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Connecting Learning Assures Successful Students

Upcoming Events

Special Needs Day

Thursday, February 5, 2009

Related Arts Day

Friday, February 20, 2009

Support Team Day

Friday, March 13, 2009

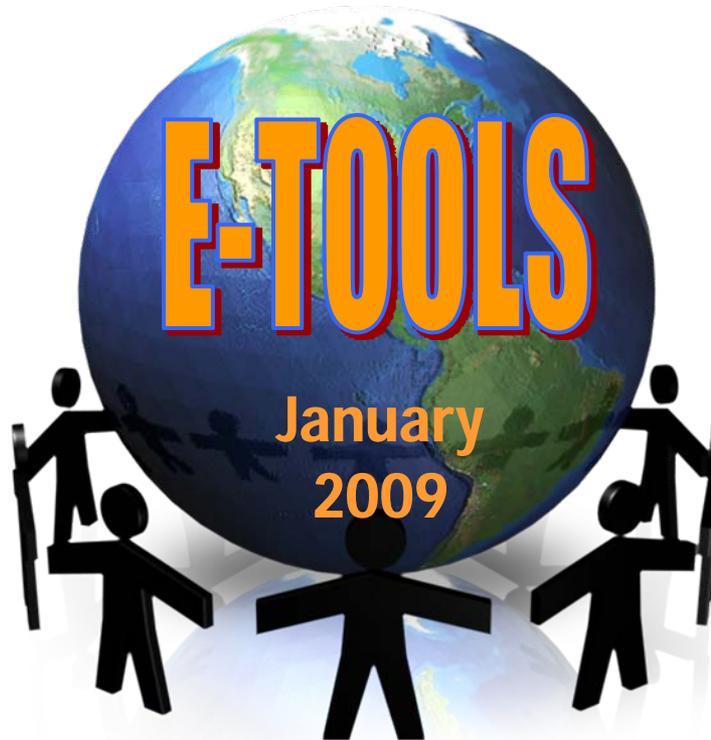
Literacy Strategies that Work! with Barbara Pedersen, Jim McMillan & Ruby Butler

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Top 10 Behavior Tips Workshop at Bethel College with Barbara Pedersen, Jim McMillan & Ruby Butler

Monday, March 23, 2009

To register please contact
the C.L.A.S.S. Office.





January Issue: Favorite Books

"I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book." - Groucho Marx

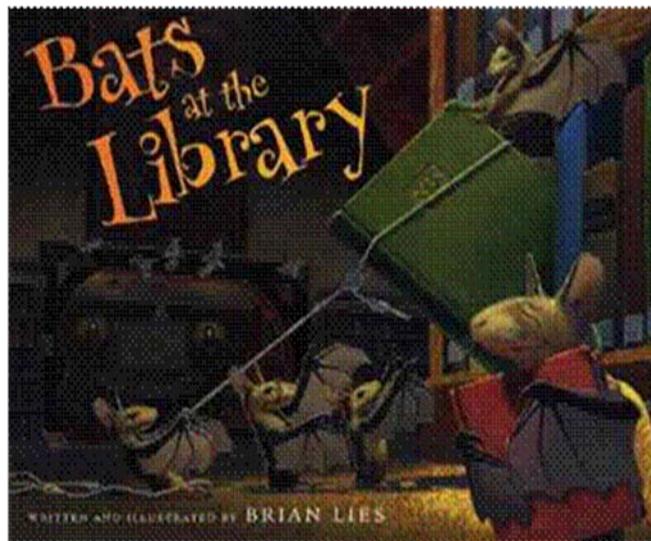
Welcome to C.L.A.S.S. ETools!

Welcome to the January issue of E-Tools. This is one of our favorite issues of E-Tools each year. We are going to share with you just a few of our favorite books that were published in 2008. Our criteria is a little different than other "Best" lists because we are thinking about how you might use these books with students in your classrooms. While our list is primarily made up of picture books, we've provided you with several examples of how you can use these books with students of all age. The last page we'll share with you some links to others "Best of 08" lists. As with any book we recommend, we always suggest you read the book completely before sharing it with students. You know your students best to know if it is appropriate for them. Look for these and many more in your library media center or public library. With so many books published each year, we hope you have found some new favorites, too. Remember, the best book is always the one that you share with a child.

Bats at the Library

by Brian Lies; illustrated by Brian Lies

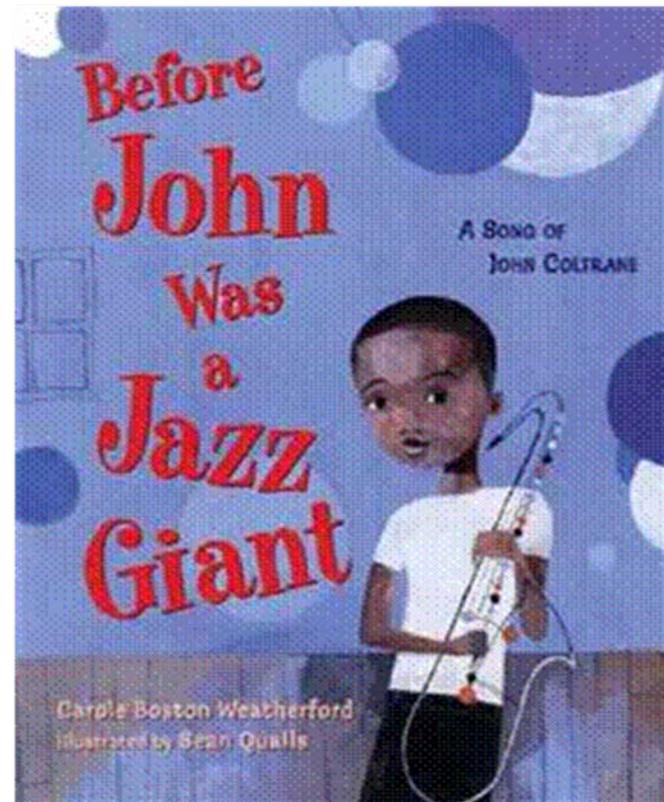
- Description: In this rhyming picture book, Lies tells the story of a group of bats who are bored and discovered a window has been left open in the library for a whole new adventure.
- Possible Activities:
 - Make a list of all the rhyming words in the book. Give each learning club and ask them to come up with new rhyming words for each one.
 - Use the premise of the story as a story starter for students. What would happen if you left the window to your classroom open? What would the bats find the enjoy?
 - Research project: What other kind of animals might sneak in to an open window? Why?



