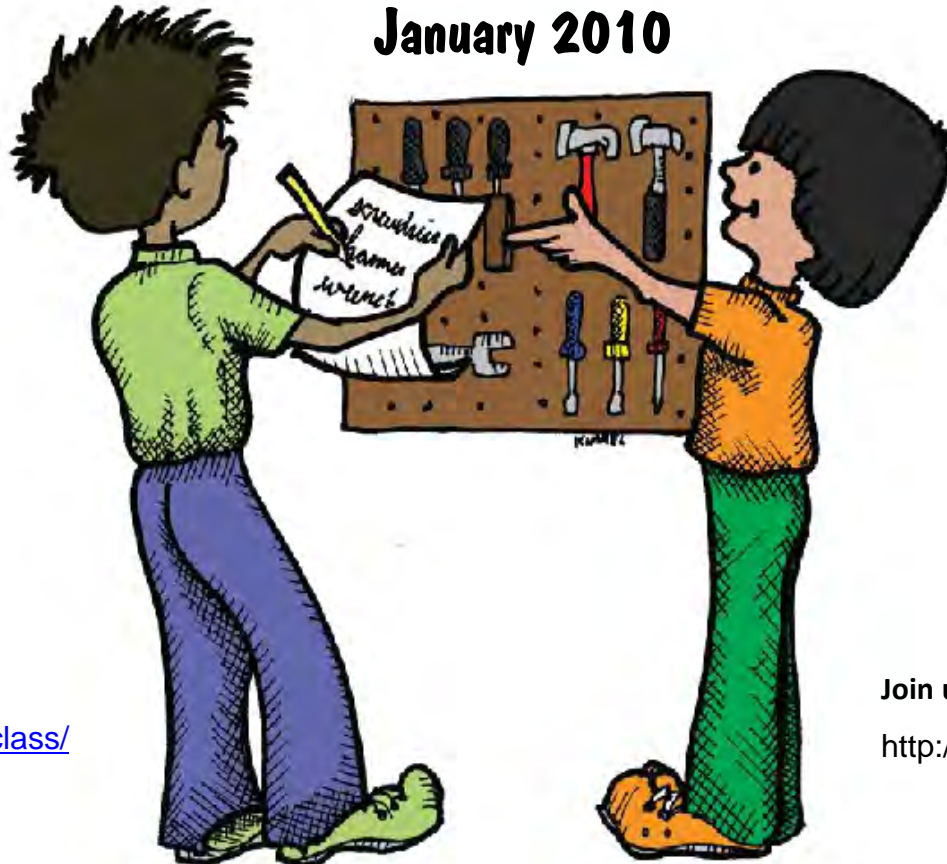




# E-TOOLS

January 2010



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When we give children books, we become part of their future, part of their most cherished memories, and part of their life. Children's books change lives.

– Anita Silvey from *Everything I Need to Know I Learned from a Children's Book*.



## January TOPIC: Favorite Books

This is always one of our favorite issues of E-Tools each year. We are going to share with you just a few (maybe more than just a few) of our favorite books that were published in 2009. They are not ranked in any order, rather just a random list of some of the best books of 2009.

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. Of course, we know you’ll come up with many more besides the one on our list. The last page we’ll share with you some links to others “Best of 09” 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.



# UPCOMING WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

For more information or to register for workshops & events go to:  
<http://joyofclass.pbwiki.com> or C.L.A.S.S. Phone: 317-572-1576

## Special Events

### Support Team Days

Pack up your group of teacher leaders from your school and come join us for a day of strategies, fun and engagement.

#### SPRING SUPPORT TEAM DAY

March 12, 2010

New Augusta North Middle School  
Indianapolis, IN

### Related Arts Days

Educators in PE, Art, Music, Music and Counselors are all welcome to the Related Arts Day. These days are a great way to gain new instructional strategies, network with your peers and share brain compatible tactics in your specific area.

#### SPRING RELATED ARTS DAY

February 19, 2010

Noblesville Intermediate School  
Noblesville, IN

### Model Teaching Days

Seeing is Believing! Experience a C.L.A.S.S. classroom in action, facilitated by a C.L.A.S.S. coach. A great day to see best practices in action.

Upcoming dates:

April 15 Noblesville, IN North Elementary

## Summer Institute

2010  
C.L.A.S.S.

### Summer Institute

You won't believe what is planned for Summer 2010! Save the dates and register early. We'll see you there!

June 22 – 25, 2010  
Pike Freshman Center  
Indianapolis, IN

See the *C.L.A.S.S. Service Brochure* for workshop descriptions at:  
<http://joyofclass.pbwiki.com>

Download Registration Forms:  
<http://joyofclass.pbwiki.com>



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Email: [class@joyofclass.org](mailto:class@joyofclass.org) Web: [www.indianaclass.com](http://www.indianaclass.com)  
Registration Forms & Info: <http://joyofclass.pbwiki.com>

## Workshops

### BEHAVIOR

Tier 2: Small Group Behavior Interventions  
January 12 Noblesville

Tier 3: One-on-One Behavior Interventions & Bullying  
January 20 Noblesville

### LITERACY

Writers Workshop the C.L.A.S.S. Way!  
February 3 (Kg-2) Noblesville  
February 4 (3-8) Noblesville

Literacy: Meaningful, Energetic & Engaging  
February 8 (Kg-2) Indianapolis  
February 9 (3-8) Indianapolis

### BEST PRACTICES

Collaboration Rules! (Cooperative Learning Strategies)  
January 13 Noblesville

Test Preparation & Study Tips Every Student Should Know  
February 2 Noblesville

Turning Your Students into Amazing Scientists  
January 27 Noblesville

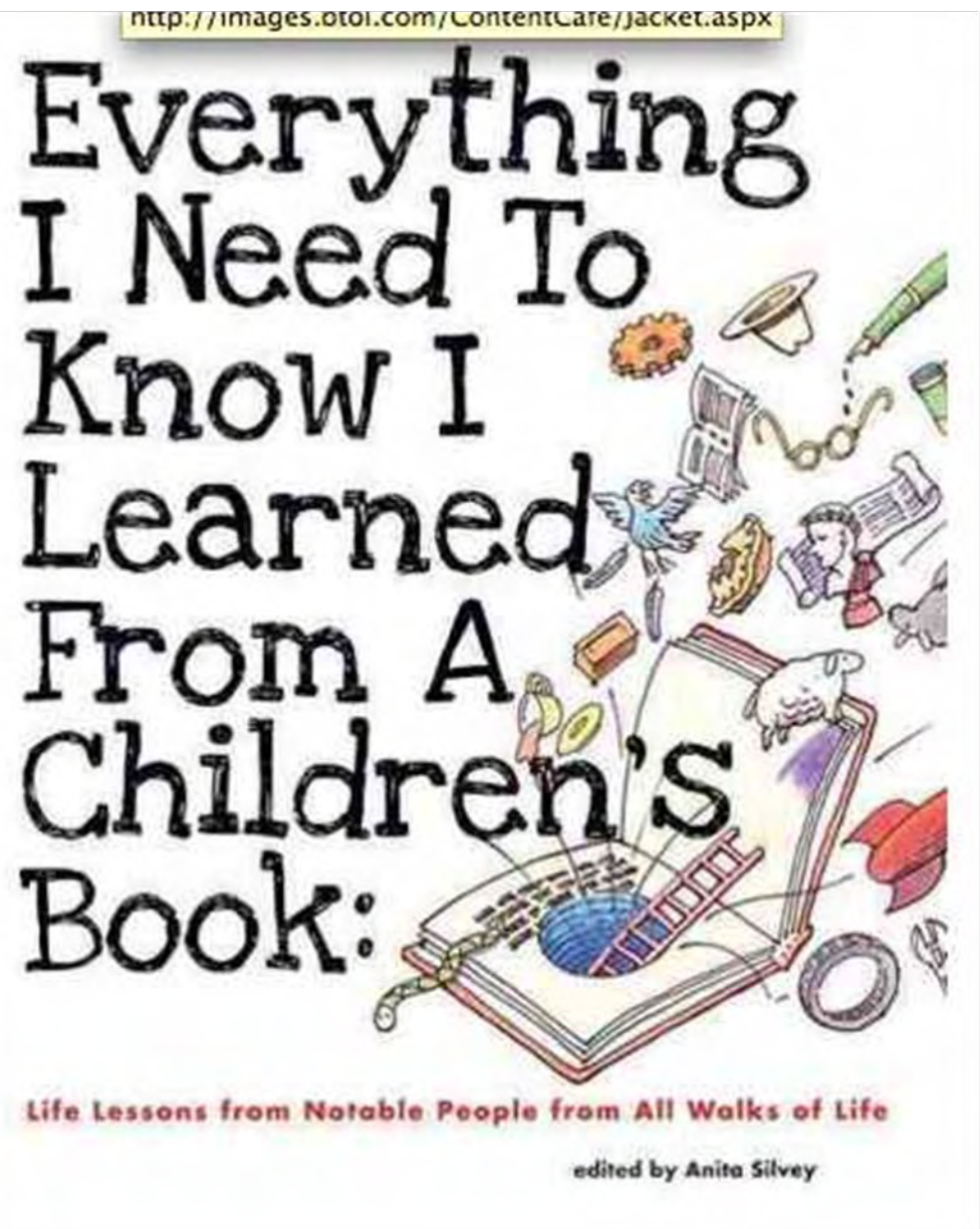
Can You Differentiate Instruction? Yes I Can!  
January 26 Noblesville

Fun and Innovative Teaching with Wikis, Blogs & Internet Resources  
February 9 Noblesville

# Everything I Need to Know I Learned from a Children's Book

by Anita Silvey

Silvey has connected people from all walks of life – business, entertainment, education, etc. and asked them about what books influenced them (and how). The result is this amazing volume full of interesting stories about how children's books really can change lives. For older students, reading an example may be a perfect introduction for a community circle or even a writing prompt. For younger students there may be quotes and passages that might work as Hallway Greetings or Welcome Messages. The title may be the attraction, but the insides prove it is an inspirational title for readers of all ages.



# Adventures in Cartooning

by James Strum, Andrew Arnold, and Alexis Frederick-Frost

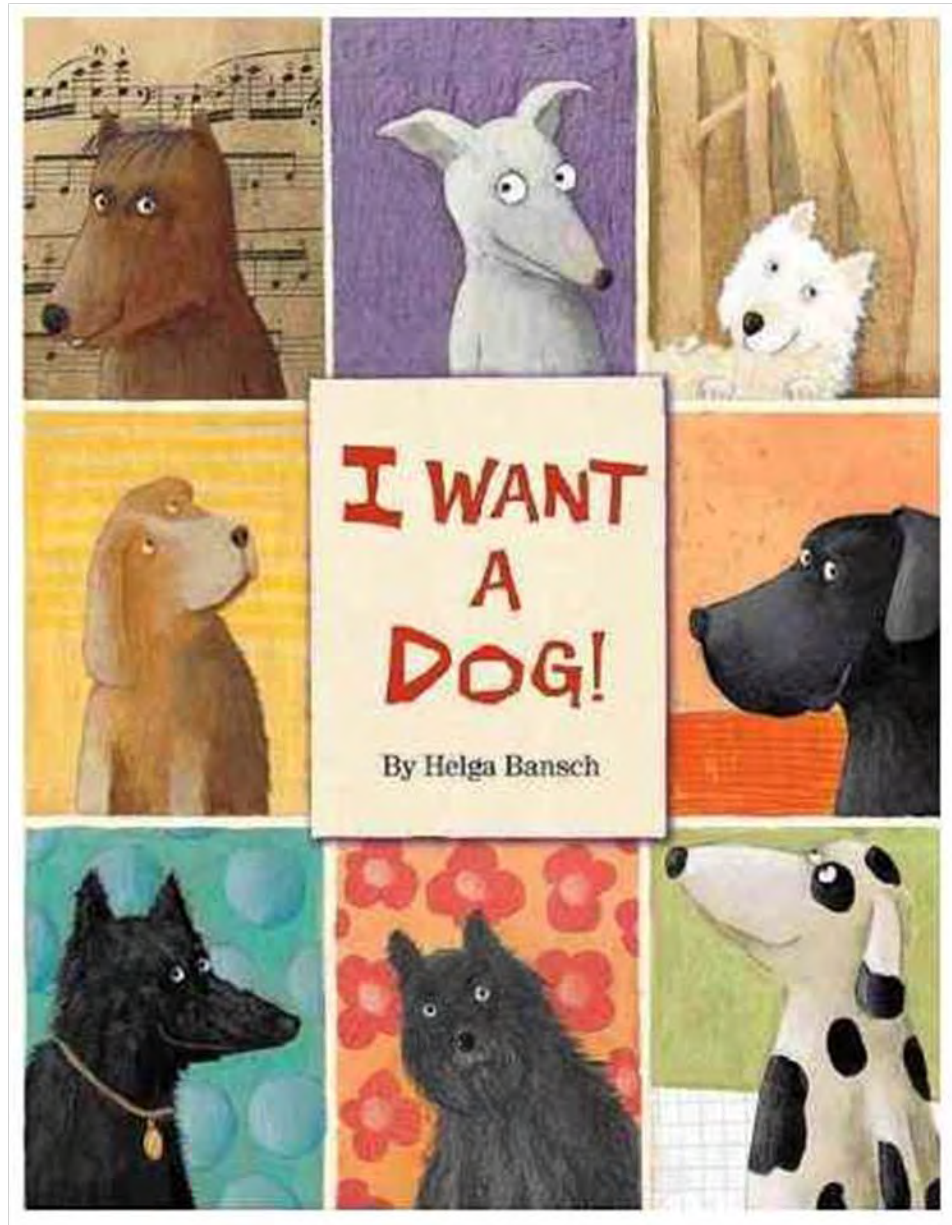
One of the most popular and growing areas of publishing at all levels is graphic novels/non-fiction. These comic books are more and more a way to draw in reluctant readers – especially boys. In addition, they show how the illustrations can be an important part in helping to tell the story. In this particular book, the entire story is designed to help students learn how to create their own comic books. How can you use the panels in a comic to help tell the action of the story? This is a great way for students to get started with creating their own stories and another format for sharing their own writing.



