

“100 Best Picturebooks of the Decade - and How to Use Them in Your Classroom”

Created by Dan McKey

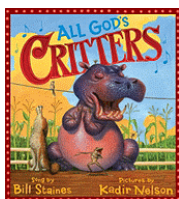
ehlm_mckey@tccsa.net

I have chosen 100 books published from 2000 – 2009 that have strong story elements, have made a special connection to me, are particularly well-illustrated, and that kids truly enjoy. I base these choices on my experience reading with hundreds of children (and adults) over the past ten years. Because these are simply my choices, I am sure there are worthy books that have not been included. If there are books you feel should have made the list, please email me.

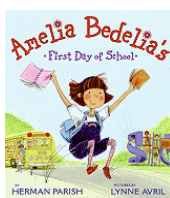
I have also included ideas for activities as you read to children.



ABC3D, by Marion Bataille, (2008), Roaring Brook Press. *This is an amazing little pop-up book that has something special for every letter of the alphabet. [Grades K-adult] IDEAS: Have students debate which pop-ups are their favorites and why. Try making some simple pop-ups.*



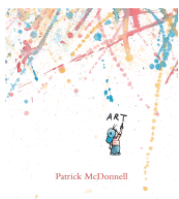
All God's Critters, Song by Bill Staines, pictures by Kadir Nelson, Simon & Schuster, (2009). *Kadir's amazing illustrations take this song to a hilarious new level. [Grades K-adult] IDEAS: Have students discuss how Nelson's paintings give a sense of uninhibited joy. Learn the song and sing along! Debate which expressions are the best.*



Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School, by Herman Parish, ill. by Lynne Avril, (2009), Greenwillow Books. *Amelia Bedelia has been making kids and their parents laugh since 1963. Now fans will be able to see what Amelia must have been like on the first day of school. She's as literal and as funny as always. [Grades K-adult] IDEA: Have students brainstorm other funny things that could have happened to Amelia Bedelia in Kindergarten. Discuss the difference between literal and figurative language.*



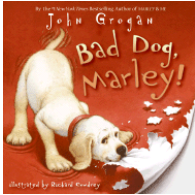
Are You Ready to Play Outside?, by Mo Willems, (2008), Hyperion. *Who hasn't been disappointed when weather ruins their plans? In this episode, Elephant and Piggie are excited to play outside. What will happen when it starts to rain? [Grades K-adult] IDEA: Have students write about times weather changed their plans. Discuss how Mo Willems captures emotions with his simple illustrations. Have students act out various emotions.*



Art, Patrick McDonnell, (2006) Little, Brown & Co. *I love this book! Young Art creates colorful scribbles, squiggles, dots, and blotches. This is a beautifully illustrated “Art-appreciation” picture book about a boy and his imagination. [Grades K+] IDEA: Imitate the child-like illustrations of this book. Write and illustrate further adventures of Art.*



Artist to Artist: 23 Major Illustrators Talk to Children about Their Art, (2007), Philomel Books. *This is a beautiful anthology celebrating the art of the picture book. It highlights the work of 23 of the most beloved children's illustrators, such as Maurice Sendak, Robert Sabuda, and Eric Carle. [Grades 4-adult]. IDEA: Have each student research one particular illustrator, or adopt an illustrator as a class.*

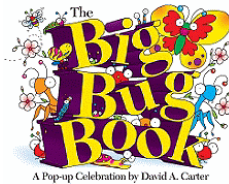


Bad Dog, Marley, John Grogan, ill. by Richard Cowdrey, (2007), Harper Collins. *My students love when I read this book! Marley is a lovable dog that gets into all kinds of trouble, but in the end, he saves the day. [K-adult] IDEA: Have students work in small groups to think of and write about other situations where Marley would get into trouble.*

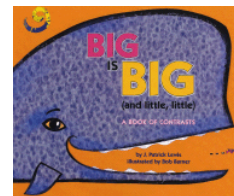
Discuss how the illustrations add to the humor. Get the sequels (Marley Goes to School, A Very Marley Christmas) and compare using a Venn diagram.



Bear's Picture, by Daniel Pinkwater, ill. by D.B. Johnson, (2008), Houghton Mifflin. *A bear begins to draw a picture. But when two art critics become a bit too critical, the bear has a very creative solution. (Make sure to turn the final painting upside down!) [Grades 2-adult] IDEAS: Introduce students to the art of Picasso and compare it to these illustrations. Have students paint in this style. Discuss the role of critics.*



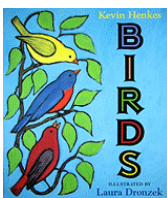
The Big Bug Book, by David A. Carter, (2008), Little Simon. *These creepy crawlers are cute and cuddly, and they pop up in the least expected places! [Grades K-2] IDEA: Share more of David Carter's pop-up books, such as Snow Bugs and Beach Bugs.*



Big Is Big (and little, little) A Book of Contrasts, Patricia Lewis & Bob Barner, (2007), Holiday House. *This is a great way to introduce or reinforce the concept of opposites. Lewis's rhyming text and Barner's clever child-like illustrations combine to form a really enjoyable reading experience! [K-2] IDEA: Have students imitate the childlike illustration style from this book. Create new lists of opposites and illustrate them in this style. Finish the project by creating a class book.*



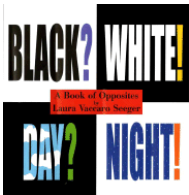
Big Smelly Bear, Britta Teckentrup, (2007), Boxer Books. *Big Smelly Bear is big and smelly, and he doesn't care. That is, until he has an itch he can't reach. Big Fluffy Bear might be willing to help, but she thinks he ought to take a bath first! What will happen? [Grades K-2] IDEA: Discuss how being friends sometimes requires you to make personal sacrifices.*



