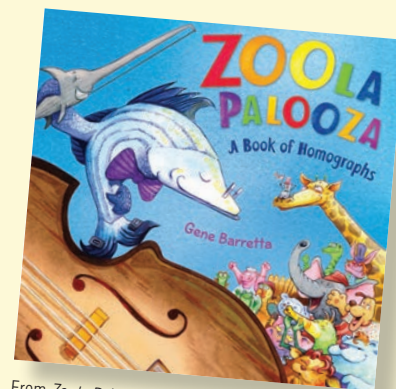
Homographs sound the same but have different meanings. Animal characters in a band provide the setting for students to learn the differences of word choices in this brightly illustrated text.



From *Even an Octopus Needs a Home* by Irene Kelly. Holiday House.



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Intermediate Readers

Grades 3-5, Ages 8-11

A Boy Named FDR: How Franklin D. Roosevelt Grew Up to Change America

Kathleen Krull. Ill. Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher. Knopf for Young Readers.

This well-researched biography details the life of our only four-term president. From his privileged childhood to his bout with polio, FDR's political ambitions and accomplishments are showcased. Timeline and quotations are included.

A Butterfly Is Patient

Dianna Hutts Aston. Ill. Sylvia Long. Chronicle.

Aston presents the stages of a butterfly's life with headings that reflect character traits: "A butterfly is patient, a butterfly is creative, a butterfly is helpful." The gorgeous artwork depicts a wide variety of caterpillars and butterflies.

Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart

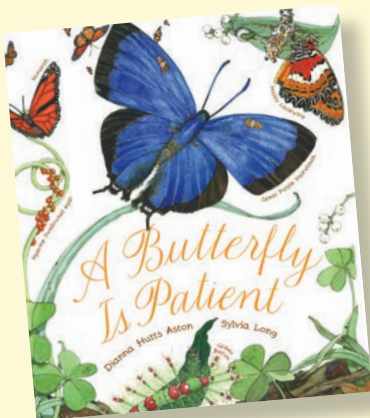
Candace Fleming. Schwartz & Wade.

In alternating chapters, this book portrays the details of the aviator's life along with a vivid account of her disappearance and the searches to find her. Fleming separates myth from reality through her extensive research.

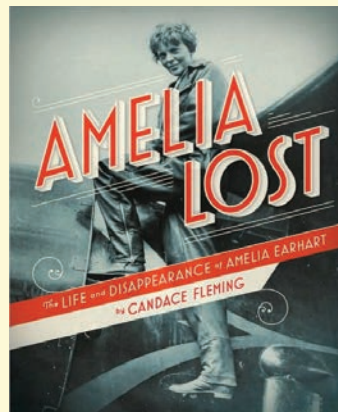
Energy Island: How One Community Harnessed the Wind and Changed Their World

Allan Drummond. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

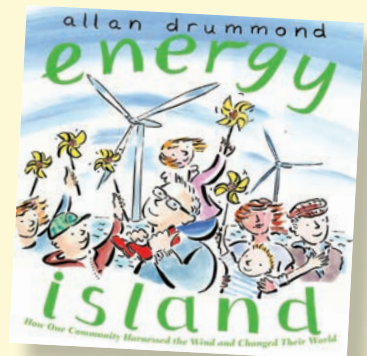
This nonfiction account explains how one community in Denmark, The Island of Samsø, reduced their carbon emissions and became almost energy independent. Young readers will learn how renewable energy can be accomplished.



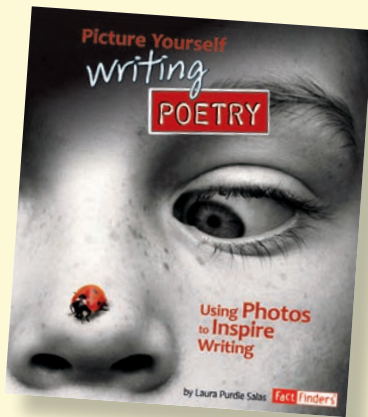
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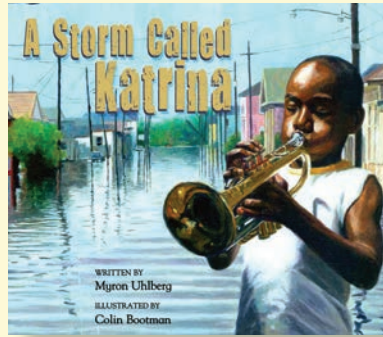
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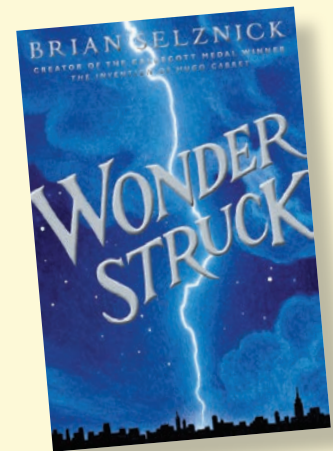
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From *Picture Yourself Writing Poetry: Using Photos to Inspire Writing* by Laura Purdie Salas. Capstone.