# I Want a Dog

by Helga Bansch

This book has so many possibilities. Lisa wants a dog, but can't have one; their apartment is too small. Yet, still she uses all her persuasive charm and rationale to convince her parents. However, the fact remains, the apartment is too small. In the end, she uses some creative problem solving to come up with a new way to have a dog. If she can't have her own, maybe she can borrow one? A nice elderly man takes her up on the offer, and now she walks and exercises his dog since he isn't able to any more. This book is a perfect example of talking about sometimes no matter how much we want something we can't have it. But, at the same time shows the ability to think outside the box and be creative. There are some great describing words used in this book that would also be good to point out to young readers and writers.



# Science Song Series

Published by Picture Window Books

There is great power in putting concepts to song, and these four books are amazing examples. Written to familiar old folk songs, they each introduce and reinforce a major science concept to children.

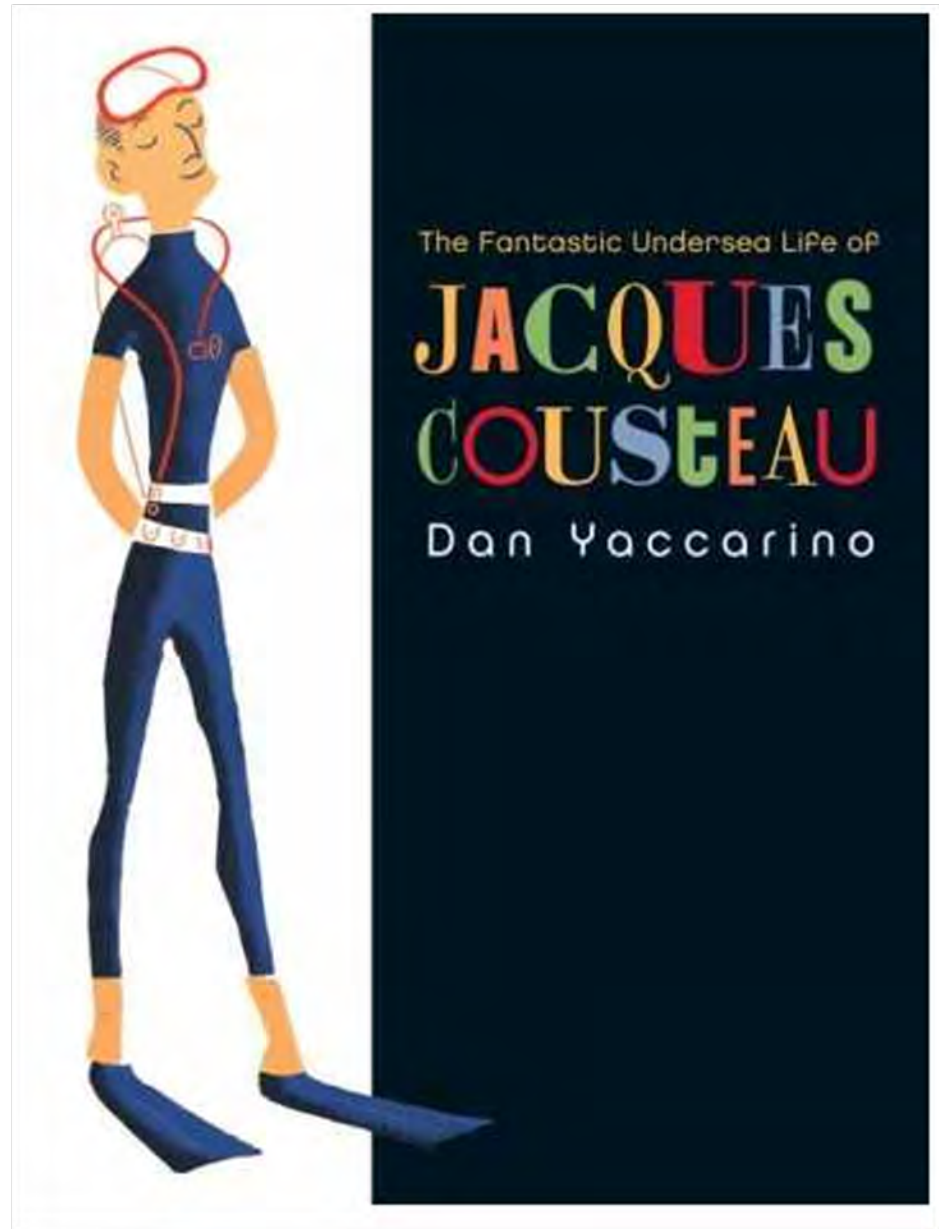
- Music teachers will love these to make connections with curriculum in the classroom.
- Classroom teachers will find these a great way to reinforce a concept.
- Older students could use these as models for writing their own songs about different science (or social studies) topics.



# The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau

by Dan Yaccarino

Not your typical biography, this book has some beautiful and colorful illustrations that help tell the life of this pioneer. Perseverance, curiosity, initiative, creativity, and caring are just some of the Lifelines that can be found in this book. The unique part of this biography is that interspaced throughout the illustrations are quotes from Cousteau that help further the story. The quotes would be wonderful Hallway Greetings. The format could also be a model for older writers to use in sharing information about someone they have researched.



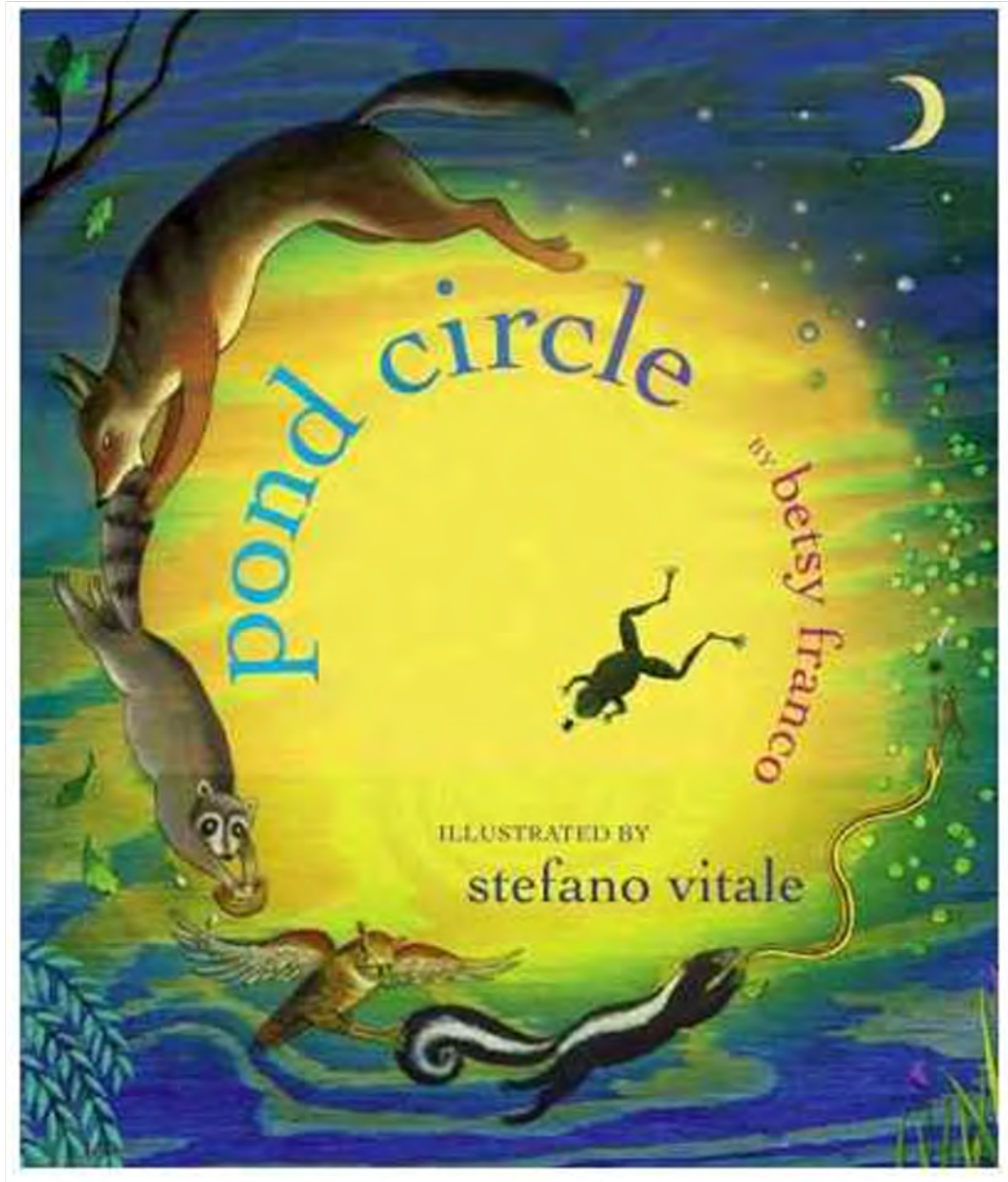


# Pond Circle

by Besty Franco

This story is based on the pattern of *The House that Jack Built*. Each page builds upon the ecosystem in the pond by sharing the food chain of a pond.

- Students could use this same pattern to create a food chain of a different biome such as the rainforest or the desert.
- This is a great book for talking about adjectives. As each animal is introduced they pick a work to describe it.
- This book also is a good one for picking out verbs – stole, caught, gobbled, etc. Make a list of these for students to consider using in their own writing.
- Students could take some of the last pages (where the entire cycle is listed) and see if they could come up with new verbs or adjectives to replace them.



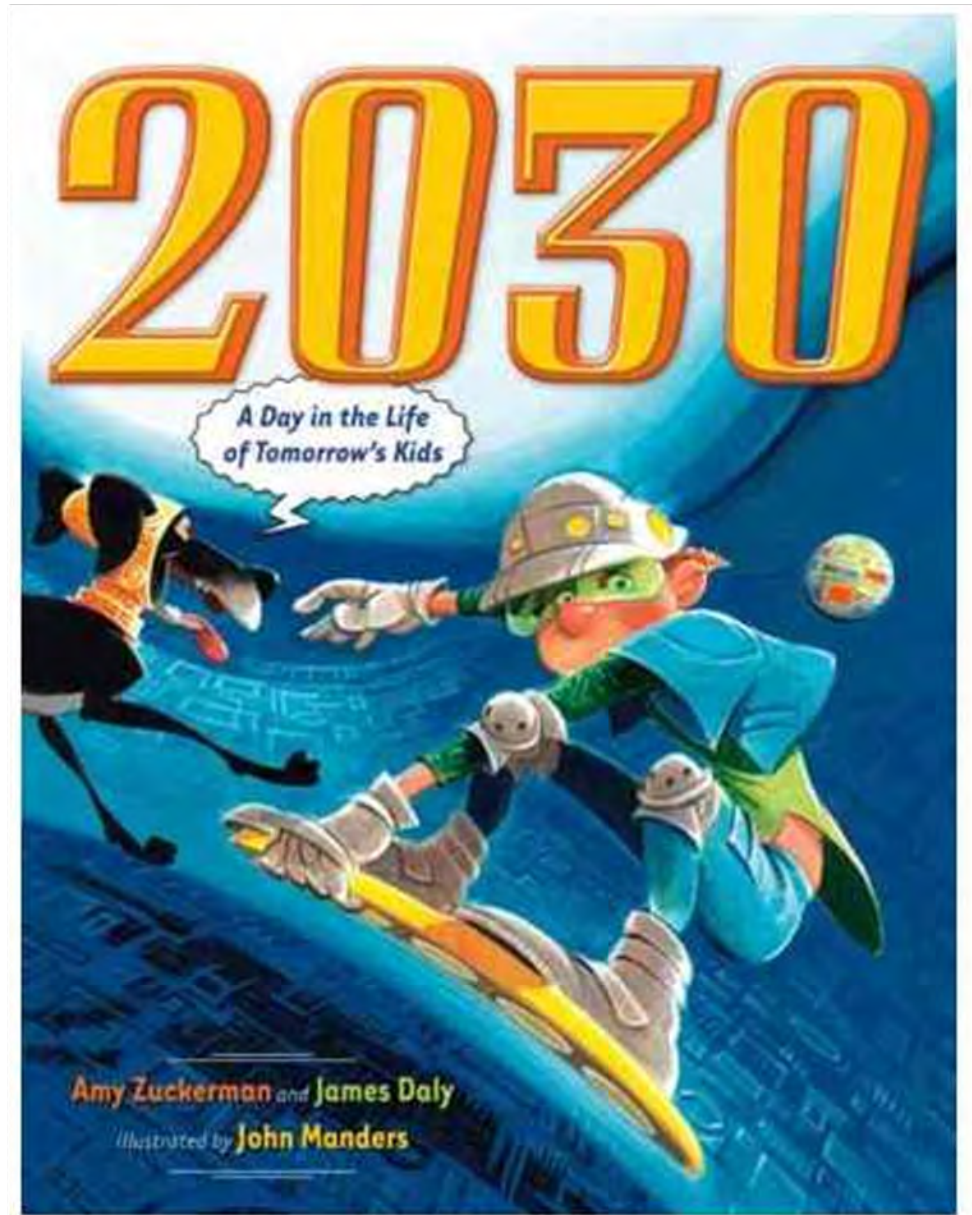
# 2030

by Amy Zuckerman and James Daly

Every wonder what the future might be like. Today's Kindergarteners should graduate in 2022, so this book focuses on what life might like for today's student's children.