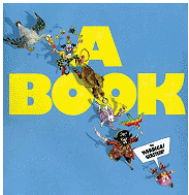
Birds, by Kevin Kenkes, ill. by Laura Dronzek, Greenwillow, (2009). *This book celebrates birds in their variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. Wonderful illustrations! [K-2] IDEA: Have students imitate the illustration style in this book.*



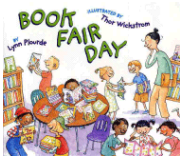
Black Book of Colors, The, by Menena Cottin and Rosana Faria, (2006), Groundwork Books. *This is an amazing book! It is all black with white text, but it is about colors, told from the point of view of a blind boy. Text is also in Braille. [Grades 2-adult] IDEA: Have students try to write simple Braille messages to each other. “Handicap” several of your students for an hour or part of a day by blindfolding them or using earplugs. Then have them describe their challenges and frustrations.*



Black? White! Day? Night!, by Laura Vaccaro Seeger, (2006), Roaring Brook Press. *Using colorful die-cut pages, Seeger has created a clever book of opposites that any young child will enjoy. [Grades pre-K to 2] IDEA: 1) Have younger students write additional opposite pairs, 2) Have older students try to create die-cuts to illustrate their own opposite pairs, 3) Compare with Seeger’s One Boy. 4) Also compare to Big is Big.*

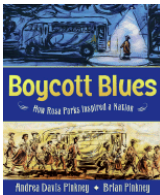


Book, A, by Mordicai Gerstein, (2009), Roaring Brook Press. *Gerstein employs a clever perspective in this story of a storybook character trying to find her own story. [Grades 2-adult] IDEA: Try drawing familiar objects or scenes from an unusual perspective. Make a list of the storybook characters alluded to in this book.*

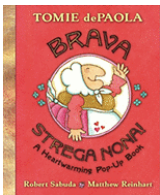


Book Fair Day, Lynn Plourde, (2006), Dutton Books.

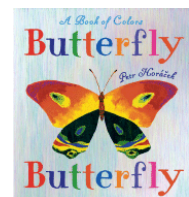
Dewey Booker has been saving up for Book Fair Day, but his class is scheduled to go last! He’s afraid all the good books will be gone! The last page of the book alone makes this one worth its cost. [Grades 2+] IDEAS: Have students create a list of their all-time favorite books. Then let them share with one another. Have them interview adults for their favorites.



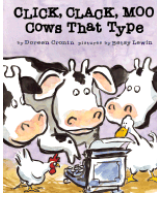
Boycott Blues: How Rosa Parks Inspired a Nation, by Andrea Davis Pinkney & Brian Pinkney, (2008), Greenwillow. *This book presents “a poignant, blues-infused tribute to the men and women of the Montgomery bus boycott, who refused to give up until they got justice.” [Grades 5 – adult] IDEA: Have students experiment with scratchboard illustration.*



Brava Strega Nona! A Heartwarming Pop-Up Book, Robert Sabuda & Matthew Reinhart, (2008), Putman. *“The wonderfully wise Strega Nona shares the six ingredients that make life magical in magnificent pop-up spreads.” [Grades K-adult] IDEA: Have students discuss if they would change any of Strega’ Nona’s ingredients for life. Have students read other Tomie dePaola books and imitate his artistic style.*



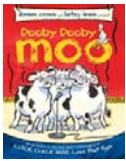
Butterfly Butterfly: A Book of Colors, Petr Horacek, (2007), Candlewick. *One day Lucy sees a beautiful butterfly, but the next day she can’t find it. She discovers some amazing things while she searches. This has a great surprise ending. IDEA: Have students create their own butterflies. Have older students try to make pop-up butterflies.*



Click, Clack, Moo, Cows That Type, by Doreen Cronin, ill. by Betsey Lewin, (2006), Spotlight Books. *What is it about cows that type that fascinates children and adults, as well? This is the first of several excellent books about the cows, Farmer Brown, and the clever Duck. IDEA: Have students turn this book into a play or Readers Theater.*



Color, Doran, Goodman, & Miller, (2006), Tate Publishing. *This is a beautiful nonfiction picture book all about color. [Grades K-adult] IDEA – Have students illustrate a page of their favorite color in a way similar to this book. Have older students discuss the connotations and feelings that certain colors give us.*



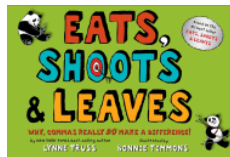
Dooby Dooby Moo, Doreen Cronin, (2006), Antheneum Books. *First there was Click, Clack, Moo – Cows That Type. Then there was Giggle, Giggle, Quack. Now Cronin and Lewin are back with a very funny barnyard picture book that takes us to the county fair. [Grades K-6]. IDEA: Have students act out this book as a musical play.*



Dot, The, Peter H. Reynolds, (2003), Candlewick Press. *Vashti thinks she can't draw, until an encouraging art teacher gives her work some attention. This is a GREAT book, addressing character traits of creativity, perseverance, and encouragement. IDEA: 1) Explore Peter Reynold's excellent website, www.peterhreynolds.com. 2) Experiment in drawing or painting a variety of types of dots. 3) Read and compare Reynolds' other books such as Ish, So Few of Me, and The North Star.*



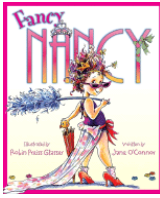
Duck at the Door, by Jackie Urbanovic, (2007), HarperCollins. *Irene lives a peaceful life with her animals. Things really change when Duck shows up at the door. [Grades 1-3] IDEA: Read and compare the sequels Duck Soup and Duck for Cover. Study migration. Discuss how organization of the book (using months) moves the story along.*