Before John was a Jazz Giant

by Carole Boston Weatherford; Illustrated by Sean Qualls

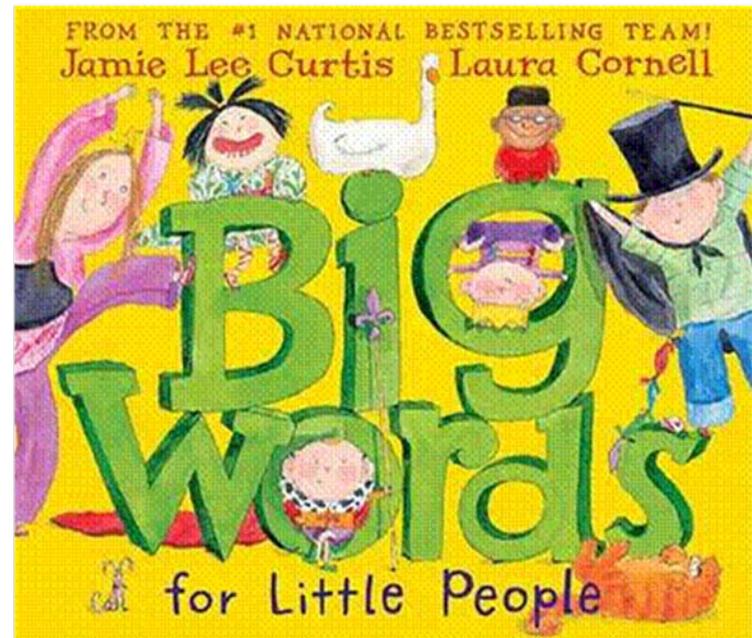
- Description: In this picture books, Weatherford shares some of the sights, sounds, and events that impacted the life of John Coltrane.
- Possible Activities:
 - There are lots of words ending in –ing in this book. Make a list. How do they add to the writing? Do they make the story more interesting?
 - Older students could use this as a pattern for writing a biography. Talk about how events in our past influence our future.
 - For example:
 - Before Beethoven was a Great Composer
 - Before A.J. Foyt was a Race Legend
 - Before John F. Kennedy was a President
 - Listen to the music of John Coltrane while reading the story. Feel how the author was able to include the feeling of his music in her words.



Big Words for Little People

by Jamie Lee Curtis; illustrated by Laura Cornell

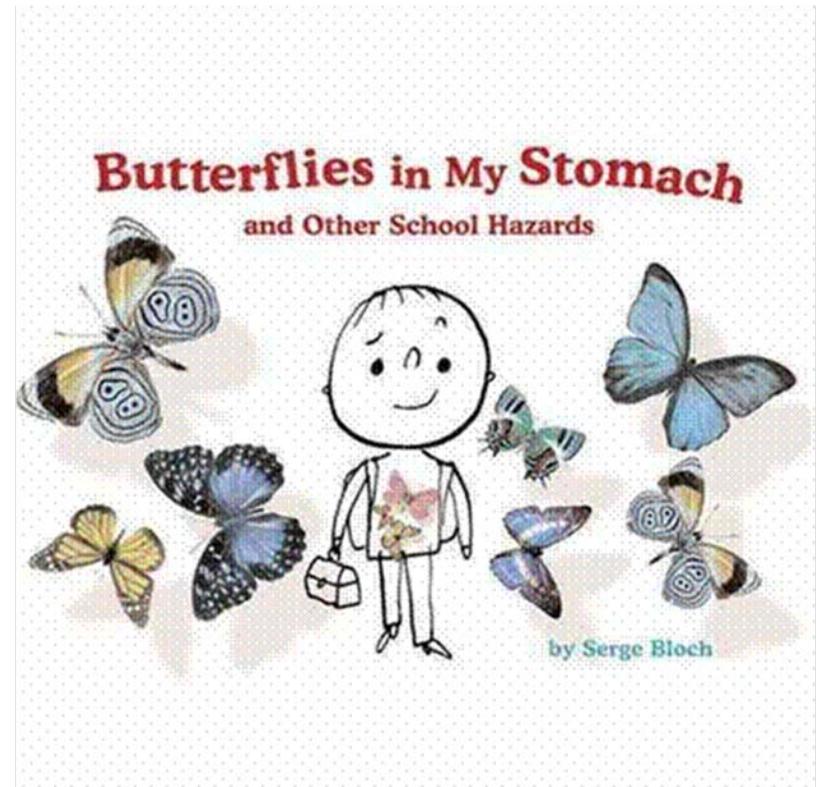
- Description: Big Words gives students a variety of words like privacy, stupendous, patience, cooperation, etc. and gives them both a visual and text definition.
- Possible Activities:
 - Students can start their own book of Big Words. Have them create both a visual and a text definition. Students can be encouraged to use some of their big words in their own writing.
 - Have students each take a Lifeline and make your own classroom book about what those Lifelines mean to your students. After the book is compiled, each week read one of them as part of a Community Circle to review and discuss the Lifelines.



Butterflies in My Stomach

by Serge Bloch

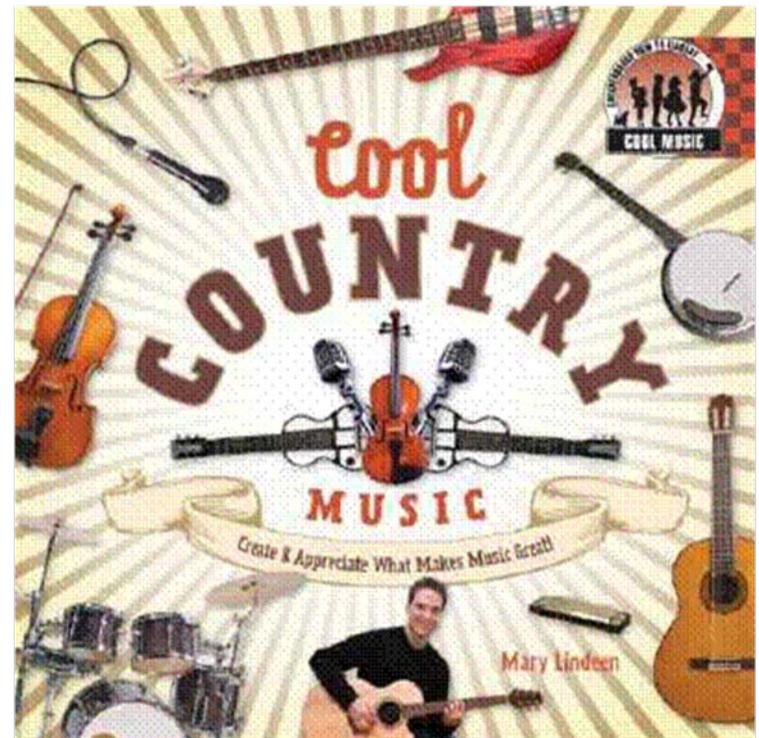
- Description: Filled with various idioms and phrases, the book shares the story of a boy and his first day of school where he gets confused about some of the language used.
- Possible Activities:
 - Each student or learning club could pick one of the idioms from the book and write their own story or adventure.
 - Use some of the idioms from the story in your welcome message to students. Ask them to illustrate the idioms. After you've read the book, ask students to compare their illustrations to those of the author.