The authors based their story on research and include all the resources in the back of the book.

- The title is a perfect topic for students to make their own predictions. "What do you think life will be like in 2030?" Or, you could get more specific and share part of the story so students get a feel for some of the ideas and then ask "What might school be like in 2030?"
- The story ends with something we're all familiar with – a book. Students might also ponder "What might be some things that stay the same – even in 2030?"
- Students might start out writing their own ideas and then share them in a community circle.

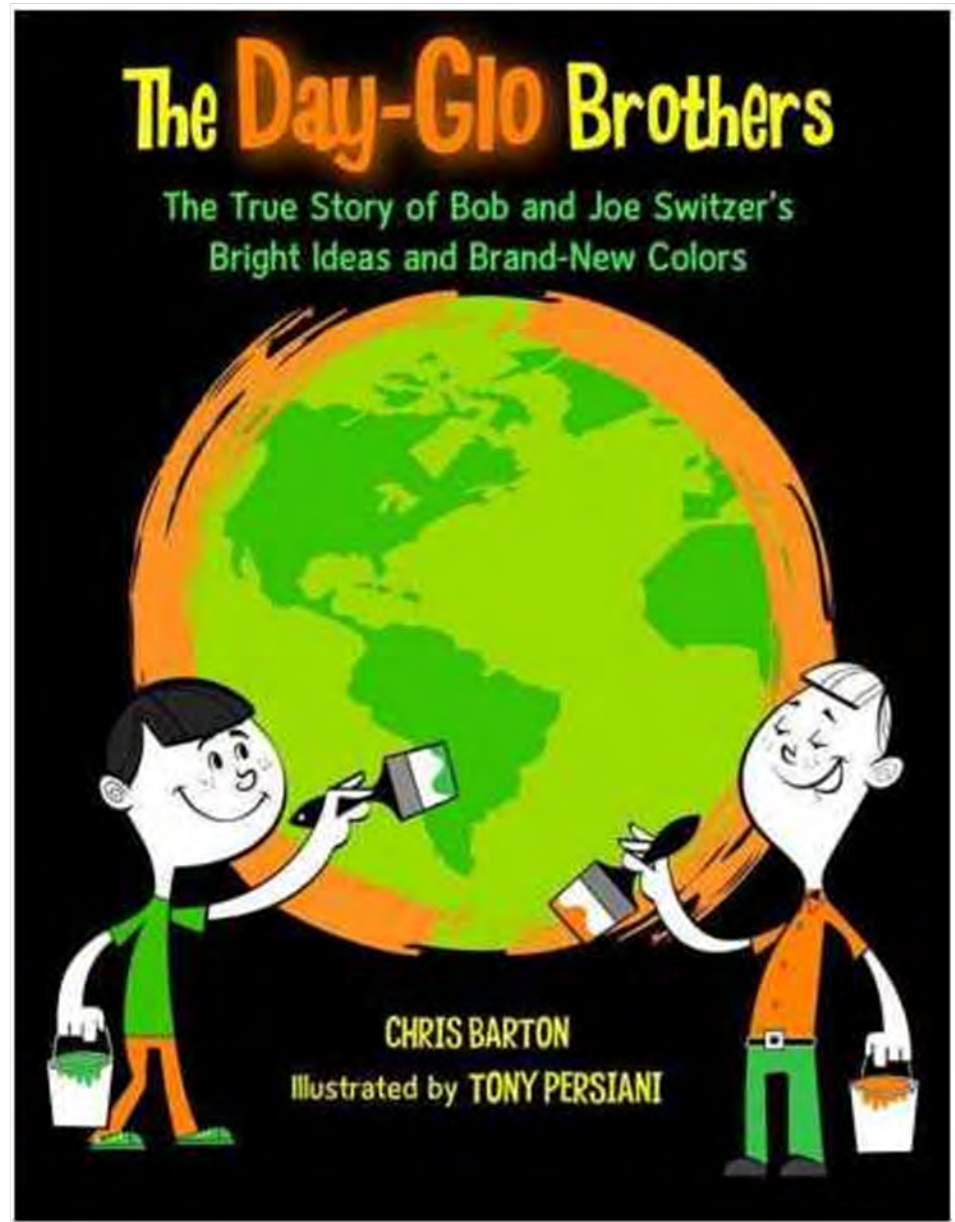


# The Day-Glo Brothers

by Chris Barton

This biography tells the story of the Switzer brothers who invented the bright neon colors.

- The story of the brothers is a great one for talking about various Lifelines – including perseverance, creativity, and curiosity. Read this book and ask students to identify the Lifelines they find in the book.
- The invention of the bright neon colors that shine even in the sunlight kind of was an accident. Talk with students about other discoveries that might have just been an accident.
- The author in the back of the book talks about the research process he used to write this book. This is a great way to show students how authors go about searching for information to create an accurate book.
- Art teachers could have fun with this book by exploring how to use these colors in student 's art work.

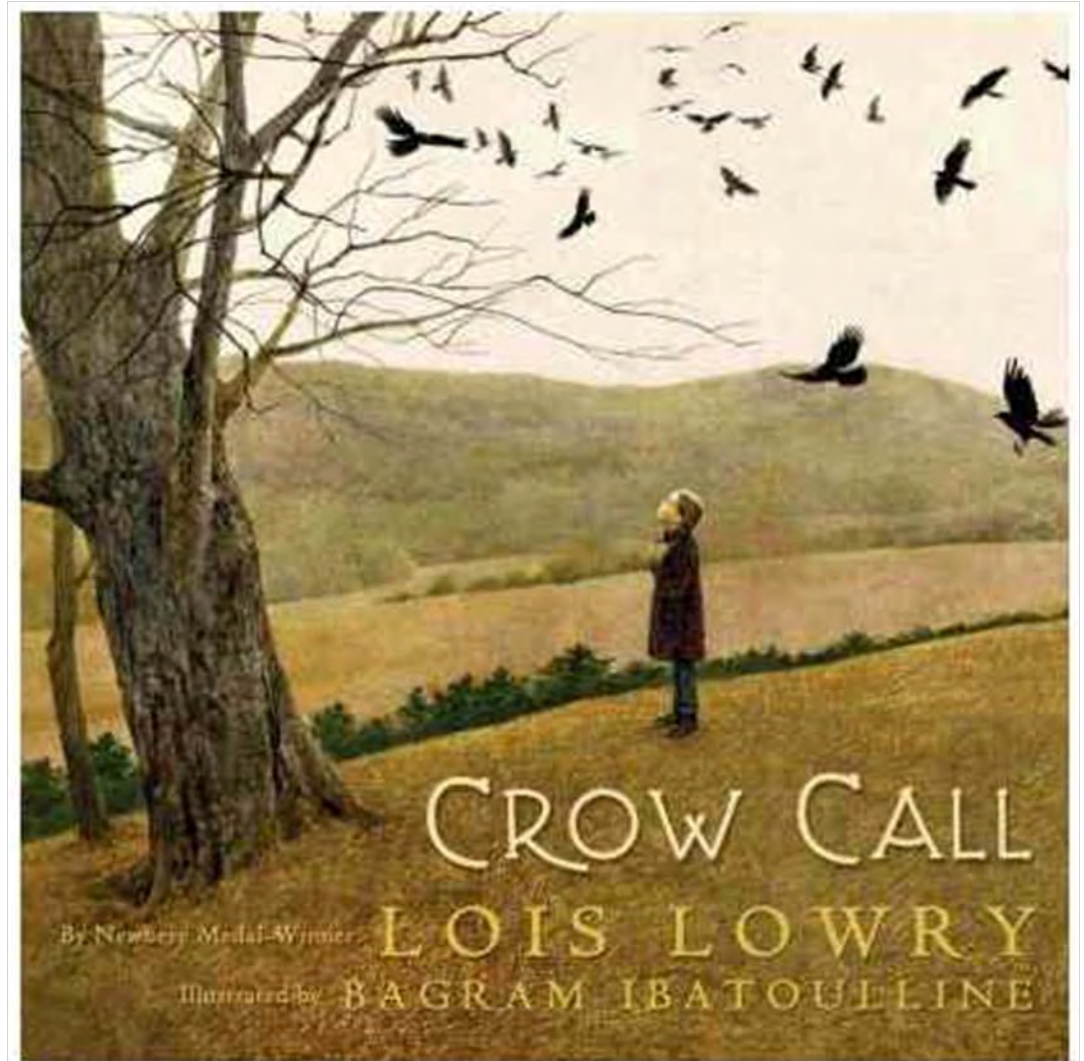


# Crow Call

by Lois Lowry

Lowry, the 2 time Newbery Medal, shares with us in a picture book format based on a story from her childhood. When her father returns from World War II, he almost seems a stranger to her and they have to work to reconnect.

- Many of our students can relate to Liz's situation as they have relatives serving in the wars overseas. Use this book as a community circle topic to talk with students about the Lifeline of Empathy. What would it be like to have someone you loved gone for so long? What would it be like when they came back after missing so much time?
- Lowry pulled this story from her own childhood (including a picture in the back of her in the long plaid shirt). This is a good model for students on how writers use their own experiences in their stories.

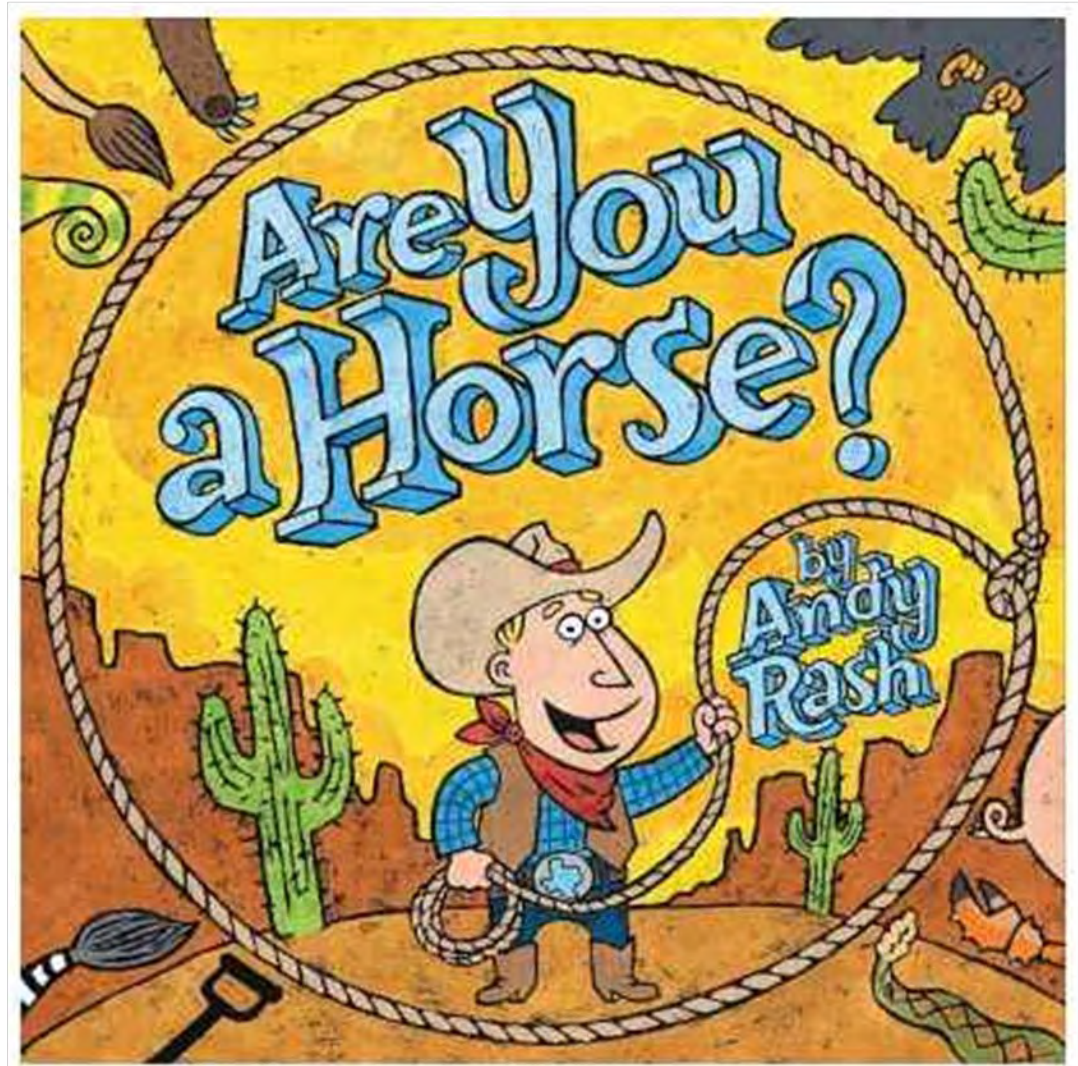


# Are You A Horse?

By Andy Rash

Sometimes you just need a fun book to show the joy of reading. This book is one of those titles. The cowboy gets a saddle for his birthday and has to find a horse; the problem is he doesn't know what a horse is. Through a series of questions of various creatures and things, he figures out what he is looking for and in the end goes for a ride with a horse.