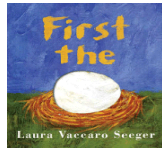
Eats, Shoots & Leaves – Why Commas Really DO Make a Difference!, Lynne Truss, (2006), Putnam Books. *Commas are important. Think of the difference, for example between the following. 1) “Eat here, and get gas.” 2) “Eat here and get gas.” IDEA: Have students write and share other funny examples of comma mistakes. Also, have students read the sequels, The Girl's Like Spaghetti and Twenty-Odd Ducks, which are about the misuse of apostrophes and punctuation marks.*



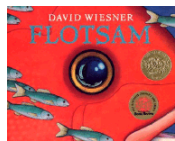
Egg Is Quiet, An, Dianna Aston & Silvia Long, (2006), Chronicle Books. *This informational book shows the amazing variety of eggs, exploring the many sizes, shapes, colors, and textures of various eggs. [Grades K+] IDEA: 1) Read and compare the sequel, A Seed is Sleepy, 2) Each student could become an expert on one topic and use this book as a pattern to create his/her own informational book. Ex. – A Motorcycle is Noisy.*



Fancy Nancy, Robin Glasser, (2006), Harper Collins. *Nancy believes it is ALWAYS better to be fancy. She is determined to teach her family how they, too, can become fancy. [K-3] IDEA: Have students create an ongoing list of “Fancy” words and encourage them to use these words in their writing. Make a “Fancy Words” bulletin board. Read the sequels!*



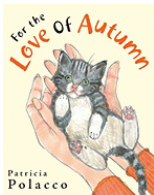
First the Egg, Laura Vaccaro Seeger, (2007), Roaring Brook Press. *This is a simple but profound book about transformation, from egg to chicken, seed to flower, and caterpillar to butterfly. [K-2] IDEA: Research and discuss other living things that make a transformation.*



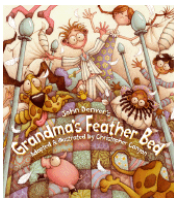
Flotsam, David Wiesner, (2006), Clarion Books. *This is the 2007 Caldecott winner, and it's both wonderfully strange and strangely wonderful! It is a wordless book, based on a boy finding a camera washed up on the shore. When the film is developed, it shows some remarkable things happening in the ocean! IDEA: Have students provide their own text for this story. Have them write a story based on one especially interesting photograph.*



Flower Man, The, Mark Ludy, (2005), Green Pastures Publishing. *This is a wonderful wordless book about what happens when the flower man visits a run-down, colorless town. Even though there are no words, there are plenty of interesting plots and characters, such as the artist and the bathtub man. IDEA – Have students create their own wordless books about something they enjoy. Find other books that deal with making the world a better place. (Miss Rumphius, One Smile, The Daffodil Principle, etc.)*



For the Love of Autumn, Patricia Polacco, (2008), Philomel. *Patricia Polacco's “love story” is a good one. Miss Parks is a new teacher who loves her home, her job, and her students, but especially loves her little kitten, Autumn. When Autumn runs away during a storm, the students work together to find the kitten. A surprise is in store for Miss Parks, a surprise about love. [K-adult] IDEA: Study other Patricia Polacco books and study her illustration style. Also, look for foreshadowing in this story.*



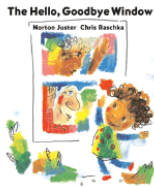
Grandma's Feather Bed, lyrics by John Denver; illustrated by Christopher Canyon, 2007, Dawn Publications. *Kids love this book, but I'm sure adults will enjoy it, too! It is so funny! Canyon's hilarious illustrations capture the exuberance of a visit to Grandma. [Grades 3-adult] IDEAS: Have students write about their memories of visiting Grandma, or of their times with their cousins. Have students learn the song and sing along!*



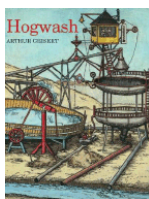
Green as a Bean, Karla Kuskin, ill. by Melissa Iwai, (2007), Harper Collins. *What would you choose to be if you were green? What if you were square, or soft, or loud? This is a great book about imagination. [Grades K-3] IDEA: Write additional pages for the book, such as “What if you were purple?”*



Hello Baby!, by Mem Fox, ill. by Steve Jenkins, (2009), Beach Lane Books. *This is another WONDERFUL celebration of babies by the author of Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes, only this one is mostly about baby animals! The cut paper collage illustrations are amazing. [Grades infant – adult] IDEA: Have students create cut paper collage illustrations of other baby animals or of themselves.*



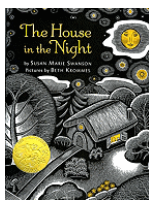
Hello, Goodbye Window, The, Norton Juster & Chris Raschka, (2005) Hyperion Books. *A kitchen window at the home of Nana and Poppy is a special place for a young girl. If you are a grandparent, or you've ever had a special grandparent, you will love this book! IDEA: 1) Have children try to imitate Raschka's art. 2) Have children share favorite memories of visiting their grandparents.*



Hogwash, Arthur Geisert, (2008), Houghton Mifflin. *This is an EXCELLENT example of a wordless book! It's bathtime and all the little piggies head into a pretty amazing contraption for quite the clean-up. [Grades K-adult] IDEA: Have students create their own text.*



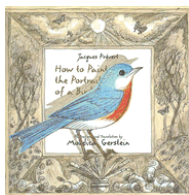
Holly Bloom's Garden, by Sarah Ashman and Nancy Parent, ill. by Lori Mitchell, (2004), Flashlight Press. *Holly wants to be a great gardener, but like Leo in the old picturebook, she's a late bloomer. With some creative advice from her father, Holly plants a garden that surprises everyone. [K-adult] Suggestion: Read and compare Leo the Late Bloomer, using a Venn diagram.*