Cool Music (Series)

Publisher: ABDO Publishing Co.

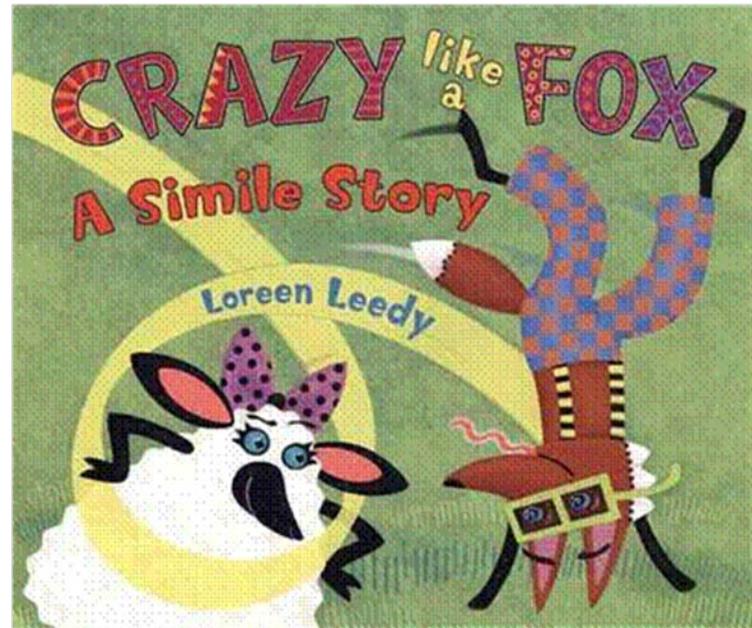
- Description: This series of books contains a volume on classical, hop-hop, reggae, rock, Latin, and country music. Each volume gives a description, famous people from that genre, and other interesting tidbits.
- Possible Activities:
 - Research some of the famous people from the various genres of music. Why are they popular? What made them interested in music?
 - In the country volume, there includes directions on how to major your own banjo (with adult assistance). Have students make instruments to use in the classroom throughout the year.
 - Talk with the music teacher to see when they might be talking about various kinds of music. Play some of it each day while students are working on their morning message to connect with what they are learning in the music classroom.



Crazy Like a Fox

by Loreen Leedy

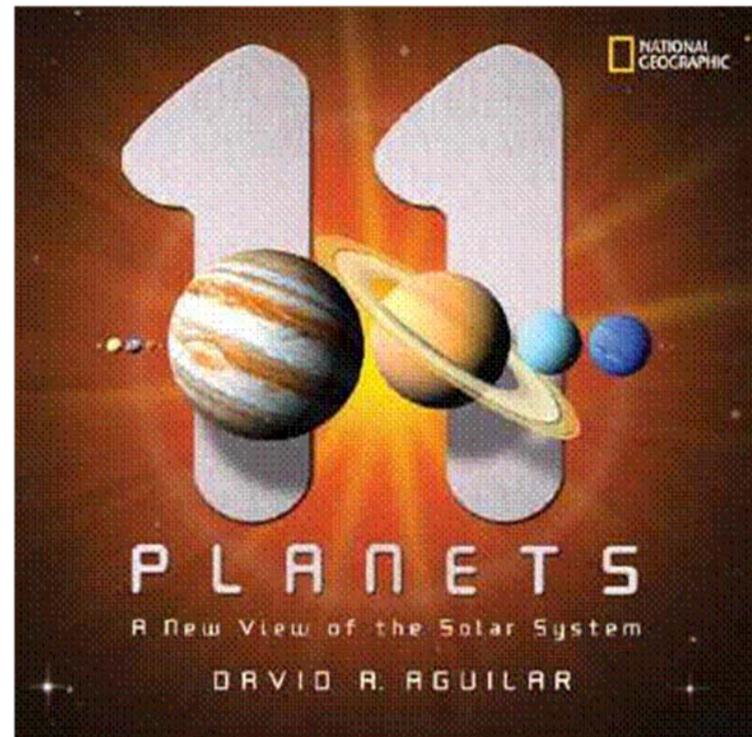
- Description: In this simile story each page ends with like... Or as... and gives the reader a chance to guess the rest of the simile.
- Possible Activities:
 - Check out Loreen Leedy's website <www.loreenleedy.com/books/crazyfox.html> She has created a list of various similes and encourages children to illustrate their own.
 - Leedy also has a Book Trailer posted online that students can watch to preview the book. Students could create their own trailers of other books they've read. (Make sure to follow all copyright guidelines.)
 - When reading the story with the students before you turn each page, brainstorm a possible list of ways the simile might be finished. Use chart paper or the dry erase board and then circle the one that Leedy used. Students could then use some of the others in their own writing.



11 Planets

by David R. Aguilar

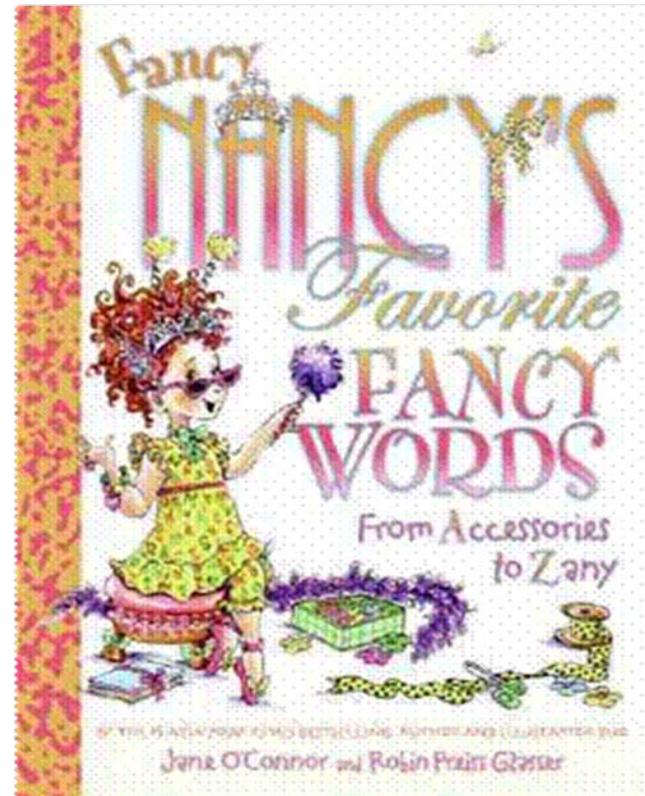
- **Description:** Aguilar writes in understandable text a very updated book about our solar system. He talks about the 8 major planets and the 3 dwarf planets (include Pluto). Each planet has a page of facts and information as well as images and diagrams to help the reader.
- **Possible Activities:**
 - Research the 11 planets Aguilar discusses in his book. Students could work in teams of two or three to see if they can find additional information to share with the class at community circle.
 - Have a class discussion on why scientists are changing their minds -- such as why Pluto is no longer a major planet.