- Students research about an animal and then write their own "Are you a \_\_\_\_?" book.
- After reading the book, play "Are you a \_\_\_\_?" as a community circle with each person trying to guess the object of the day. Make a list of the questions as you go so students don't repeat.
- When teaching students about writing about character, have them think about the horse in this book. Have them come up with as many Are you \_\_\_\_? Questions about their character to brainstorm details about their character that they could use in their writing.

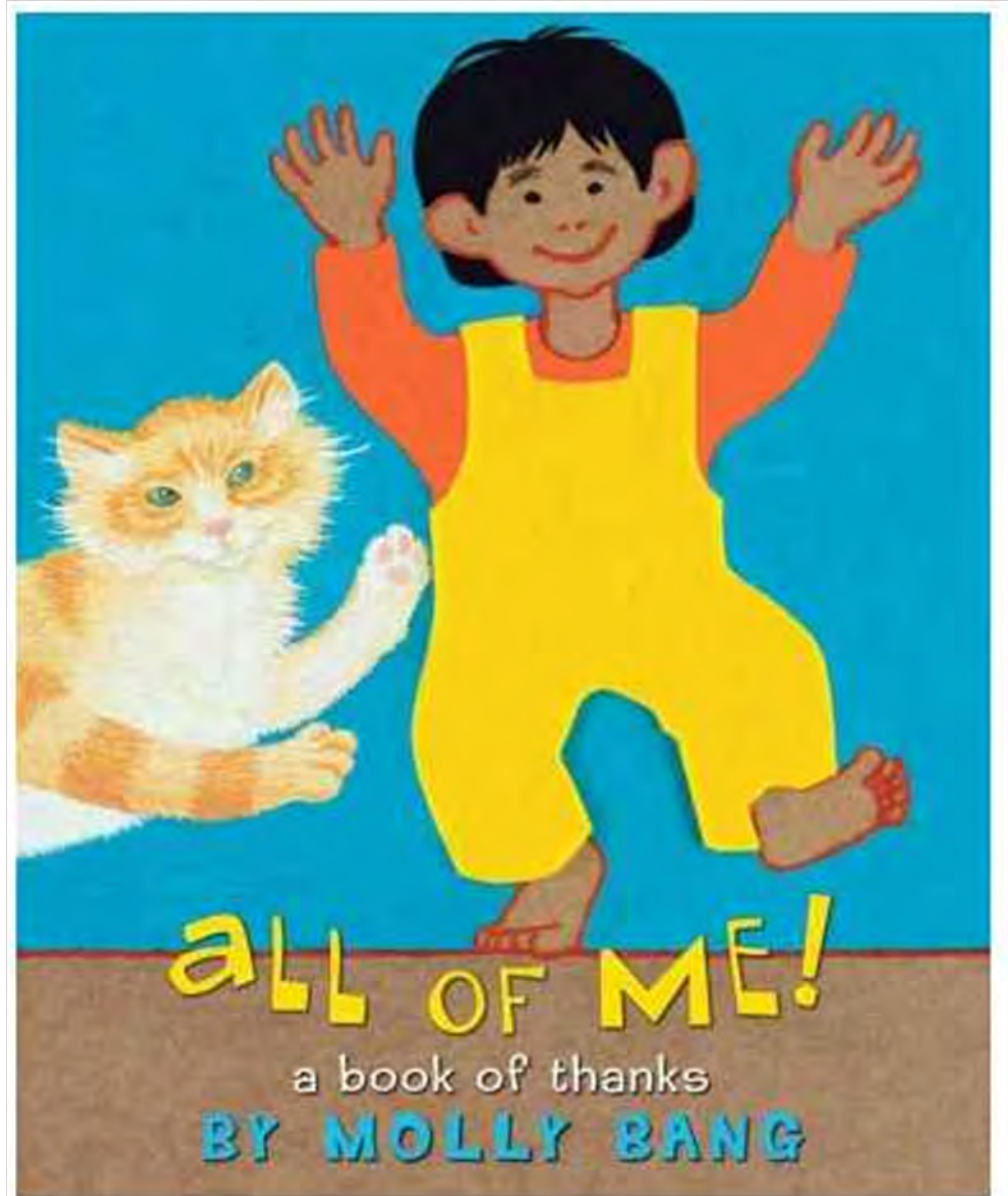


# All of Me

by Molly Bang

This is a great book to talk about feelings and emotions. On each page, the boy talks about the various senses and how he is thankful for them.

- Students can expand on the list the boy makes for each of the senses. This would be a great activity to do at the beginning of the year to fill a writer's notebook with lots of ideas for action and movement of characters.
- In the back of the book, the author includes all the materials she used to create this book. Students could use those similar to create their own book "all about me!"
- After students have published a piece of writing (with or without illustration) have them create a page about their own process like Molly Bang. It can be very reflective to think and write about the process.



# Big Frog Can't Fit In

by Mo Willems

Mo has two on our list this year (not including the fabulous Elephant and Piggie series!) In this pop-up book, the frog just can't seem to fit in. But luckily she has some helpful friends willing to solve the problem.

- Lifelines are a great connection with this book. Problem solving and friendship quickly come to mind.
- Students could brainstorm a list of possible ways they might solve the problem (before reading what frog's friends do).
- Read more of Mo Willem's books. He has created a variety of interesting characters – The Pigeon, Elephant and Piggie, Knuffle Bunny etc. Compare and contrast the various characters to see what similarities and differences you might find.



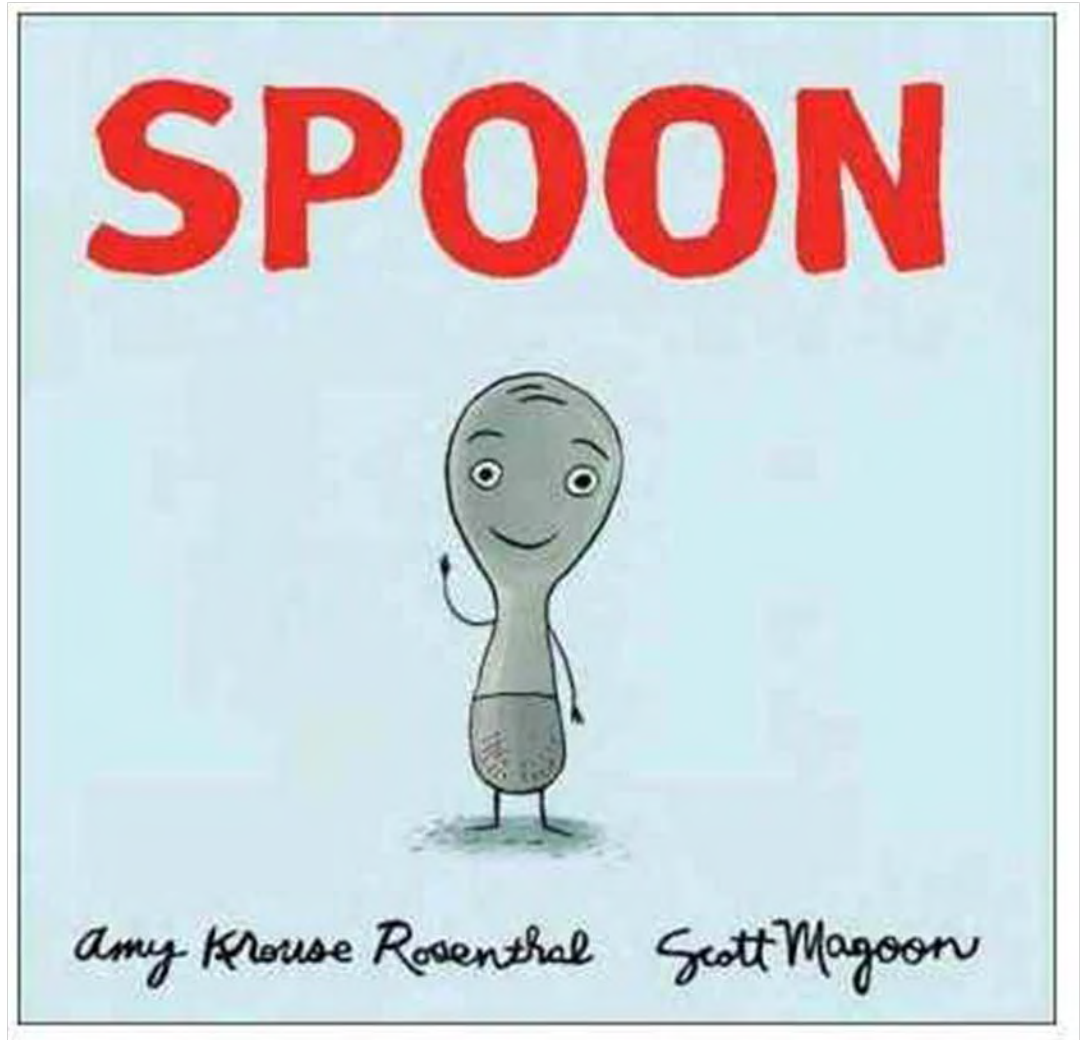
# Spoon

by Amy Krouse Rosenthal

Amy Krouse Rosenthal is always a favorite. Her books always send such important messages for both kids and adults. In this book, the little spoon is jealous of all his utensil friends. They can do such cool things compared to him. He doesn't realize they are jealous of him.

- This is a book about talking about how we all have special talents and are unique. Put a bunch of different utensils in the middle of the community circle and ask students to pick one and then decide what is unique about that utensil and share one thing about them that is unique.
- Play a “Spoonful of Sugar” from *Mary Poppins* and then ask students to rewrite the song. A spoonful of \_\_\_\_\_ helps the \_\_\_\_\_ go down. What in life can help make it easier for us to get by?
- Thanks to the C.L.A.S.S. Related Arts Day Facilitators for these ideas!

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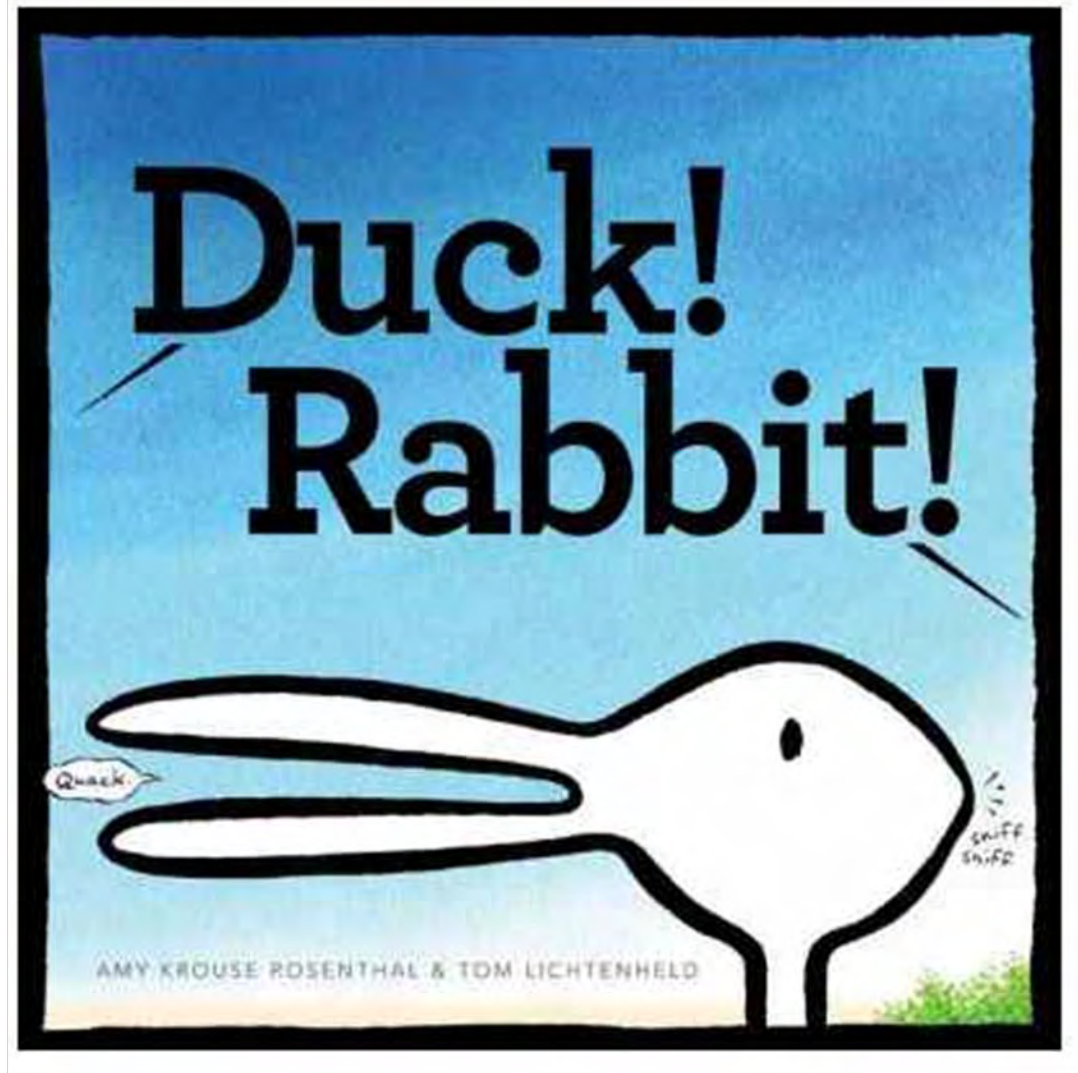


# Duck! Rabbit!

By Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld

With a simple illustration, the authors of this book have created the perfect book for teaching students about perspective. It would be a great book to share in art classrooms, too.