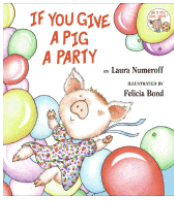
House in the Night by Susan Swanson, ill. by Beth Krommes, Houghton Mifflin, (2009). *This is the well-deserved 2008 Caldecott winner, although I had a few other personal favorites. The amazing illustrations are scratchboard with simple yellow watercolors in places. The simple pattern brings "This is the House that Jack Built" to mind. [Grades K-3] IDEA: Have students use scratchboard to illustrate a scene from a favorite book.*



How Many – Spectacular Paper Sculptures, by Ron Van der Meer, (2007), Robin Corey Books. *This book only has five pop-ups, but they are all amazing! Each is a work of art. Readers are encouraged to look for various shapes, colors, special effects. [Kindergarten – adult] IDEA: Have students try to answer many of the questions in the book such as "How many triangles are hollow?" Check out the website for this book at www.howmanypopups.com.*



How to Paint the Portrait of a Bird, illustrated and translated by Mordicai Gerstein, (2008), Roaring Brook Press. *This is a BEAUTIFUL book! It is a "meditation on art, creativity, and wonder that has meaning for every reader." [K-adult] IDEA: Find other books illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein (The Man Who Walked Between the Towers, and A Book, for example) and discuss his artistic style.*



If You Give a Pig a Party, by Laura Numeroff, (2005), Harper Collins. *The little pig from If You Give a Pig a Pancake is back. This time she wants to throw a party, and who knows where that will take us? IDEA: Have students work together writing and illustrating their own “If You Give a Pig . . .” stories. Rent the pig costume and throw your own party!*



I'm the Best Artist in the Ocean, Kevin Sherry, (2008), Dial Books. *This giant squid loves to draw! From fish to crabs to jellyfish, he can draw anything! [K-2] IDEA: Have students imitate the style of this book.*



Invention of Hugo Cabret, Brian Selznick, (2007), Scholastic Press. *This is one of a handful of novels I read in one evening! I love this book!!! It was my pick for the 2008 Newbery Medal and it won the Caldecott instead! Brian Selznick really pushes the boundaries of picture book with this one! Young Hugo is an orphan, a clock keeper, and a thief, who lives within the walls of the Paris train station in the early 1900's. [Grades 5-adult] IDEA: Listen to the novel without the pictures then discuss the differences.*



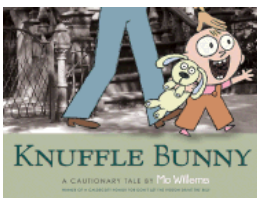
In the Fiddle Is a Song: A Lift-the-Flap Book of Hidden Potential, by Durga Bernhard, (2006), Chronicle Books. *There's hidden potential all around us! Inside an acorn is a tree waiting to grow! Inside the wheat is bread waiting to be baked. This book helps us see the potential not only in things around us, but in ourselves, as well! [Grades K-adult] IDEA: Make a list of other things that have potential. Try to make similar flaps.*



Ish, Peter H. Reynolds, (2004), Candlewick Press. *This is the clever sequel to one of my all-time favorites, The Dot. Ramon loves to draw until a nasty remark by his older brother takes away all joy. Fortunately, his little sister helps Ramon look at drawing, and at life, from a new perspective. IDEA: Create “ish” drawings. Our students have done this, and they are wonderful!*



Kick in the Head, A: An Everyday Guide to Poetic Forms, Paul Janeczko, ill. by Chris Raschka, (2005), Candlewick Press. *This is a GREAT collection of various types of poetry, from couplets to haikus, to double dactyls! The illustrations are hilarious. IDEA: Have students choose a type of poetry and write examples. Create a class collection including as many poetic forms as possible. Illustrate them.*



Knuffle Bunny, Mo Willems, (2004), Hyperion Books for Children. *Daddy takes Trixie and her Knuffle Bunny to the neighborhood laundromat, where things start to go wrong. The illustrations are cartoon characters in a background of Brooklyn photographs. IDEA: Imitate Willems' illustrations by having students draw and color themselves then place these illustrations in the foreground of black and white photo backgrounds of the school or their home. One teacher made an outstanding bulletin board of her students at various places in our school.*



Lily's Big Day, Kevin Henkes, (2006), Greenwillow.

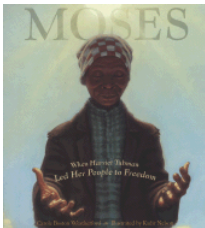
Lily is back! Her teacher is getting married, and Lily dreams of being the perfect flower girl. But things don't go as planned. [Grades K-3] IDEA: Read other Kevin Henkes books and discuss how he uses words and pictures to show how children truly feel in various situations.



Look! Look! Look!, Nancy Wallace & Linda Friedlaender, (2006), Marchall Cavendish Children. *Three mice (not blind) introduce children to art and to careful observation. The mice find a postcard of a famous painting. They take several close looks and learn about color, line, pattern, and shape. [Grades K+] IDEA - Elementary students could make similar observations with other famous works of art. Older students could write and illustrate a similar story about another work of art. Students could also experiment with using a variety of shapes to create various objects. Art teachers could use this book as an introduction to studying art more carefully, looking for shapes, patterns, colors, etc.*



Man Who Walked Between the Towers, The, by Mordicai Gerstein, (2003), Scholastic. *This Caldecott-winner chronicles the true story of Philippe Petit, a tightrope walker, who in 1974 walked across a cable stretched between the Two Towers in NYC. [Grades 3-adult] IDEA: Discuss the planning it took to accomplish this dream. Find pictures that provide an unusual perspective. Compare the illustrations in this book with those in Gerstein's other books.*