Fancy Nancy's Favorite Fancy Words

by Jane O'Connor and Robin Preiss Glasser

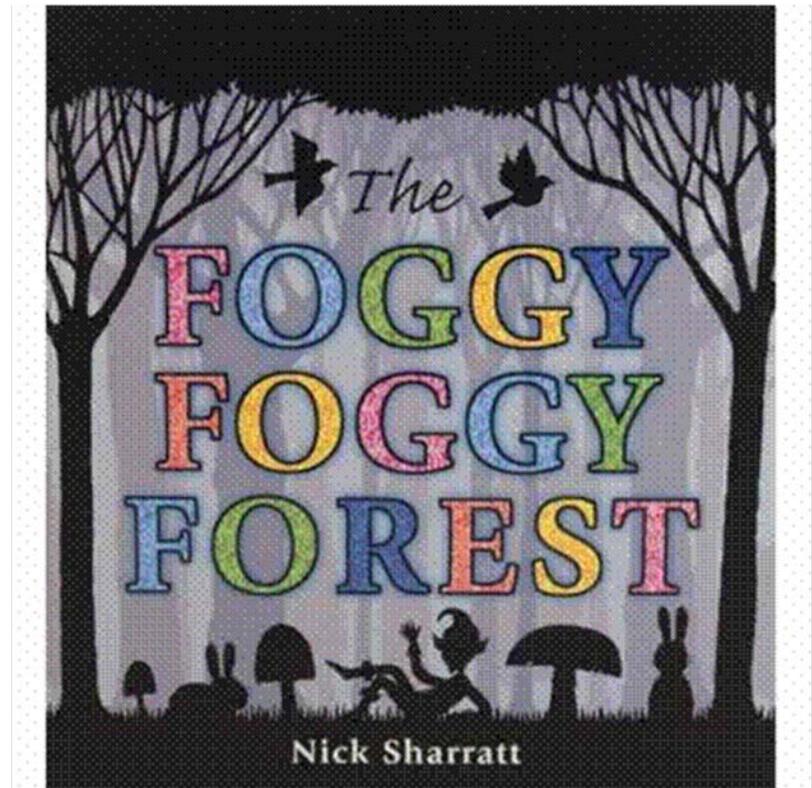
- Description: This is an amazing alphabet with some terrific new words for students.
- Possible Activities:
 - Fancy Nancy has created her own ABC book based on fabulous words. Take another famous character and ask students to imagine what type of ABC book they might create. Max from *Where the Wild Things Are* might create a wild and adventurous ABC book or maybe the Fly from *Diary of a Fly* might have all insect related words. Students could work in their learning clubs to write one of these new ABC books.
 - This would be another great book to use when introducing students to a thesaurus. How could they use some of these words to make their writing more interesting?



The Foggy Foggy Forest

by Nick Sharratt

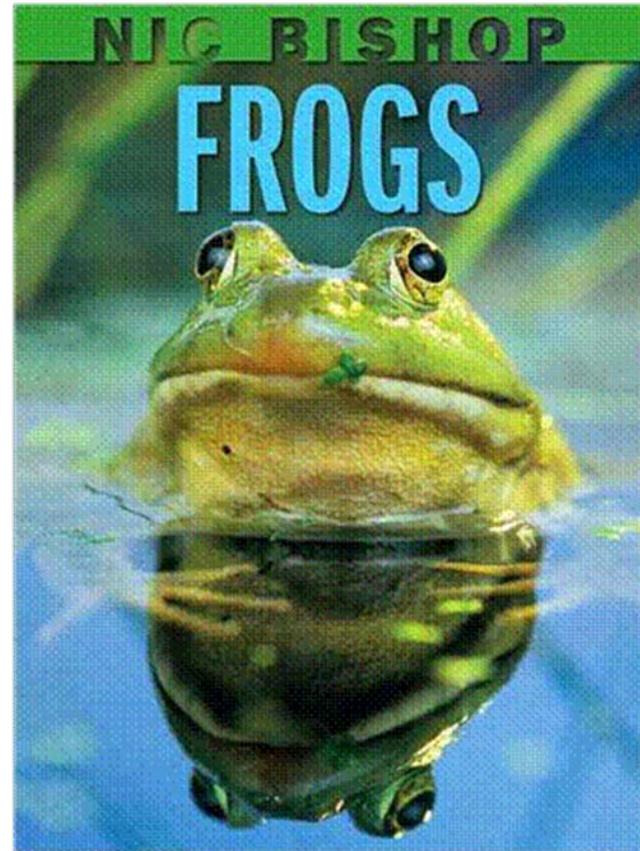
- Description: Use thin and almost see-through paper, Sharratt has created a mysterious tale as the reader has to guess by looking at the all black illustration. When you turn the page, you see what the author has “hidden” in the forest.
- Possible Activities:
 - As part of a morning message, project some of these pictures on the wall using a document camera or overhead. Ask students to predict what they might be seeing in the Foggy, Foggy Forest.
 - Give students their own black paper and see if they put together a silhouette theme paper for others to guess what might be out in the Foggy Foggy Forest!



Frogs

by Nic Bishop

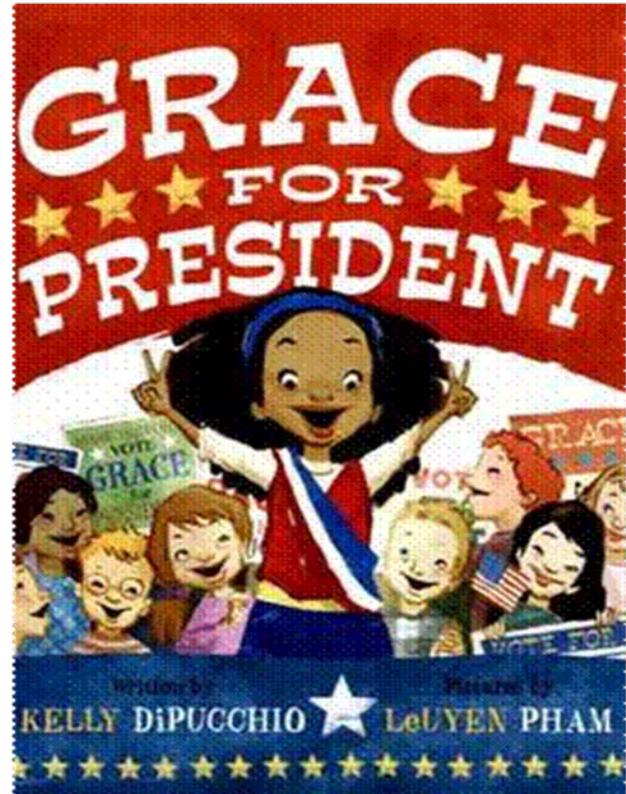
- Description: Bishop's amazing non-fiction books are known for their striking photographs as well as informative text.
- Possible Activities:
 - There is so much to see and read in one of Bishop's non-fiction books. First read through the book, only read the highlighted text. Then, go back and read it again in depth. Finally, make another pass through to check out the photo captions. A great way to model for students that sometimes it is important to go back and reread parts of a book.
 - Bishop lets his photographs tell part of the story of frogs. Ask students to use some of their own photographs in a story. How do the pictures help to explain or enhance the text?