- Show the illustration without the title and ask students to write down on a piece of paper what they think it is. Then talk about their answers. It can be hard for students to understand that we all look at things a little differently, and this is a great way to illustrate that.
- Have a community circle and talk about why it is important to think about the way other people look at things.
- For older students, see if they could create their own illustration that can be seen two different ways.

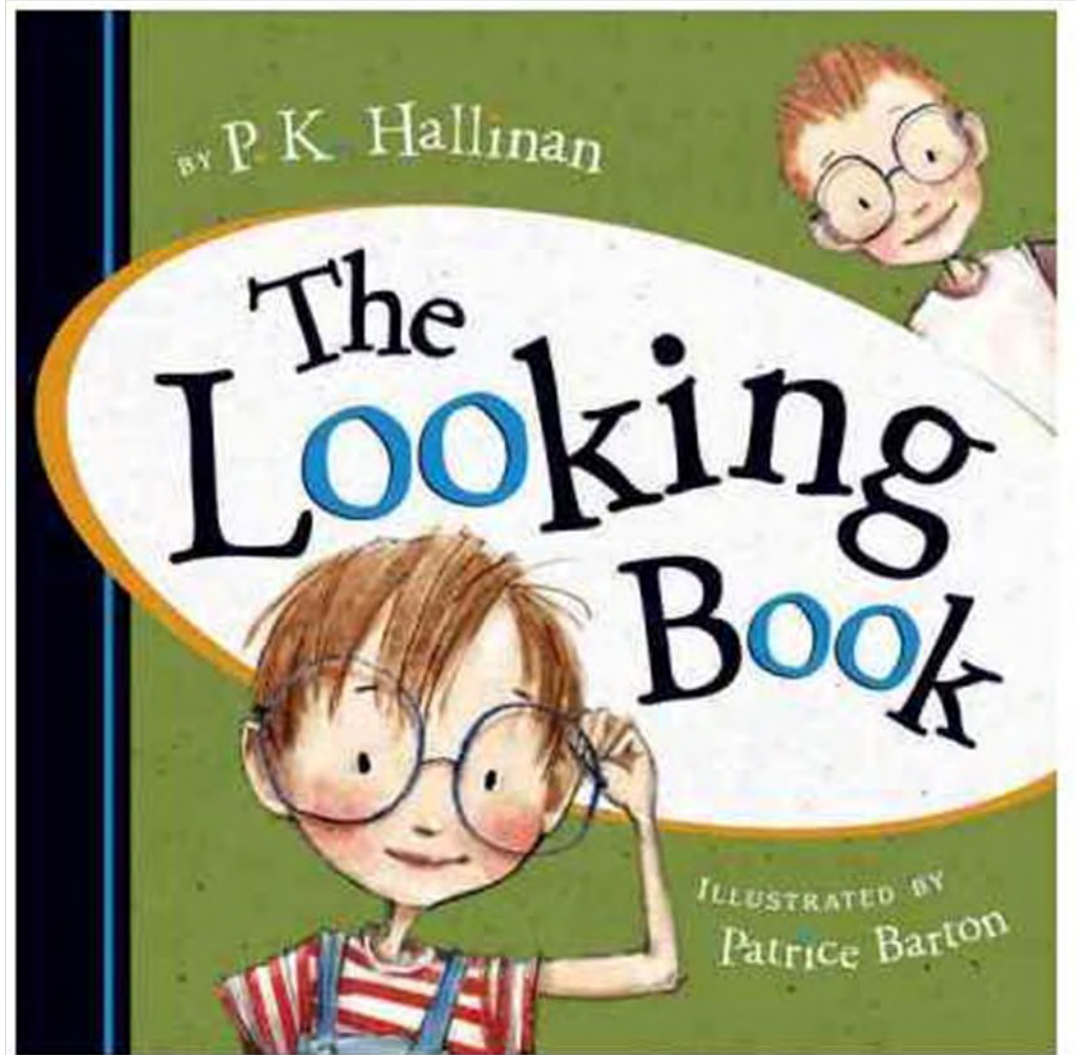


# The Looking Book

by P.K. Hallinan

This book may look familiar as it was in our December E-Tools is as a good science resource, but it works in many other areas, too. In this book, young Kenny and Mickey are sent outside to play away from the TV. Mom makes them Lookers (glasses out of pipe cleaners) and they discover a whole world they've missed.

- Create lookers for all the learners in you classroom and go outside to see what you might discover.
- Maybe get some cheap magnifying glasses that students can use to “look” for things in their writing – verbs, adjectives, etc.
- Maybe get the Lookers out to find students Doing the Right Thing and Treating People Right!
- At some point go on an adventure and leave the Lookers in the room. Show students they can still be observant even without their Lookers.

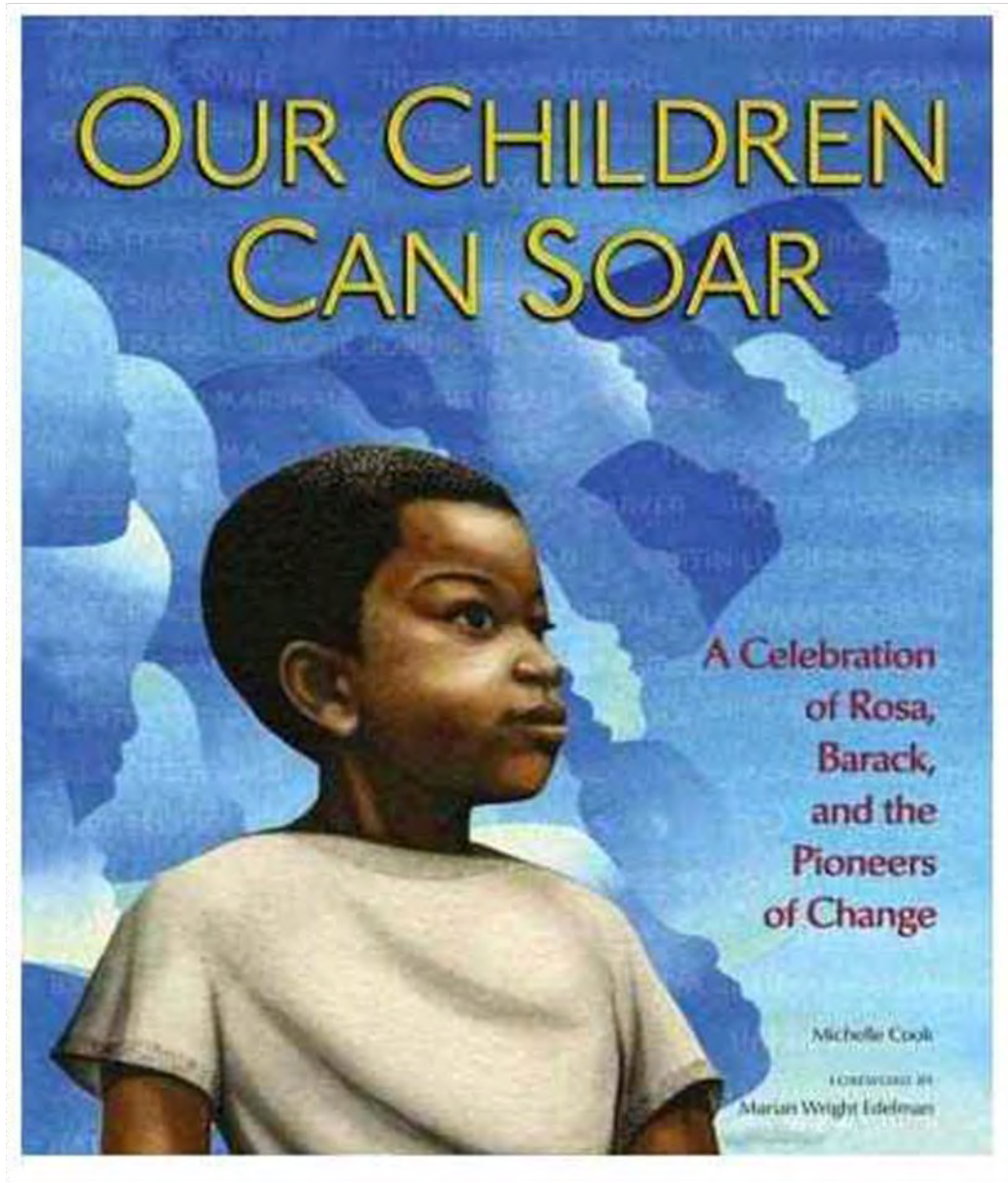


# Our Children Can Soar

by Michelle Cook

This book is absolutely amazing on so many different levels. Each page is done by a different illustrator. The author uses simple words (mostly a name and a verb) to show us the timeline of the Civil Rights movement in America. For example, “Jackie scored....so Rose could sit. Rose sat....so Ruby could learn.” etc.

- Make a list of all the pioneers in this book and research more about them and their place in the Civil Rights movement.
- Use this format to create a timeline. Talk about the cause and effect of the actions of others.
- Tim McGraw has a new song called “Southern Voice” Many of the same people (and others) are included in his song and he uses a similar format of a name and a verb. Research some of the people referenced in his song. Why were they important?
- Make a list of all the verbs from the song and book starting a word bank students can use in their own writing.

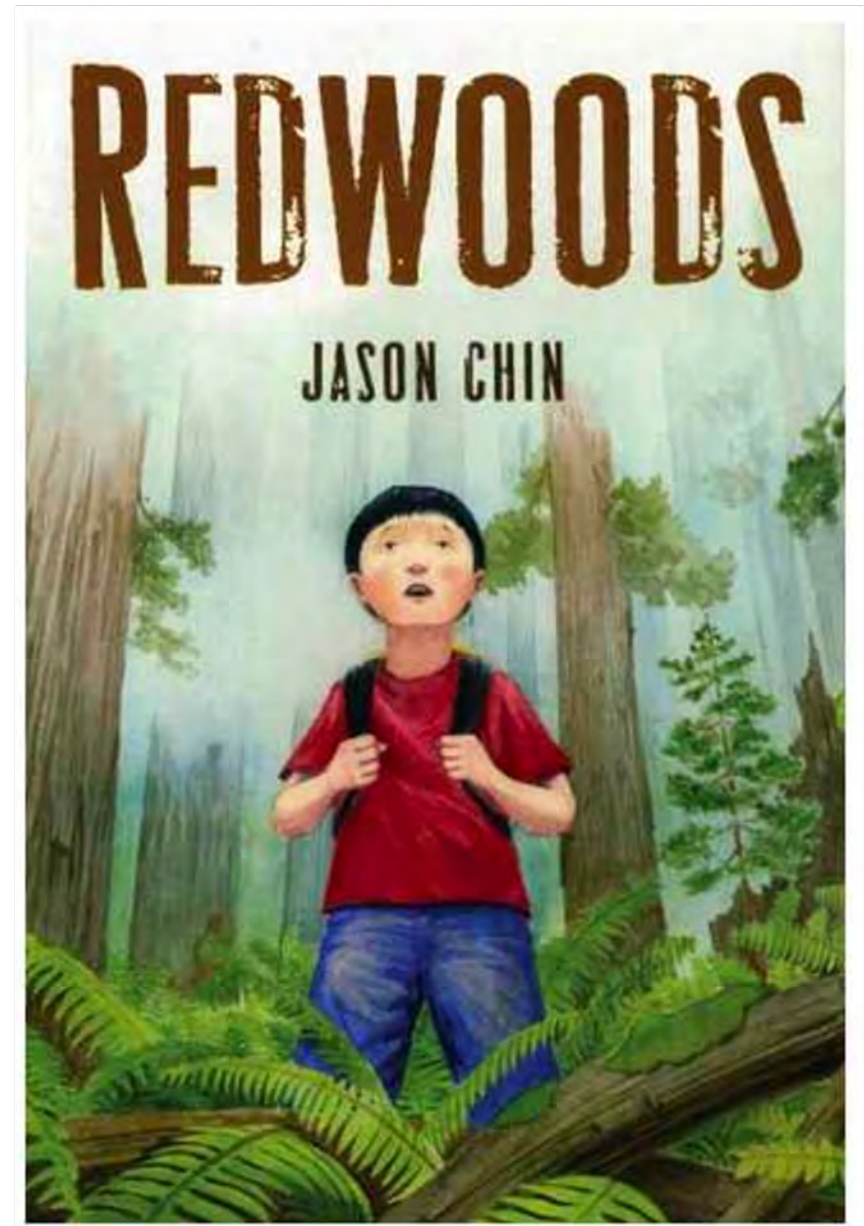


# Redwoods

by Jason Chin

This is the first book by Jason Chin and what an amazing first book it is. First of all it gives us amazing information about redwood trees, but more importantly it shows how a boy can get lost in a book. It illustrates how when we read it transports us to that place and feel like we're right there part of the story.