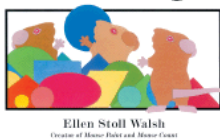
Moses, When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom, by Carol Weatherford, ill. by Nelson Kadir, (2006), Hyperion Books for Children. *This Caldecott Honor picture book is an inspiring tribute to Harriet Tubman and her courage, faith, and resilience. [Grades 3+] IDEA: Read other versions of the Harriet Tubman story, such as the 1996 Minty. Also read the "Addy" stories from the American Girls Collection. Compare other texts illustrated by Kadir.*



Mortimer's First Garden, Karma Wilson, ill. by Dan Andreasen, McElderry Books, (2009). *From the author of Bear Snores On comes the story of Mortimer, a mouse who believes seeds are for eating. He overhears people talking about a miracle that happens when seeds are planted in a garden, and he decides to give it a try! [Grades K-3]*

IDEA: 1) Read other books about seeds and plant growth, such as A Seed is Sleepy. 2) Make a list of amazing things in nature (spinning of a web, migration of butterflies, etc.)

Mouse Shapes



Mouse Shapes, by Ellen Stoll Walsh, (2007), Harcourt Books. *This book is a celebration of shapes, colors, and creativity! Three clever mice learn to manipulate shapes and turn them into just about anything they want. They even find a way to trick a sneaky cat!*

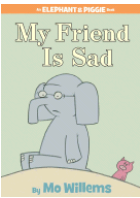
[Grades K-1] IDEA: Let children play with pattern blocks or other shapes to create their own characters and objects. Have children experiment with torn-paper illustrations.



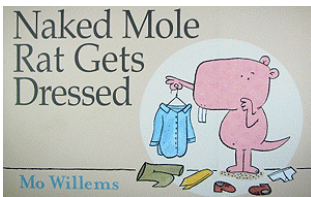
Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!, Candace Fleming, (2002), Atheneum. *Mr. McGreely will do just about anything to keep those pesky bunnies away from his beloved vegetables!. This one is hilarious!!! [K+] IDEA: Have students work in small groups and brainstorm ways for Mr. McGreely to keep out the bunnies and for ways the bunnies could get in. Vote on the most creative ways. Discuss how words and illustrations work together.*



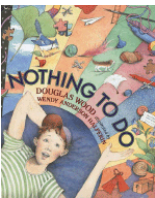
My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks and Other Funny Family Portraits, Hanoch Piven, (2007), Schwarz & Wade Books. *A young girl draws a picture of her family, but wants to say so much more. So, she uses everyday objects to represent characteristics of her family members. The results are amazing! This is also an excellent way to study similes. Visit the author's website at pivenworld.com. [K+] IDEA: Have each student create a self-portrait, or possibly a family portrait, using the illustration style of this author.*



My Friend Is Sad, by Mo Willems, (2007), Hyperion. *This "Elephant and Piggie" book describes the wonderful friendship between Gerald the Elephant and Piggie the Pig. In this episode, Piggie will stop at nothing to find a way to drag her friend out of his depression. [Grades K-adult]. IDEA: Compare the friendship of Elephant and Piggie with that of other famous duos, such as Frog and Toad.*



Naked Mole Rate Gets Dressed, by Mo Willems, (2009), Hyperion Books. *This book will really make kids giggle! It is not only very funny, but it sends the message that it's OK to be different. [Grades K-adult] IDEA: 1) Create a list of books that deal with being different. 2) Discuss the benefits of clothes.*



Nothing to Do, Douglas Wood, (2006), Dutton Books. *It can be wonderful when there is absolutely nothing to do! The illustrations cleverly incorporate shapes and patterns found in nature. IDEA: 1) Have students create of list of things they would love to do when there is nothing to do. 2) Have students imitate the shapes and patterns used in the illustrations. 3) Read this book with appropriate music playing in the background. Possibly have students select the appropriate music.*



OK Book, The, Amy Krouse Rosenthal & Tom Lichtenheld, (2007), Harper Collins. *There are so many things to try in this world! But what if you're not great? What if you're just OK? Is it OK to just be OK? This is one of my favorites! [All ages] Suggestion – Try drawing OK doing a variety of activities. Put these together into a book.*



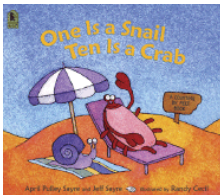
Old Bear, Kevin Henkes, (2008), Greenwillow. *While Old Bear sleeps, he has beautiful dreams of spring, summer, fall, and winter. When he awakes, it takes a moment to realize he's not dreaming. This is a beautifully illustrated book. [K-adult] IDEA: Have students imitate the style of these illustrations, possibly with bold marker outlines and softer colored pencils on the interior.*



One, Kathryn Otoshi, (2008), KO Kids Books. *This is a simple yet profound book about colors and numbers with an important message about bullying and what can happen when we stand up to a bully. [K-adult] IDEA: Have a group of students, or better yet, a group of teachers, act out this story. Each character could simply hold an appropriately colored piece of construction paper.*



One Boy, by Laura Vaccaro Seeger, (2008), Roaring Brook Press. *This is not only an excellent counting book, but also a hidden word adventure using die-cuts in a very creative manner. [Grades K-adult] IDEA: Have students make similar hidden words and share with each other.*



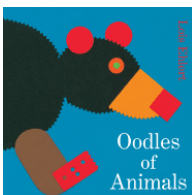
One Is a Snail, Ten Is a Crab: A Counting by Feet Book, April & Jeff Sayre, (2003), Candlewick Press. *This is a great book to read to Kindergarteners or 1st graders. It's even kind of fun with older students. IDEA: Work on helping kids count, not just by 1's, 2's, 5's, and 10's, but also by 4's (dogs) and 6's (spiders.)*