Grace for President

by Kelly DiPucchio; illustrated by LeUyen Pham

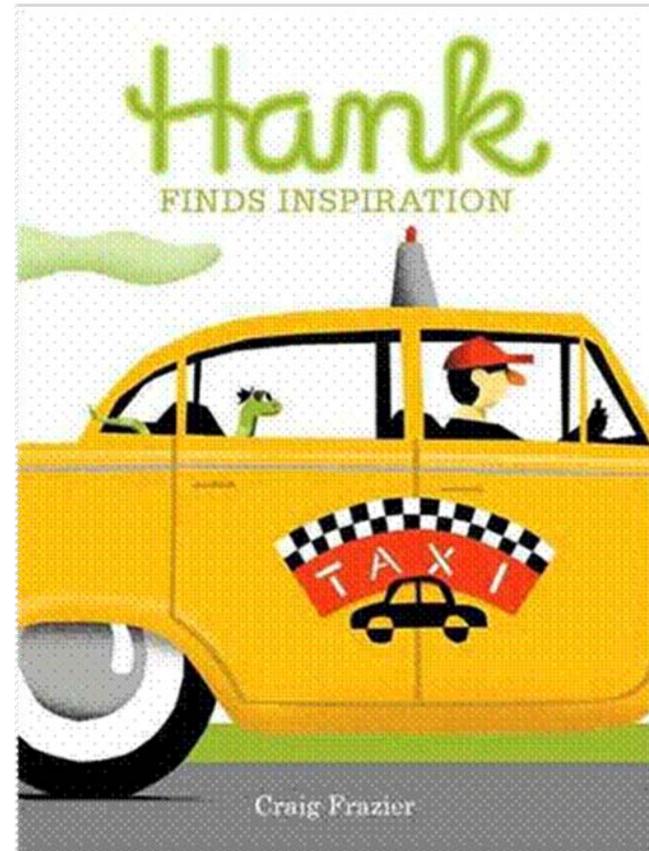
- Description: This was one of a tons of books published in 2008 about being President. This book does an excellent job of explaining the Electoral College.
- Possible Activities:
 - Use this book in even non-election years to explain how our election system works in the United States. Students could participate in a mock election just like the students in the book with each one representing a state and electoral votes.
 - Read this book prior to students electing representatives to student council. Talking about the campaigns and making promises. Is it important to keep those promises? Should you promise something you can't deliver?



Hanks Finds Inspiration

by Craig Frazier

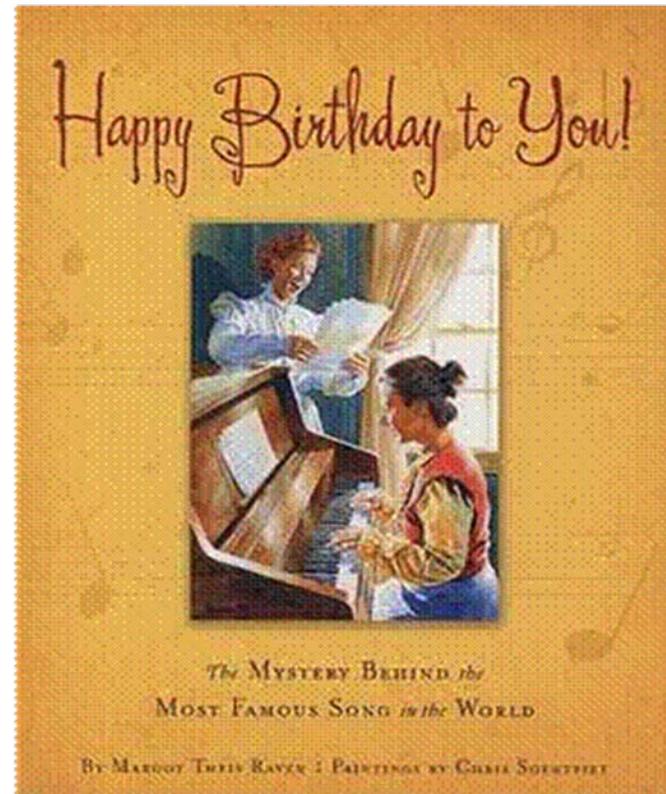
- Description: Hank the Snake is looking for inspiration. First he needs to find out where you get it, what it is, and then find his own. This book leads us through Hanks' journey.
- Possible Activities:
 - Before reading the book, ask students what they think inspiration is. Record their thoughts. After the book, ask students again and record their thoughts. Compare the two – What is the same from both definitions? What is different?
 - Ask students to think of something, someone or someplace that inspires them. Ask them to bring in a photo and tape it to their desks. Remind them that when they run out of ideas or are frustrated, look down at the inspiration for help!



Happy Birthday to You!

By Margot Theis Raven; illustrated by Chris Soentpiet

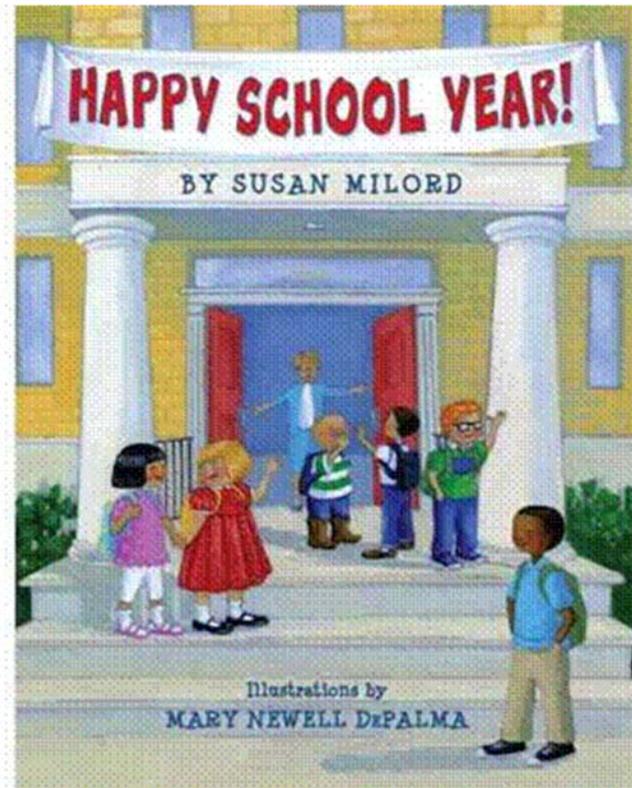
- Description: This book tells the true story of how the song Happy Birthday to You was written as a Kindergarten greeting around 1890.
- Possible Activities:
 - Originally published in 1893, the song was part of Kindergarten lessons written by Patty and Mildred Hill.. However, as the song took off, the two ladies responsible for the words and lyrics were not credited. It wasn't until 1935 after one of the Hill sisters sued for it being used without crediting the sisters, that they sued and were awarded the full copyright of the song. Anytime the song is now used commercially, they must request permission and pay a royalty to the Hill Foundation. This is a great book to talk with students about copyright and getting permission to use others work. Use it as a spring board for a class discussion or community circle topic.