- This would be a great way to introduce students to choosing an inquiry topic. It needs to be something they can totally be immersed in and what to learn about.
- It can be hard to show students what it feels like to really love to read – whether it is non-fiction or fiction – and this book perfectly illustrates the concept. Ask students to share in community circle a book that they totally were engrossed in.
- Ask students to think of topics they are interested in and when checking out books in the LMC bring down that list to help guide them to books where they might have the same feeling as found in this book.



# Otis

By Loren Long

This book truly goes back to the classic picture book format. The illustrations and text are reminiscent of those children books we now consider classics. Otis is a little tracker that loves working hard. He even helps keep the animals calm – especially a young calf. However, the farmer gets a new tractor and Otis is put out to pasture. Well the little calf gets stuck in the mud and can you guess who is the only one able to save her? Otis, of course.

- This book is a great example of showing the beginning/middle/end of a story.
- It also would be good to discuss about how sometimes we might want something new, but the old thing we have might work just as well (if not better).
- Of course, the Lifeline of friendship is also a huge theme with this book as well.

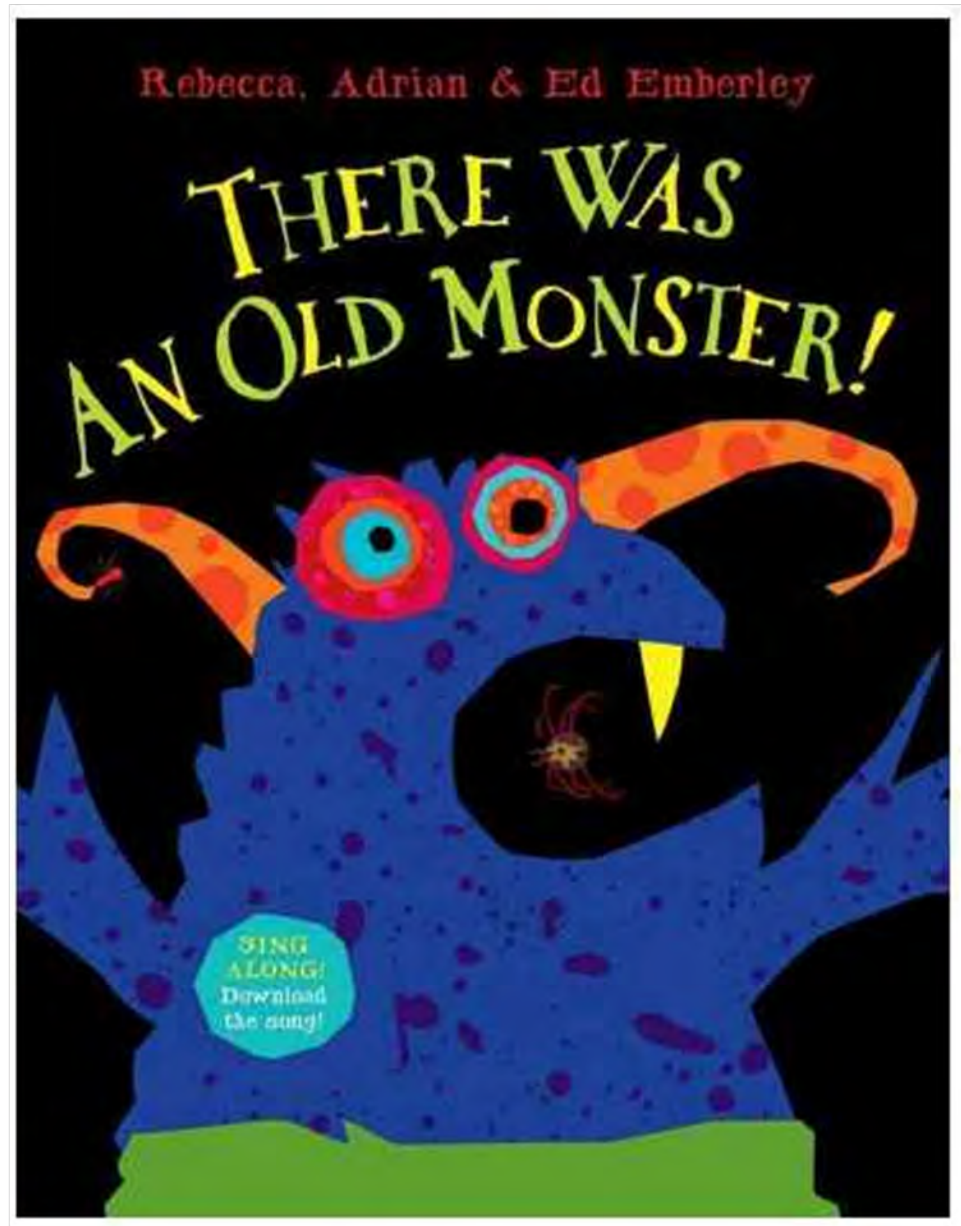


# There Was An Old Monster

By Rebecca, Adrian, and Ed Emberley

We all heard about that old lady who swallowed a fly and over the years there have been countless versions of this story written. But, the Emberley family have collaborated to create a truly unique version. (There is even a downloadable song version to share with students).

- This book is just full of great, fun words. Lots of examples of words that tell use how the monster feels and the sounds we might here. Talk about how those words make the book more interesting for the reader.
- Compare and contrast this version with many of others you might find in the library media center.
- Older students might even write their own version of this book that they could share with younger children.

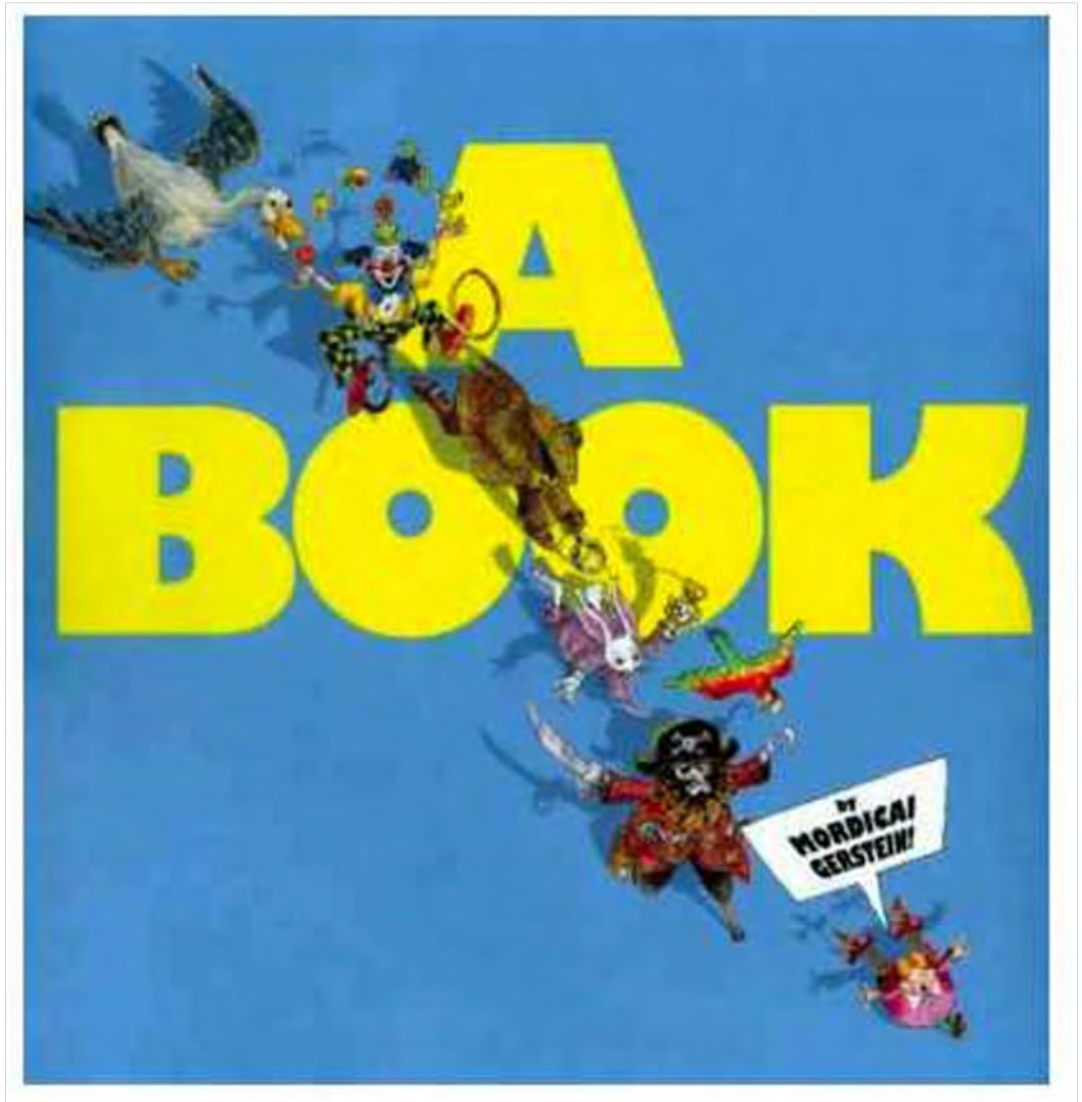


# A Book

by Mordicai Gerstein

Caldecott Medal winner Gerstein has created a fantastic journey for a young girl trying to find her story. The book takes the reader through a variety of genres as the girl looks for her story, but in the end she discovers the best way to find her story is to write it herself.

- Use this book to introduce students to the concept of genres. Make a list of them as you go through the book. Are there others?
- In some of the genres it is easy to guess what story some of the characters came from. How many can you name?
- This book is setup in speech bubbles. They would be perfect to take a page of them to show students how to write with quotation marks in their own stories.



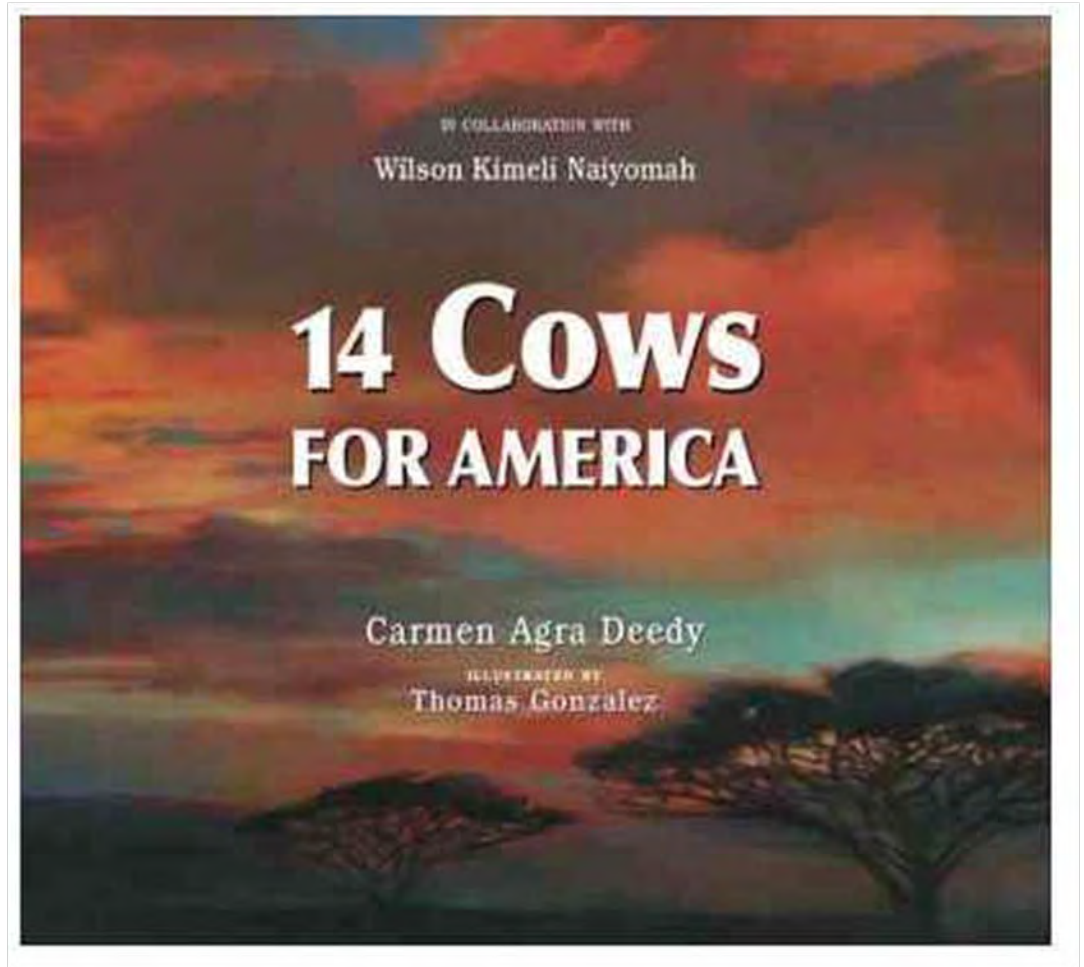
# 14 Cows for America

by Carmen Agra Deedy in collaboration  
with Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah

This is a true story. After 9/11, the Maasai people in western Kenya wanted to do something to show support to the United States. They decide to give the US a gift – 14 cows. The cows are the way of life for the Maasai. The last line sums up the gift so well – “Because there is no nation so powerful it cannot be wounded, nor a people so small they cannot offer mighty comfort.”