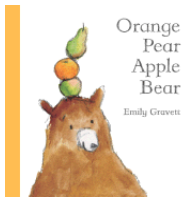
One Red Dot, David A. Carter, (2004), Little Simon. *This is one of my favorite pop-ups, very suitable for Kindergarten students or adults. Everyone loves finding the hidden red dot amid an amazing pop-up sculpture. IDEA: Have students try to create simple pop-ups. Have them research paper engineering. Share the sequels: Blue Two, Yellow Square, 600 Black Spots, and White Noise. They're all amazing!*



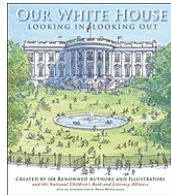
On Meadowview Street, Henry Cole, (2007), Greenwillow. *Caroline lives on Meadowview Street, a street with no meadow or view. She starts to make a little difference in her neighborhood and ends up changing her world. [K-adult] IDEA: This book works great with other "make the world a better place" stories like Miss Rumphius or The Flower Man.*



Oodles of Animals, Lois Ehlert, (2008), Harcourt. *In her signature paper-cut illustrations and short poems, Ehlert shares about a variety of animals. [K-1] IDEA: Have students create cut-paper illustrations of various animals. I had a 2nd-grade teacher create a great bulletin board of her students' cut-paper illustrations.*



Orange Pear Apple Bear, Emily Gravett, (2007), Simon & Schuster. *Using only four, OK, five words, Gravett presents a very clever and pleasing book. [K-3] IDEA: Have students choose four words and have them try to write and illustrate a similar book.*

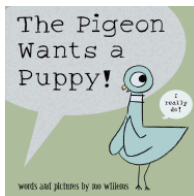


Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out, Created by 108(!) Renowned Authors and Illustrators and the National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance, (2008), Candlewick Press. *This is a truly amazing book! It chronicles many of the interesting events and residents of this house of presidents. As a picturebook lover, I really enjoy the clever illustrations. Authors and illustrators include Kate DiCamillo, Katherine Patterson, Jean Craighead George, Jerry Pinkney, Jerry Spinelli, and Chris Raschka. [Grades 5 – adult] IDEA: Have students choose a favorite illustrator and draw a president in that style. Put them on display or publish them as a book.*

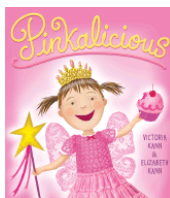


Over in the Jungle: A Rainforest Rhyme, by Marianne Berkes, ill. by Jeanette Canyon, (2007), Dawn Publications. *Sung to the tune of "Over in the Meadow," this one is sure to please youngsters and teach them about the amazing creatures in the rainforest. The illustrations are all done in polymer clay, using a painstaking process described at the end of the book. [Grades K-adult] IDEA – Have students try to*

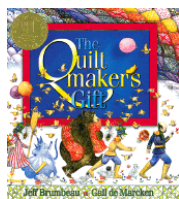
make an illustration using playdough, clay, or simply paper collage.



Pigeon Wants a Puppy, The, Mo Willems, (2008), Hyperion Books. *Our favorite pigeon (from Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus and The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog) is back, and he REALLY wants a puppy! What happens when the puppy arrives? [K-adult] IDEA: Have students write and illustrate sequels about what else the pigeon wants.*



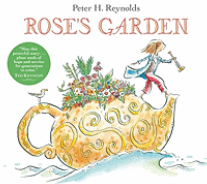
Pinkalicious, Victoria Kann & Elizabeth Kann, (2006), Harper Collins. *Pinkalicious loves everything pink! Even though her parents warn her not to eat too many pink things, she does. It has a great message about being yourself. [K-adult] Idea: Have each student choose one thing they are passionate about (like pink), and share what could happen if this passion got out of control. Kids love dressing up and sharing their passions, so maybe they could get in costume and make a presentation to the class. Read the sequels Purplelicious and Goldilicious.*



Quiltmaker's Gift, The (2000) and The Quiltmaker's Journey (2004), Jeff Brumbeau & Gail de Marcken, (2004), Orchard Books. *In the first book, a spoiled king learns an important lesson about giving. In the sequel, a brave young girl searches for happiness and learns lessons of love, kindness, and generosity. IDEA: Have students create a real or paper classroom quilt. Have them study a variety of quilting patterns.*



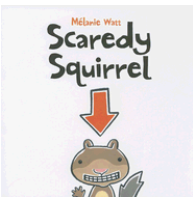
Ribbit!, Bender & Bender, (2007), HarperCollins. *This is a truly amazing book! The reader is encouraged to “flip and see just how many froggies there can be!” Each page is split into three parts: a head, a mouth, and a body. Readers will enjoy countless combinations of Froggy! [K-adult] IDEA: Have students create their own flip books that can be arranged in hilarious combinations.*



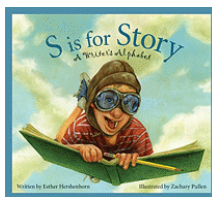
Rose's Garden, by Peter H. Reynolds, (2009), Candlewick Press. *Rose has traveled the world and is now ready to put down roots. She plants flower seeds in a neglected part of the city and waits. This book is brimming with faith, beauty, and the spirit of community. It is a tribute to Rose Kennedy. [K-adult] IDEA: Visit Peter Reynolds' website, www.peterreynolds.com.*



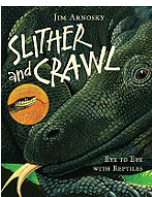
Runny Babbit, by Shel Silverstein, (2005), HarperCollins. *What a billy sook! Runny Babbit and his friends seem to get everything wackbards. “So if you say, ‘Let’s bead a rook that’s billy as can se,’ You’re talking’ Runny Babbit talk, just like mim and he.” [Grades 3-adult] IDEA – Have students write a story using Runny Babbit language.*