Happy School Year

by Susan Milford; illustrated by Mary DePalma

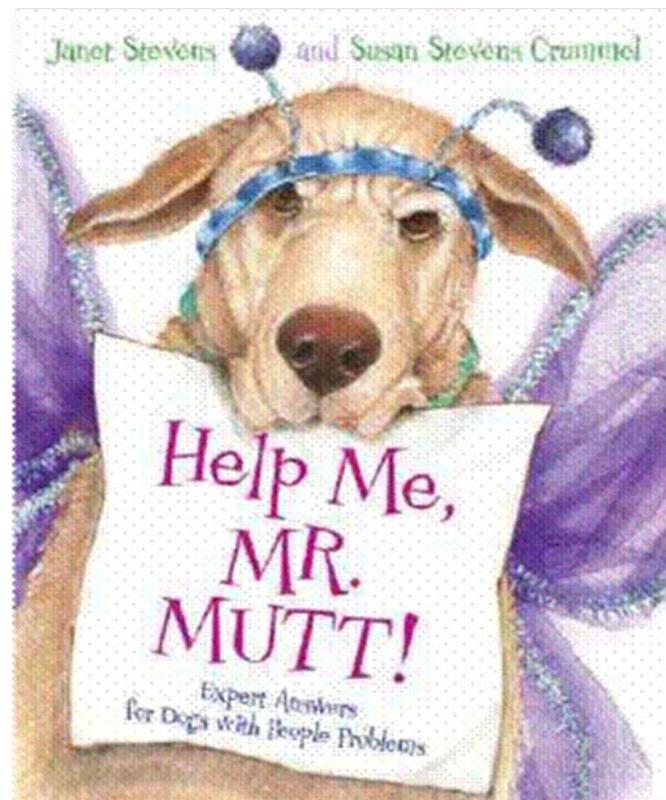
- Description: Milford has a wonderful story about the first day of school and kicking it off right. They are going to all have the best school year ever!
- Possible Activities:
 - This is a great book to read with students to start off the year. In the story the principal asks them all to make a wish for a great school year. Ask your students to do the same. What is one thing they are going to do to have a great school year?
 - Consider reading it at the semester break. What are students going to do to have a great second semester?
 - Read it at the end of the year as a story starter for students. Ask them to write... This was the best school year ever because... as they reflect on the end of the school year.



Help Me, Mr. Mutt

by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel

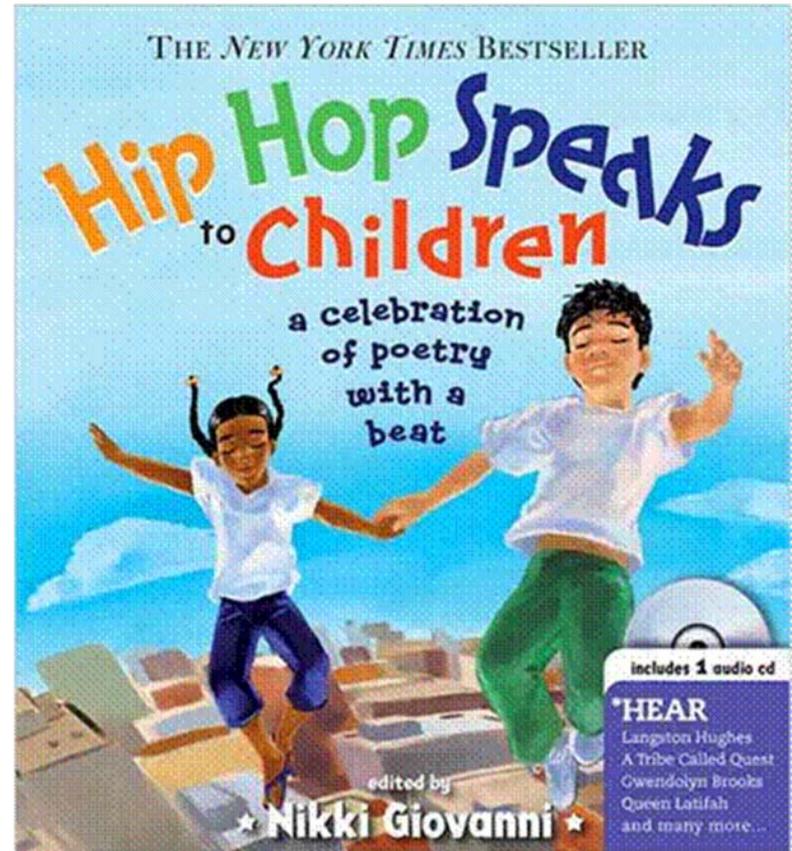
- Description: Written as a series of letter, readers all over the country write to Mr. Mutt to ask for his advice on how to deal with the people in their lives...oh and there are a few mentions about cats, too.
- Possible Activities:
 - Ask students to pretend that they are dogs and write their own letters to Mr. Mutt.
 - Talk about how the authors had to imagine what it was like to be a dog to write this book. It is a great book for talking about the perspective of the story from the viewpoint of different characters.
 - To provide equal time to cats, maybe students might want to write in and ask some questions to Queenie or Mr. Mutt.