From *A Storm Called Katrina* by Myron Uhlberg. Ill. Colin Bootman. Peachtree.



From *Wonderstruck* by Brian Selznick. Scholastic.

Marching With Aunt Susan: Susan B. Anthony and the Fight for Women's Suffrage

Claire Rudolf Murphy. Ill. Stacey Schuett. Peachtree.

Spunky 10-year-old Bessie Pond tells the story of her encounter with Susan B. Anthony and the long fight for women's suffrage in the United States. Author's notes make this a unique look at women in history.

Nurse, Soldier, Spy: The Story of Sarah Edmonds, a Civil War Hero

Marissa Moss. Ill. John Hendrix. Abrams Books for Young Readers.

Sarah Edmonds dressed as a man to escape a bad marriage and served as Frank Thompson in the Union Army. This picture book biography details her life as a battlefield nurse and as a spy in a Confederate encampment.

Picture Yourself Writing Poetry: Using Photos to Inspire Writing

Laura Purdie Salas. Capstone.

This book captures the writing process and demystifies the steps in writing poems. Sensory details, metaphors, word choice, and imagery help shape good poems. The photos in the book will inspire even reluctant poets.

A Storm Called Katrina

Myron Uhlberg. Ill. Colin Bootman. Peachtree.

Students learn about perseverance and resilience when 10-year-old Louis and his family are evacuated to the Superdome during Hurricane Katrina. Back matter provides a bibliography and details of Hurricane Katrina, a storm that forever changed New Orleans.

Walking Home to Rosie Lee

A. LaFaye. Ill. Keith D. Shepherd. Cinco Punto.

Set at the end of the Civil War, this slave boy is searching for his mother. Gabe's voice shows his determination despite months of travel from Mobile to the Appalachian Mountains. The lingering effects of slavery are portrayed through Gabe's eyes.

Wonderstruck

Brian Selznick. Scholastic.

Two intertwined stories, one in words and one in illustrations, tell the journeys of two deaf children from different decades. Mysteriously, their stories come together at the New York Museum of Natural History. The layered plot provides curriculum connections in art, science, and language arts.

Advanced Readers

Grades 6-8, Ages 11-14

Alexander Hamilton: The Outsider

Jean Fritz. Putnam.

With strong connections to U.S. history curriculum, this rich biography will help readers understand Hamilton's role in the shaping of our country, the details of his famed duel with Aaron Burr, and why his picture is on the 10 dollar bill.

City of Orphans

Avi. Ill. Greg Ruth. Atheneum/Richard Jackson.

Readers learn about tenement life in New York in the 1890s, as Maks and his friend Willa use their wits to survive the harsh conditions faced by many immigrant families. Vivid descriptions and characterizations provide models for effective writing.

Grammar Girl Presents the Ultimate Writing Guide for Students

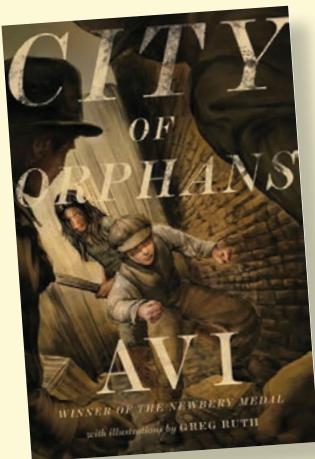
Mignon Fogarty. Ill. Erwin Haya. St. Martin's Griffin.

This lively handbook transforms grammar from boring rules to useful tools for self-expression. Even reluctant students will be able to employ these simple tips to improve their writing.

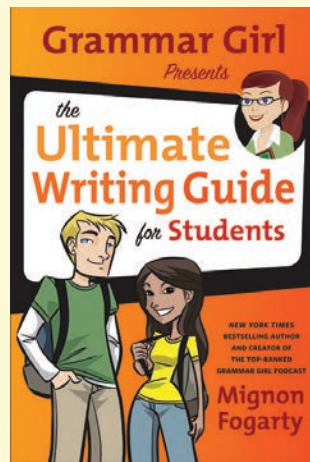
Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans

Kadir Nelson. Balzar & Bray.