The illustrations in this book are breathtaking and bring to life the story of this small tribe and their desire to help the United States. This book is one that requires discussion and reflection. This is a great example, too, of the power a story can have when shared. How does it make the reader feel? What kind of Lifelines did the Maasai use?

To read more about the 14 cows, go to: <http://14cowsforamerica.com/>





# The Lion & the Mouse

by Jerry Pinkney

Many believe this book may just be the one that finally wins Pinkney the Caldecott Medal this January. Pinkney tells the classic fable of The Lion and the Mouse in a wordless picture book format. The breathtaking illustrations are amazing at the detail and the way they share the story not needing any words at all. Whether it wins any awards still remains to be seen, but there is little doubt that it is one of Pinkney's best books!

- Have students tell the story as they look at the pictures. They can write their own version of the fable based on the images they see.
- Take time to look at the details in the pictures. Can you tell what the Lion or Mouse are thinking or feeling based on looking at their faces. Show students how the illustrations of a picture book are just as important as the words.

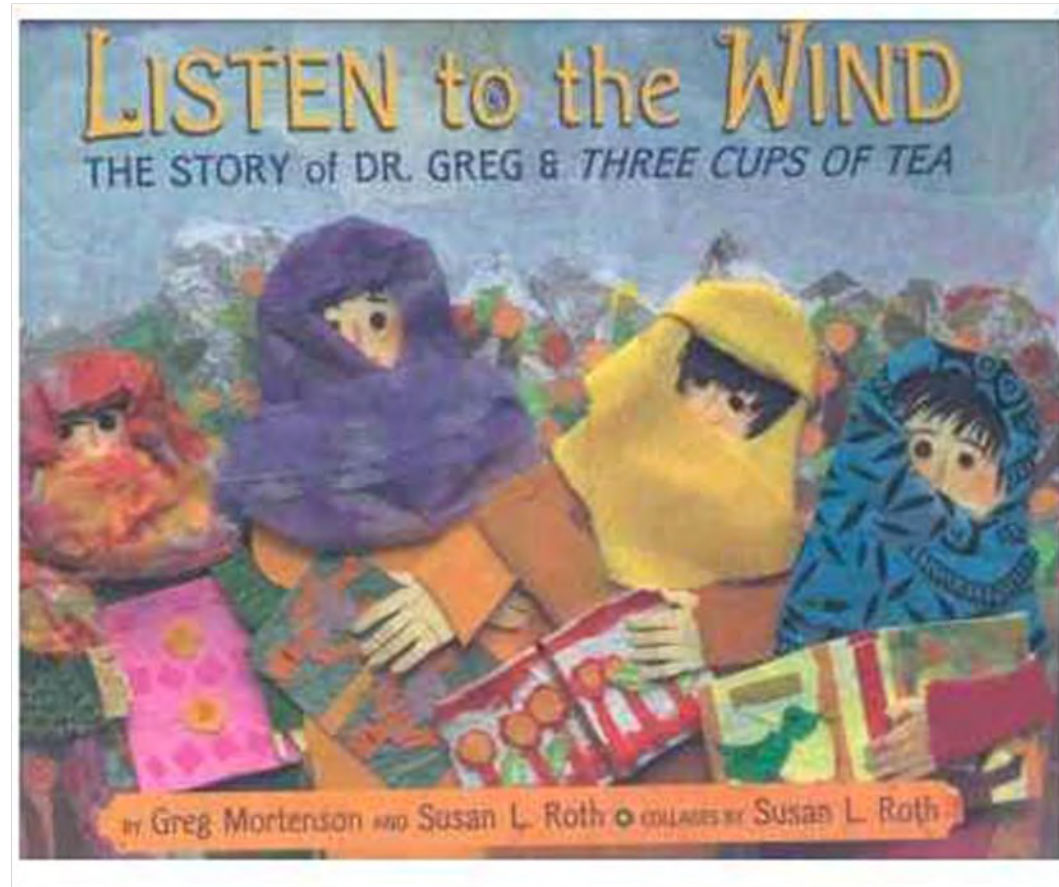


# Listen to the Wind

by Greg Mortenson & Susan L. Roth

This is another one of those books that transcends the generations. The Three Cups of Tea has been a bestseller for adults and here comes a version to share with children. This is the story of Greg Mortenson and his mission to build a school for the people of Korphe.

- There are so many Lifelines represented in this book they are too numerous to mention. Ask students to make a list after they've read the book.
- We sometimes take it for granted the schools that we have and the resources available in it. What do you think life would be like without a school?
- The illustrations in this book are an example of collage. Why do you think the illustrator choose to use that technique?
- The afterward is an important part of this book as it includes more details and real pictures. Talk to student about why it is important to read those parts of a book, too.



# Willoughby & the Lion

by Greg Foley

This is an endearing story about a Lion with great power to grant wishes. Unfortunately he is terribly unhappy. The boy uses his wishes for many of things you might expect, but in the end uses his last wish to help his lion friend feel better.

- Community Circle discussion:
  - What kind of things would you wish for if you could have anything you wanted (and why)?
  - Why don't you think Willoughby used his first wishes to help the Lion. Why did he wait until the end? Would it have been better if he used his wishes to help the lion earlier?
- Use the gold coin in the back where it says "True Friend." as a way to recognize students in your class who have done the right thing. Cut out gold coins they can hang on their desk when they've been a True Friend.

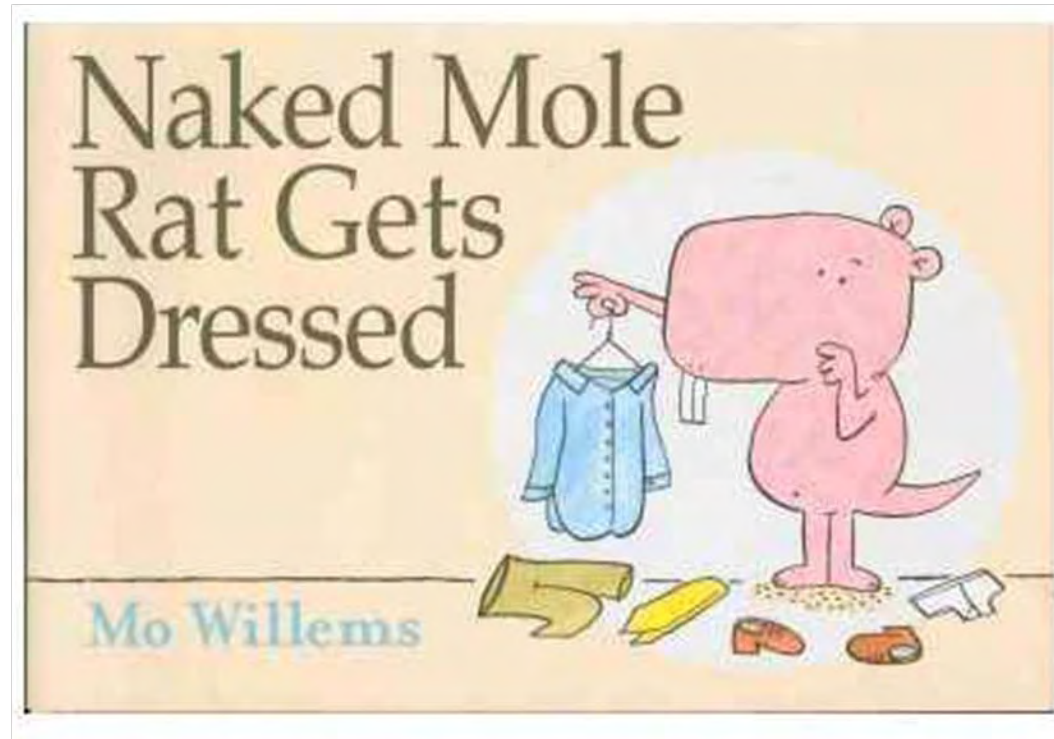


# Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed

by Mo Willems

What can I say? We love Mo, so we had to include this book on our list. Naked Mole Rat loves to dress up in clothes; however, his friends don't quite understand. They try their best to explain to him that Naked Mole Rats don't wear clothes. His response was, "why not?" They take him to the Grand-pah who after pondering it agrees and proclaims it ok to wear clothes.

- Sometimes it is ok to go against the normal and be a little different along as it doesn't hurt anyone else. We should respect that quality in our friends.
- Can you find The Pigeon in the book? Willems usually hides him somewhere in his books...so challenges the students to find him.
- Research about Naked Mole Rats. What more can you learn about them?

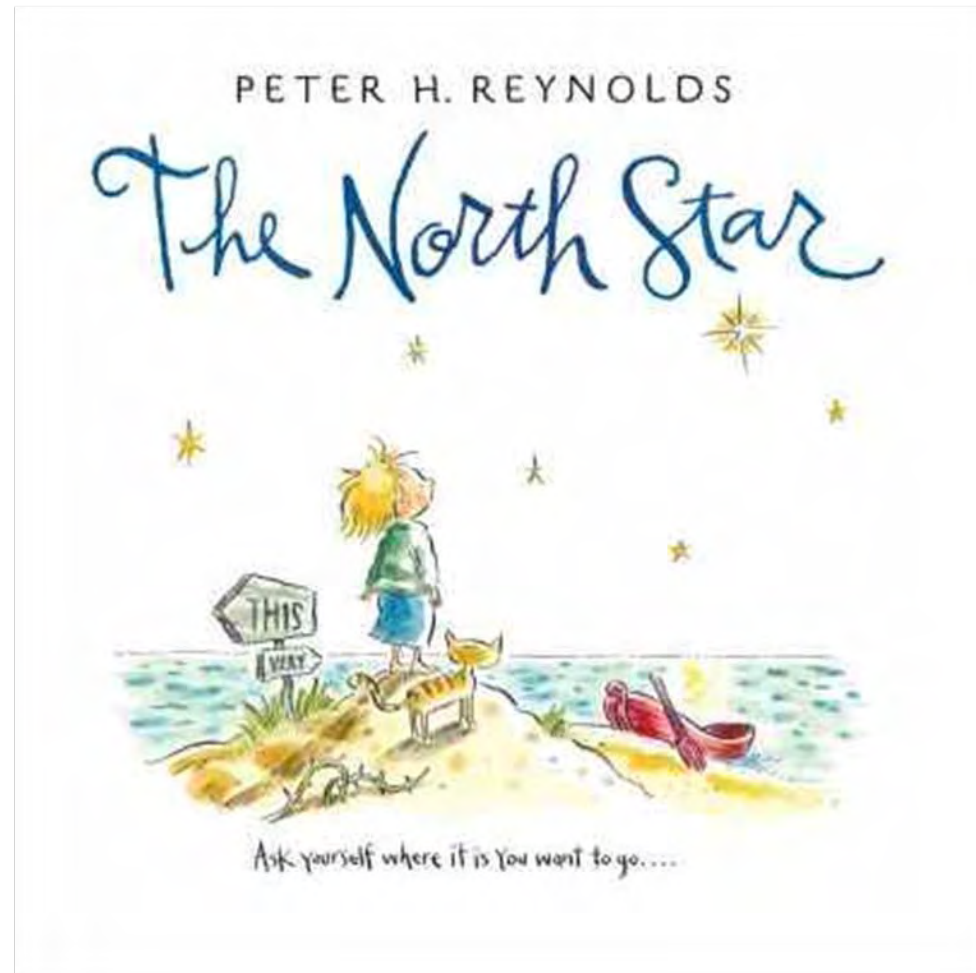


# The North Star

by Peter H. Reynolds

We have come to love Reynolds for his books that tell a simple and complex message all wrapped up together. His books are important for both children and adults. In this book, the young boy belongs his journey in life. Sometimes being guided along the way. What he discovers after a while is that he can't follow anyone else's path, but must follow his own path to success. The North Star – his star – is what guides him down the right path along the way.

- This is another book for discussing about following your own path. It is perfect to read at the beginning of the year (or end) as you hope students are setting off on the right path for the year – their path. It is a good reminder for us that while we all are moving down the path for helping our students be successful, some of our students may have a different road they need to take to get there.
- Ask students to write on an arrow where their path is taking them right now and where they want to go. Use it as a way to set a goal for the beginning of the year. Review the arrow periodically and update it as needed.



# Falling Down the Pages

Edited by Georgia Heard

The list wouldn't be complete without a little poetry. In this collection there are all kinds of poems about everyday things that children will relate to, but the fun part is that they use the layout of the words and text to help tell the story of the poem. The odd long shape will attract students because it is different.