Hip Hop Speaks to Children

edited by Nikki Giovanni

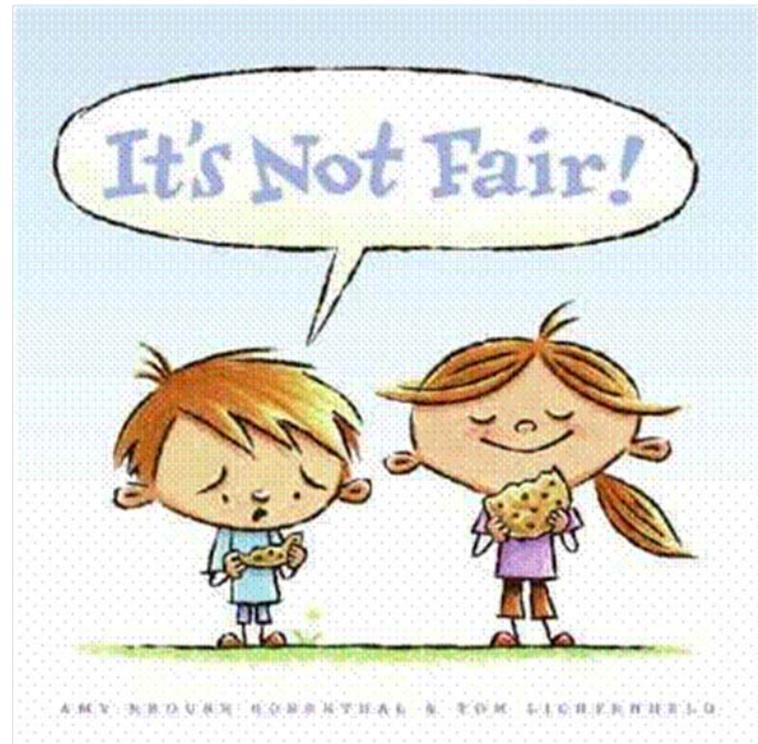
- Description: An amazing collection of Hip Hop – “poetry with a beat” has been compiled by Giovanni. Not only is this a book to be read, but the CD that comes with it brings the sounds of the poetry alive.
- Possible Activities:
 - Take one of the poems that are read by two different readers such as “We Real Cool” by Gwendolyn Brooks or “I Have a Dream” by Martin Luther King, Jr. Compare how a different reader makes the poem sound different.
 - Some of these poems have music and some don’t. Do they need it? Can you hear the music in your head?
 - Many of these poems give the feeling of what caused the author to write them. Older students might research the time period or the issues surrounding the poems to get a deeper understanding.



It's Not Fair!

By Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld

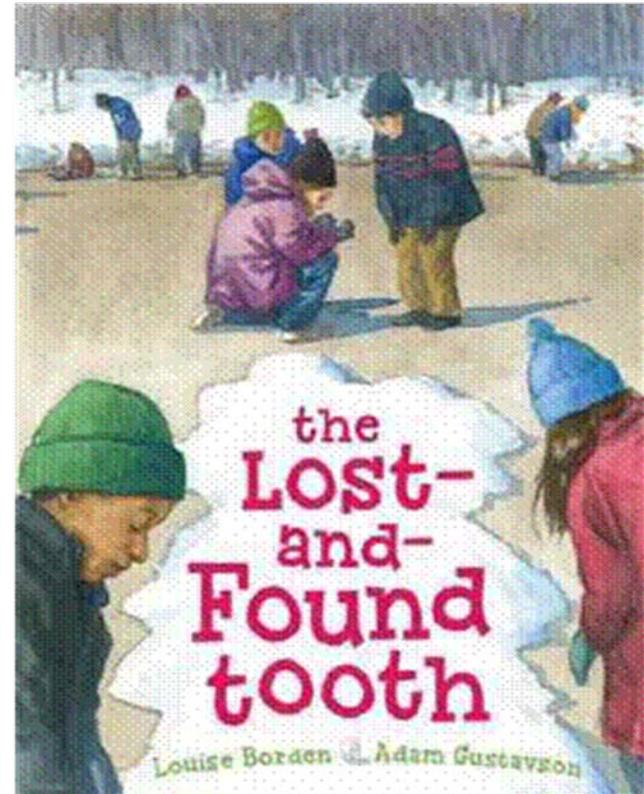
- Description: In this book, the authors talk about the concept of life not being fair. It's true for children, adults, and as the authors point out many other creatures and things in the world.
- Possible Activities:
 - When having trouble in your classroom, create an "It's Not Fair" box. Students can write when they're feeling something is not fair, and then drop it in the box. This gives them some time to process and then hopefully let go and move on. Teachers can in turn periodically read through them to see if there is a problem in their room they need to address.
 - It's good for us to see that we're not alone. Ask students to brainstorm other things not used in the story that might not be fair. Are there things we can control or change? How do we try to solve them? This is a great book for community circle discussions.



The Lost-And-Found Tooth

by Louise Borden; illustrated by Adam Gustavson

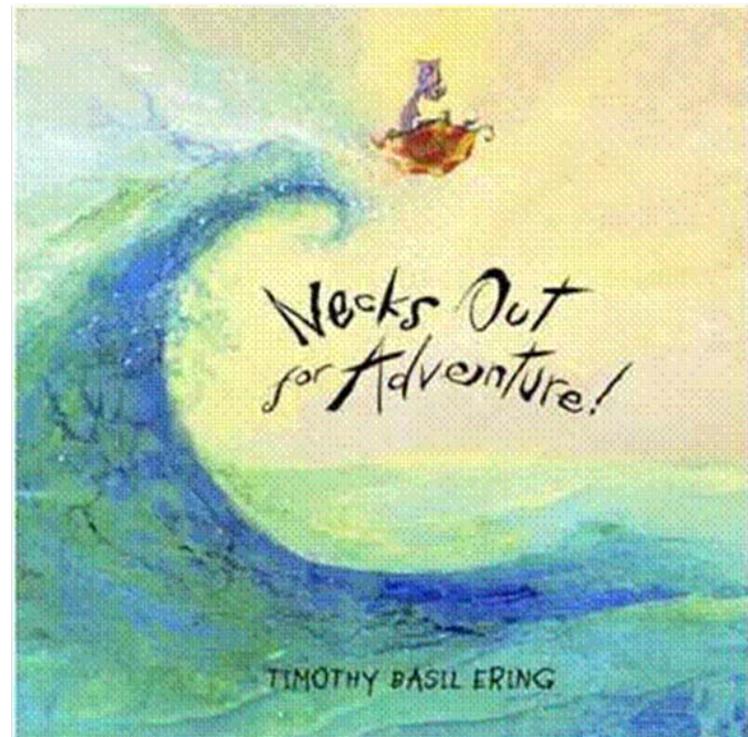
- Description: In this book, Lucy is the only kid in second grade who hasn't lost a tooth. Her teacher, Mr. Reilly, teaches them to record the date, time, and what happened as teeth are lost. In the end, Lucy has a great story to tell.
- Possible Activities:
 - Mr. Reilly believes there are three skills all second graders should know – Know the Date; Tell Time; and Share Stories. He has his students record those things for every tooth lost over the school year. It makes for some great writing. What type of things happen in your classroom where students could record the date, time, and story? What kind of stories are there to be found in your classroom this year?