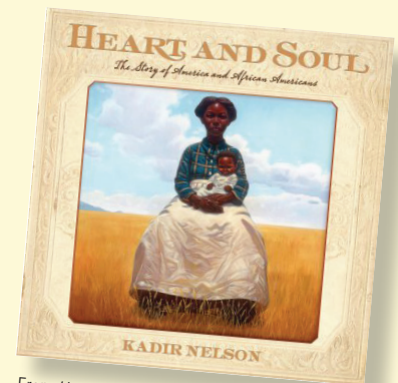
Kadir Nelson combines engaging portraits with moving narrative to show how African Americans shaped this country from colonial days through the Civil Rights movement to the election of the first African American president. The unnamed narrator brings history to life for young readers.



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From *Grammar Girl Presents the Ultimate Writing Guide for Students* by Mignon Fogarty. Ill. Erwin Haya. St. Martin's Griffin.



From *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans* by Kadir Nelson. Balzar & Bray.

Hidden

Helen Frost. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Two girls' lives are entwined forever when the father of one steals a car and inadvertently kidnaps the other child. Told in free-verse poetry, the author cleverly reveals "hidden" clues which help the reader unravel the real story.

Inside Out and Back Again

Thanhha Lai. HarperCollins.

This free-verse narrative is based on the author's own experiences of immigrating to America in 1975 after fleeing Saigon. Readers will be sensitized to displaced families who must find their way in a new culture.

Okay for Now

Gary D. Schmidt. Clarion.

14-year-old Doug Swietek finds respite from his dysfunctional family in an unlikely place, his small town's library and an original edition of James John Audubon's *Birds of America*. The art becomes a metaphor for Doug's journey toward self-acceptance.

Requiem: Poems of the Terezin Ghetto

Paul B. Janeczko. Ill. Various. Candlewick.

Free-verse poems from the perspective of fictionalized characters tell the stories of those who endured the Nazi concentration camp at Theresienstadt. Reproductions of prisoners' drawings that were recovered after the liberation provide a haunting reality to the poems.

Saga of the Sioux: An Adaptation From Dee Brown's Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee

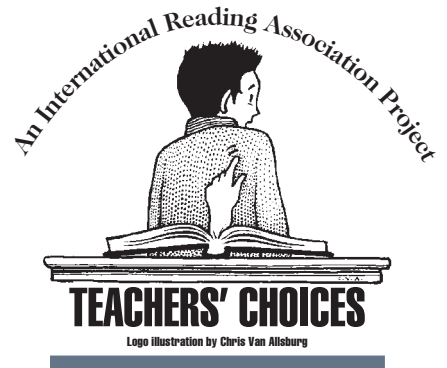
Dwight Jon Zimmerman. Henry Holt.

Period photographs and easy-to-interpret maps help make the story of the massacre of the Sioux nation accessible to a middle school audience. This is a must-have addition to any teacher's collection of U.S. history resources.

Saving Zasha

Randi Barrow. Scholastic.

In post-World War II Russia, when all things from Germany are despised and outlawed, a young boy finds a dying man and his German shepherd in the woods. Themes of loyalty, loss, and survival are explored as Mikhail risks everything to save this dog.



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Saving Zasha. Randi Barrow. Scholastic.

For over 50 years, the International Reading Association has been the trusted provider of ongoing professional development for teachers. IRA is committed to advancing worldwide literacy by improving reading instruction, disseminating research and information about reading, and encouraging the lifetime reading habit. Additional information about IRA can be found at www.reading.org.

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More About Teachers' Choices

Thank you to the 2011–2012 IRA Teachers' Choices Committee and review teams. The committee members were Joyce Gulley (cochair), Marjie Podzielinski (cochair), Cathy Denman, Jessica Hollon McGuire, Denise Johnson, and Cathy Voelker. Team Leaders in the field test were

- East—Janet Shaw and Susan Thompson-White
- Great Lakes—April Wolber
- Plains—Pam Ryan
- Rocky Mountains—Lynne Nevriy and Rebecca Stone (trainee)
- Southeast—Linda Armstrong and Joan Kindig (trainee)
- Southwest—Jane Dewailly
- West—Belinda Louie

For more information on the Teachers' Choices list or to learn how to become involved visit www.reading.org/resources/booklists/teacherschoices.aspx

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