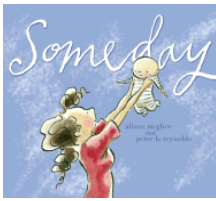
Scaredy Squirrel, by Melanie Watt, (2006), Kids Can Press. *This paranoid squirrel never leaves his nut tree because too many bad things could happen. But he does have a pretty elaborate plan in case something goes wrong. [K-adult] IDEA: Have students make elaborate illustrated plans like Scaredy Squirrel.*



S Is for Story: A Writer's Alphabet, by Esther Hershenthorn, ill. by Zachary Pullen. *Sleeping Bear Press has been creating wonderful alphabet books like this for years, and one needed to be included in this list! It is an A to Z journey through what it means to be a reader and a writer. [Grades 4-adult] Have a series of debates. Which story element is the most important? What part of the writing process is the most difficult? What makes a book a classic?*

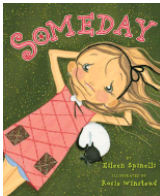


Slither and Crawl: Eye to Eye with Reptiles, by Jim Arnosky (2009), Sterling Publishing. *Jim Arnosky has created another masterpiece of nonfiction. The illustrations are great, and the fold-outs allow for some life-size looks at turtles, snakes, and lizards! [Grades 3-adult] IDEA: Let each child become an expert on one particular reptile and report to the class. Read other Jim Arnosky books. Visit his website, www.jimarnosky.com.*

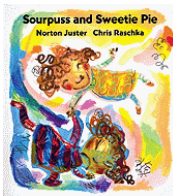


Someday, Alison McGhee, illustrated by Peter Reynolds, (2007), Atheneum Books. *This is a simple and pure picture book that will touch readers of all ages, especially moms and daughters. It deals with a mother's wishes for her child to live life at its fullest. [K+] IDEA: Sometimes I like to try reading an especially touching book with appropriate music in the background. Beethoven's Cantabile*

Movement from the Pathetique Sonata (No. 8) works well for this one.



Someday, by Eileen Spinelli, ill. by Rosie Winstead, (2007), Dial Books. *A little girl may be stuck being a girl for today, but SOMEDAY, she's really going to be something – an artist, an animal scientist, and a gymnast to name a few. [K-3] IDEA: Have students write about what they would someday like to be. Discuss what they could be doing right now to prepare to be successful in the future.*

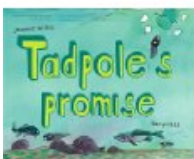


Sourpuss and Sweetie Pie, Norton Juster & Chris Raschka, (2008), Scholastic. *This is the lovely sequel to the 2006 Caldecott Medal winning The Hello Goodbye Window. Nanna and Poppy are never quite sure if their granddaughter will show up in a good or a bad mood.*

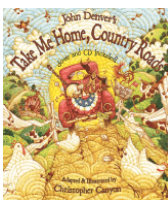
[Kindergarten – adult] IDEA: Have students contrast and possibly role play how they act when they are in good or bad moods. Read other books about moods.



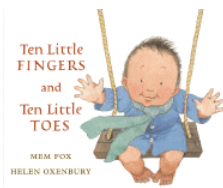
Sunshine on My Shoulders, by John Denver, ill. by Christopher Canyon, (2003), Dawn Publications. *A girl and her dad enjoy the simple pleasures of life together. Canyon captures the beauty of our world and of relationships with his heartwarming and charming illustrations. [Grades K-adult] IDEA: Learn the song and sing along! Discuss the choice of color in Canyon's illustrations. Discuss how the words, illustration, and in the case, the music, all work together to make a wonderful picturebook.*



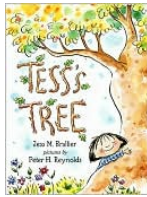
Tadpole's Promise, Jeanne Willis & Tony Ross, (2003), Atheneum Books for Young Readers. *A beautiful caterpillar meets a handsome tadpole. They fall in love, and she asks him (the tadpole) to never change. He promises to never change. You can guess how that's going to turn out. IDEA: Discuss the concepts of "irony" and surprise ending.*



Take Me Home, Country Roads, lyrics by John Denver, ill. by Christopher Canyon, (2005), Dawn Publications. *Canyon's quilt-like illustrations give new life to John Denver's already great lyrics. This is a wonderful celebration of nature and family, ending with a hayride and a hoedown. [Grades 4-adult] Teach the songs to the kids and let them sing along. Follow each vehicle as it makes its way to the reunion.*



Ten Little FINGERS and Ten Little TOES, Mem Fox & Helen Oxenbury, (2008), Harcourt. I smile every time I read this one! This book is a celebration of “baby fingers, baby toes, and the joy they – and the babies they belong to – bring to everyone, everywhere, all over the world!” IDEA: Discuss how babies around the world are the same. Try to draw babies’ fingers and toes in a variety of settings.



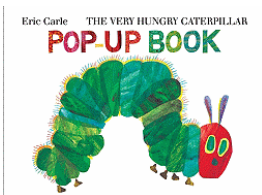
Tess's Tree, by Jess Brallier, pictures by Peter H. Reynolds, (2009), Harper Collins. *Tess is heartbroken when the old tree she loves is damaged by a storm. Tess decides to hold a memorial service for the tree. The text and warm pictures work together to help deal with the loss of a loved one. [Grades K-adult] Have students plan a memorial for something else they love – a pet, a favorite toy, etc.*



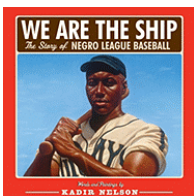
There is a Bird on Your Head!, by Mo Willems, (2007), Hyperion. I love ALL the “Elephant and Piggie” books, but this one is my favorite! Piggie helps Elephant know what to do when a bird lands on his head. IDEA: Have two students (or two adults) act out the story as Readers’ Theater. This is always more fun than simply reading it. This works well for all the Elephant and Piggie books! Since there are so many great “Elephant and Piggie” books, consider making simple masks or props to help in the storytelling.