Necks Out for Adventure

by Timothy Basil Ering

- Description: The Wiggleskins motto has always been “Necks out to Eat; Necks in to Hide” until they are all taken away except Edwin who must have a new motto “Necks out for Adventure” to save them all.
- Possible Activities:
 - This is a great story about taking risks. What kinds of risks have students taken? The answers will obviously vary from grade level and older students will have a better grasp of this topic. Ask each student to think of one thing this year, this semester, this week, where they are going to stick their “Neck out for Adventure”. You may want to quantify that by saying a positive adventure and not one that would go against our school procedures.



One

by Kathryn Otoshi

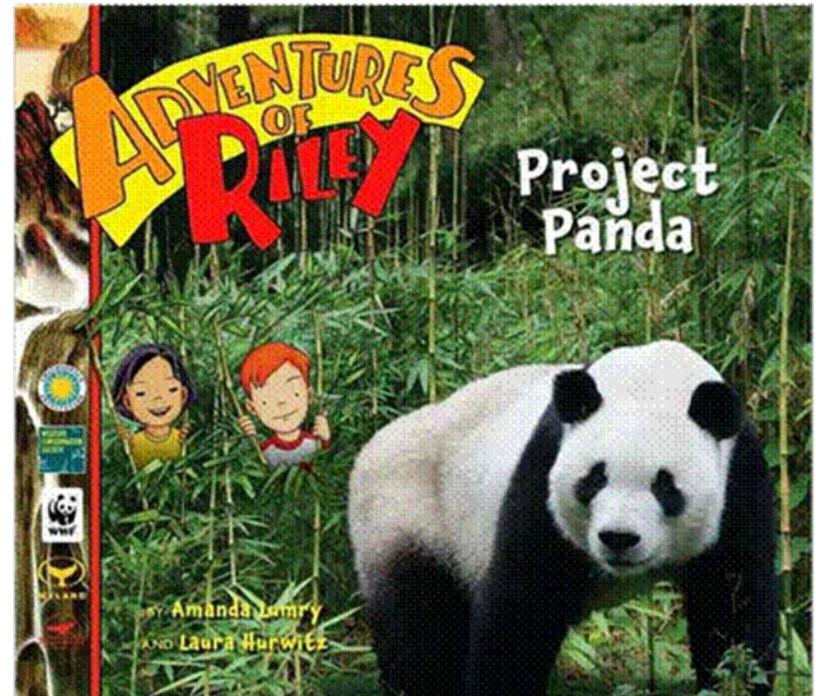
- **Description:** This is the classic bully story told with colors. Blue is mostly a happy color except when he is near red who is a bully who keeps growing until “one” comes to stop him. It just shows it takes just one to stop a bully.
- **Possible Activities:**
 - This is another great community circle book. It shows the power 1 person can have to be a bully or 1 person to stop a bully. It also ends with everyone forgiving red and letting him be their friend again. Some possible discussion questions might be:
 - Why did red keep getting bigger every time he picked on blue?
 - Why did blue’s friends not saying anything to red?
 - Why was 1 not afraid of red?
 - Why did they let red come back to their group at the end?



Adventures of Riley (Series)

by Amanda Lumry and Laura Hurwitz

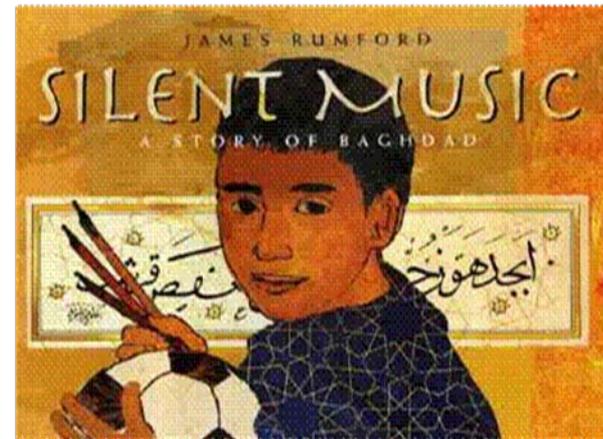
- Description: In these fictional tales, Riley goes on adventures with his Aunt and Uncle all over the world. In the one picture to the right, they go looking for Panda bears in China.
- Possible Activities:
 - These books are a combination of illustrations and real photos. Ask students to use real photos that they've taken or ones that are copyright free online and then add their own illustrations of the characters from their stories.
 - All of these books focus on animals from around the world. Many experts provide additional information in the book, but take time for students to research the animals. What additional information can they find?



Silent Music

by James Rumford

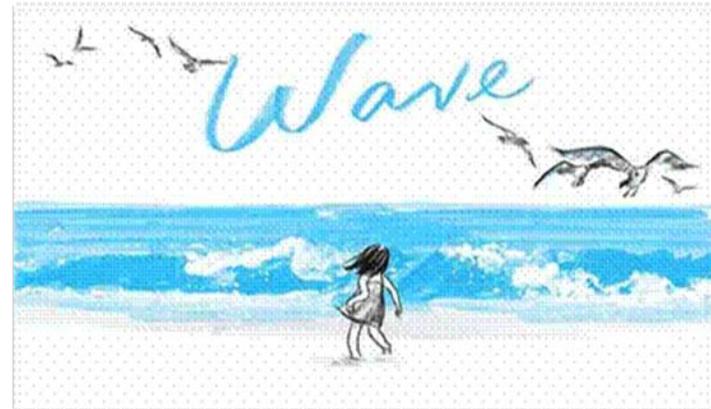
- Description: This is the beautifully illustrated story of a young boy who loves calligraphy and much like his hero Yakut from the 1200s, he uses his writing to hide from the bombings of 2003 in Baghdad.
- Possible Activities:
 - The calligraphy in the book is amazing. Sharing the images with students. Look for examples of calligraphy writing in English as well. It is a beautiful art form.
 - Possible discussion question might be:
 - What do you do when you are trying to avoid something terrible?
 - What helps distract you from things out of your control?
 - Have you ever felt like Ali in the story?
 - Research about Yakut. What more can you find out about this famous calligrapher?



Wave

by Suzy Lee

- **Description:** In this playful book, Lee only use blue, black, and gray to tell the story of a young girl playing with a wave.
- **Possible Activities:**
 - Imagine you are the girl. Looking on each page, what emotion is she showing us? Ok, now how can we use that emotion to decide what she is saying? Ok, so now let's write words to go with this wordless picture book.
 - The use of blue as the only color besides the gray/black is an interesting way to highlight the wave. How does picking one color change the mood of the story? How does it highlight the main character in the story?



Other lists of “Best of 2008”

- New York Times Best Illustrated Children’s Books
 - <http://tinyurl.com/nytbestillustrated08>
- Kirkus Reviews’ Editor’s Choices
 - <http://tinyurl.com/kirkus>
- School Library Journal’s Best Books of 2008
 - <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6617203.html>
- The Academy Awards of Children’s Literature (Caldecott Medal, Newbery Medal, Printz, Seibert, Geisel, etc.) will be announced on January 26, 2009 in Denver, Colorado. More information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/alaawards>