Today I Will Fly!, by Mo Willems, (2007), Hyperion. This “Elephant and Piggie” book contrasts the optimistic enthusiasm of Piggie, who wants to fly, with the pessimism of Gerald the Elephant. [Grades K-adult] IDEA: These books are all great to act out or perform as Readers Theater. They also are great starters for writing, since they typically focus on a single idea.



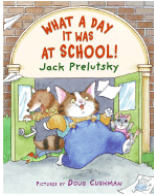
Very Hungry Caterpillar Pop-Up Book, by Eric Carle, paper engineering by Keith Finch, (2009), Philomel Books. In honor of the 40th anniversary of The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Eric Carle’s 80th birthday, this classic pop-up was created. While staying true to the original story and illustrations, the pop-up won’t disappoint. [Grades K-adult] IDEA: 1) Compare and contrast the pop-up book with the original. 2) Read other excellent butterfly books such as Butterfly, Butterfly by Petr Horacek. 3) Have students try to create art using tissue paper in the trademark Eric Carle style.



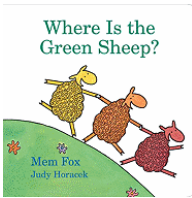
We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball, written and illustrated by Kadir Nelson, (2008), Jump at the Sun Publishing. What an amazing book! The story is fascinating, but it is Nelson’s incredible oil paintings that give this book a larger than life feel. IDEA: Research Negro League Baseball and racial barriers in sports.



Watch Me Throw the Ball (Another Elephant and Piggie book), by Mo Willems, (2009), Hyperion. *Gerald the Elephant is serious about throwing the ball. But Piggie is more serious about having fun! This is another great book about this unlikely friendship. (These are great for kids or adults to act out!) [Grades K-adult] IDEA: 1) Discuss what makes “Elephant and Piggie” books so funny. 2) Compare and contrast Elephant and Piggie. 3) Compare and contrast Elephant and Piggie to other friends like Frog and Toad.*



What a Day It Was at School!, by Jack Prelutsky, pictures by Doug Cushman, (2006), Greenwillow Books. *I needed to choose one great book of poetry for this list, and this is it! It includes some hilarious poems about homework, music class, and spelling tests. [Grades 3-adult] IDEA: Choose a poem such as “I Wish I’d Studied Harder” and write a similar poem. Write school poems using other poetic forms such as couplets or limericks.*



Where is the Green Sheep?, Mem Fox & Judy Horacek, (2004), Harcourt Books. *Primary students will enjoy this cleverly illustrated search for a green sheep. This is one of my favorite books to read to Kindergarteners! [K-1] IDEA: 1) Discuss opposites. Think of and illustrate other opposite situations for the sheep. 2) Write a sequel to the book! 3) Have young students perform this for older students.*



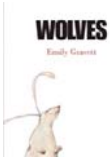
Willow, Denise Brennan-Nelson & Rosemarie Brennan, ill. by Cyd Moore, (2008). Sleeping Bear Press. *I love this book!!! Miss Hawthorn is a nightmare of an art teacher who doesn’t know what to do with Willow, who colors outside the lines and paints pink trees and blue apples. This is a book about creativity and the amazing influence an imaginative child can have. [Grades K-adult] IDEA: Have children choose a page from the book and try to illustrate something in a similar style. Discuss how a child can have an impact on an adult.*



Winter’s Gift, Jane Monroe Donovan, (2004), Sleeping Bear Press. *This is a heart-warming Christmas story of an elderly gentleman grieving over the loss of his beloved wife of many years. A snowstorm brings an unusual guest to the old man. This is a story about comfort, companionship, and hope. Get out the Kleenex. IDEA: Discuss grief and brainstorm ideas that might help a grieving person.*



Winter’s Tale: An Original Pop-Up Journey, Robert Sabuda, (2005), Little Simon. *This is one of my favorite pop-up books! A mysterious narrator tells of the beauty of winter. The pop-ups in this one are beautiful. IDEA: Have students try to look for clues and guess the narrator.*



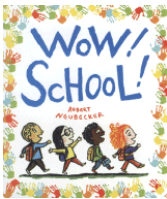
Wolves, Emily Gravett, (2006), Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing. *Rabbit checks out a book on wolves. On his way home, he is so engrossed in reading that he doesn't notice the sinister bushy-tailed figure creeping up on him. The story has two surprise endings! [Grades 3+] IDEA: 1) Discuss how this book combines fiction and nonfiction. 2) Discuss "dramatic irony," in which the reader knows something a character doesn't know, and why that is so funny.*



Wonderful Happens, The, by Cynthia Rylant, ill. by Coco Dowley, (2000), Simon & Schuster. *This lovely book celebrates the many wonderful things that happen in our world. [K-adult] Brainstorm other wonderful things that happen in our world.*



woof! woof!, David A. Carter, (2006), Little Simon. *This is a clever guessing game story made with simple shapes, bold colors, and cut-out pages that come together for a surprising ending. [K+] IDEA: Have students use simple shapes (consider pattern blocks) to create other animals. Or, learn how tangrams can be positioned to create a variety of shapes including animals.*



Wow! School!, by Robert Neubecker, (2007), Hyperion Books for Children. *Experience the wonder of the first day of school from a child's eye view. [K-1] IDEA: Discuss what else is wonderful about school. Illustrate it.*