These poems would make wonderful Hallway Greetings and Welcome Messages. Consider how you could find ways to share them over a period of time. Then give student a piece of paper the same size and see what kind of poems they might write about everyday things. Brainstorm ahead of time adjectives and describing words that will help them. Have students video tape reading their poem standing next to their object.

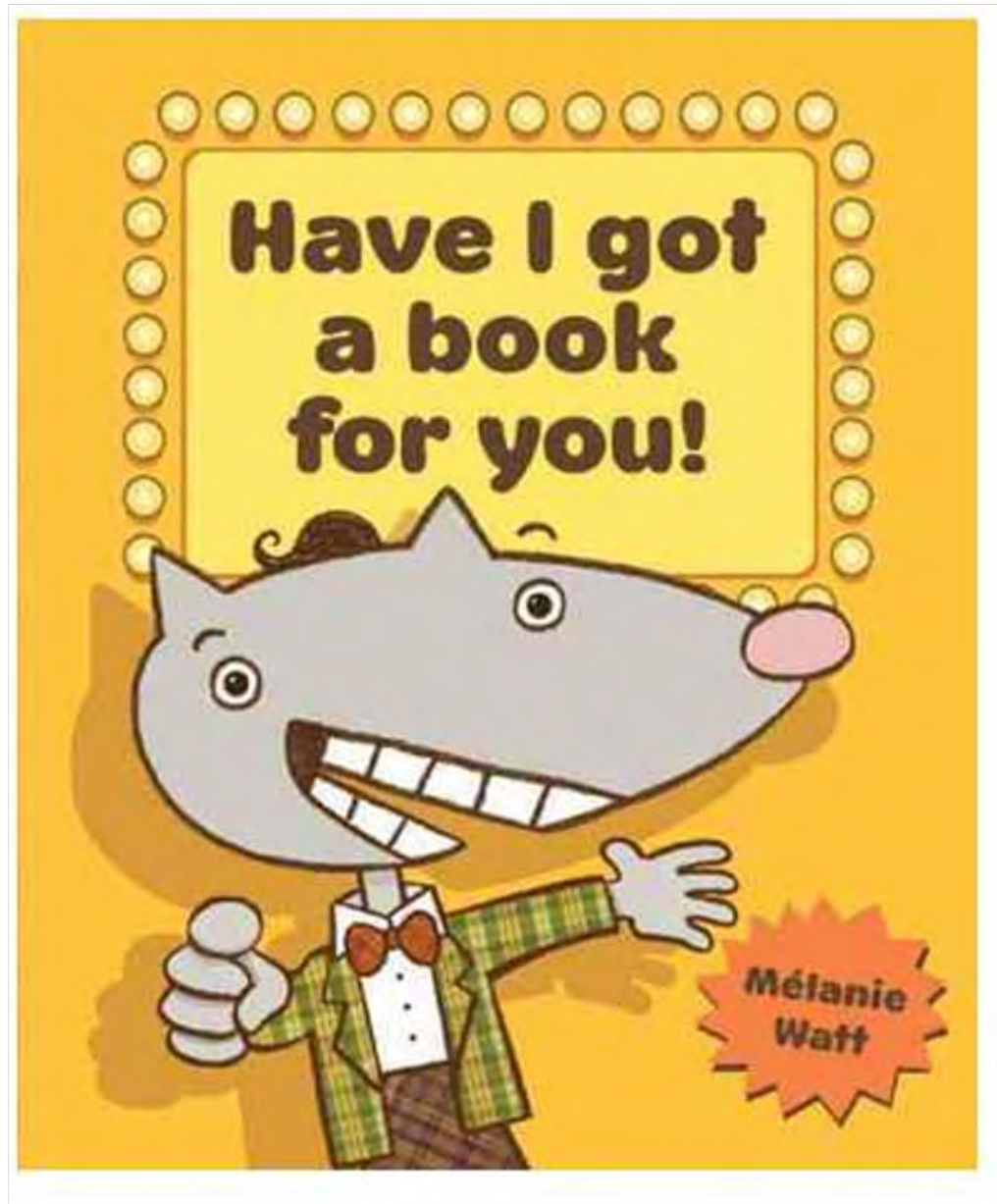


# Have I Got a Book for You!

by Melanie Watt

We couldn't resist this book because it all about a sales pitch to get the reader to want to read the book.

- Have students use some of these techniques to create a commercial based on a book they read. (Much more fun than a boring book report!).
- Talk about the power of the media. Are commercials effective? Why do we buy some of the things we do? Can advertisements effect what we buy?
- Use this as a way to introduce a novel or book you are going to read as an entire class. Entice the kids to want to read it. This could be your emotional hook.



# The Curious Garden

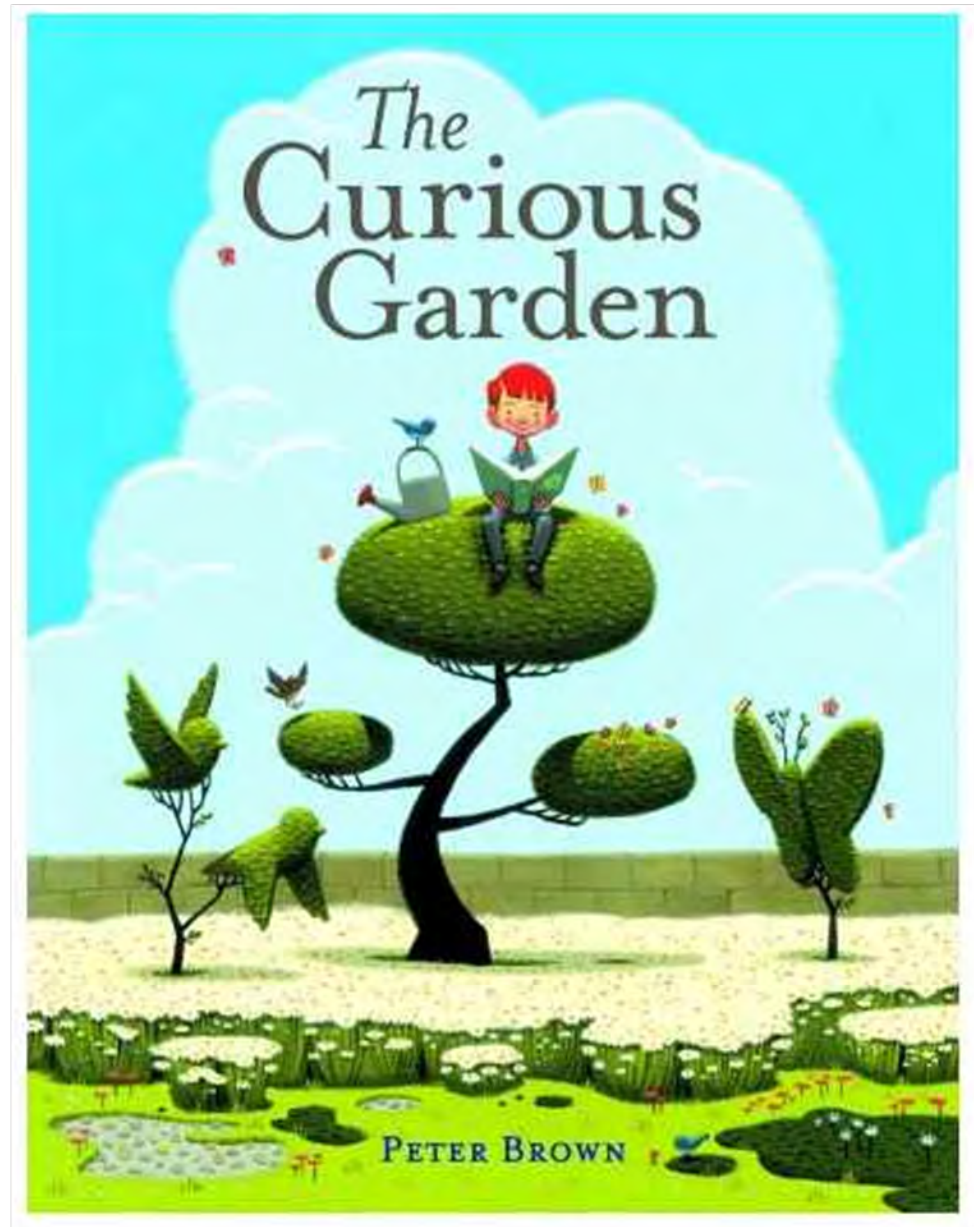
by Peter Brown

This is a story about a curious boy who explores an old forgotten railroad track that in turn becomes a beautiful garden. The efforts of this one boy spread to others and eventually others help tend and expand the garden.

- Community circle topics:

- This boy took a lot of initiative in this book. Can you list some of the ways he used the Lifeline of initiative?
- The garden transformed the city in this story? How do you think it did that?
- Is it really possible for one person to make a change for a whole community? Why or why not?

- Consider a place in your community that might need brightening up. As a class take on that project to help make your community a better place.





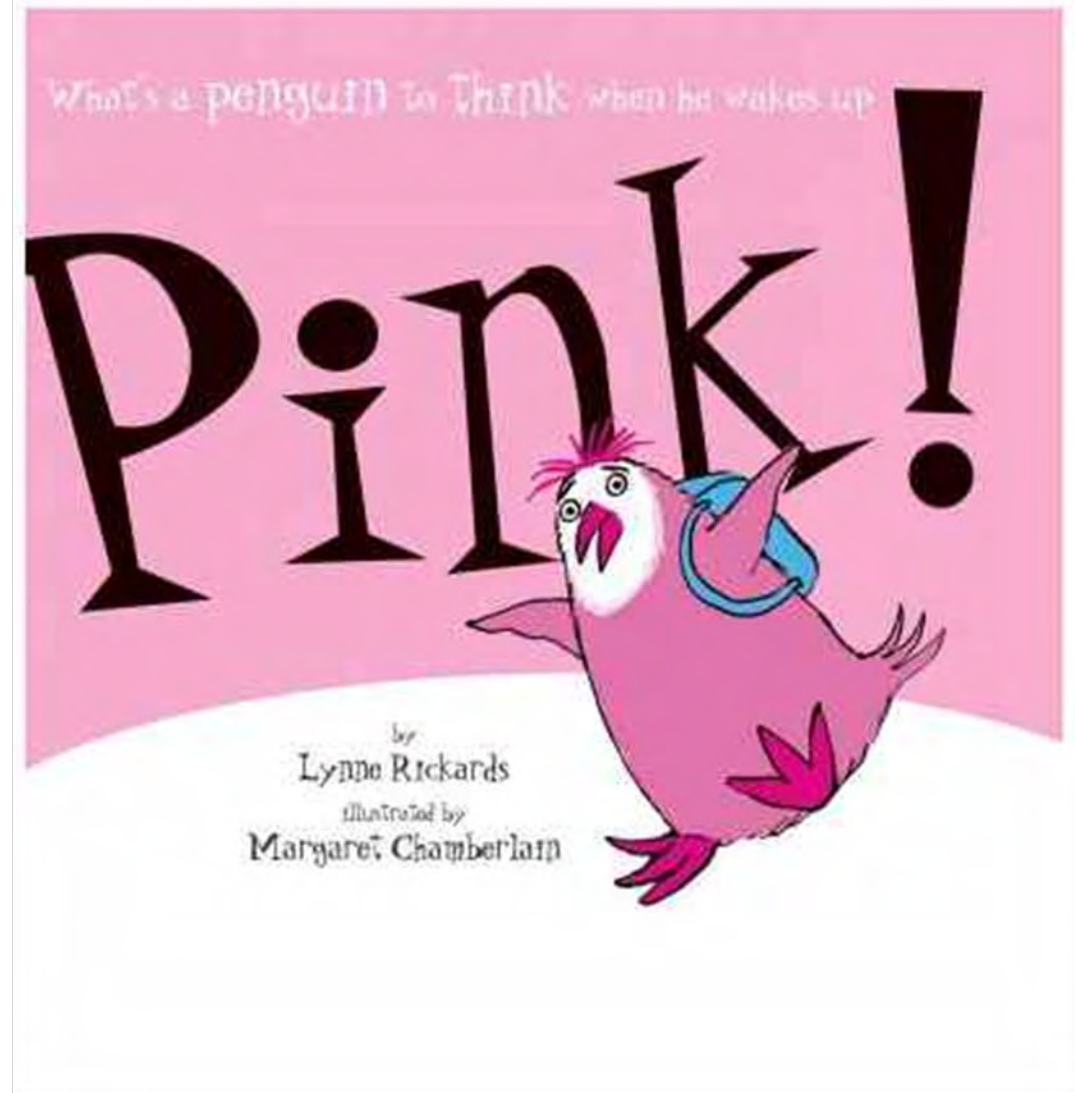
# Pink!

By Lynne Rickards

This little penguin will grow in your hearts much like Helen Lester's Tacky did years ago. One day Patrick wakes up and he is PINK!!! Boys aren't suppose to be pink. He gets very distressed. He is worried people will make fun of him. So, he decided to go where there are other pink animals – Flamingos in Africa.

Fortunately, he quickly finds out that he doesn't fit in there and maybe things back home weren't so bad after all. When he returns, his friends are all curious of his adventure and he realizes the color really doesn't matter after all.

- Ask students to pick a color. Then write a story about why (or why not) they would want to be that color. Stand them in front of a data projector and using a PowerPoint slide turn them that color. Film them reading their story. Students will enjoy their brief color transformation while sharing their writing.

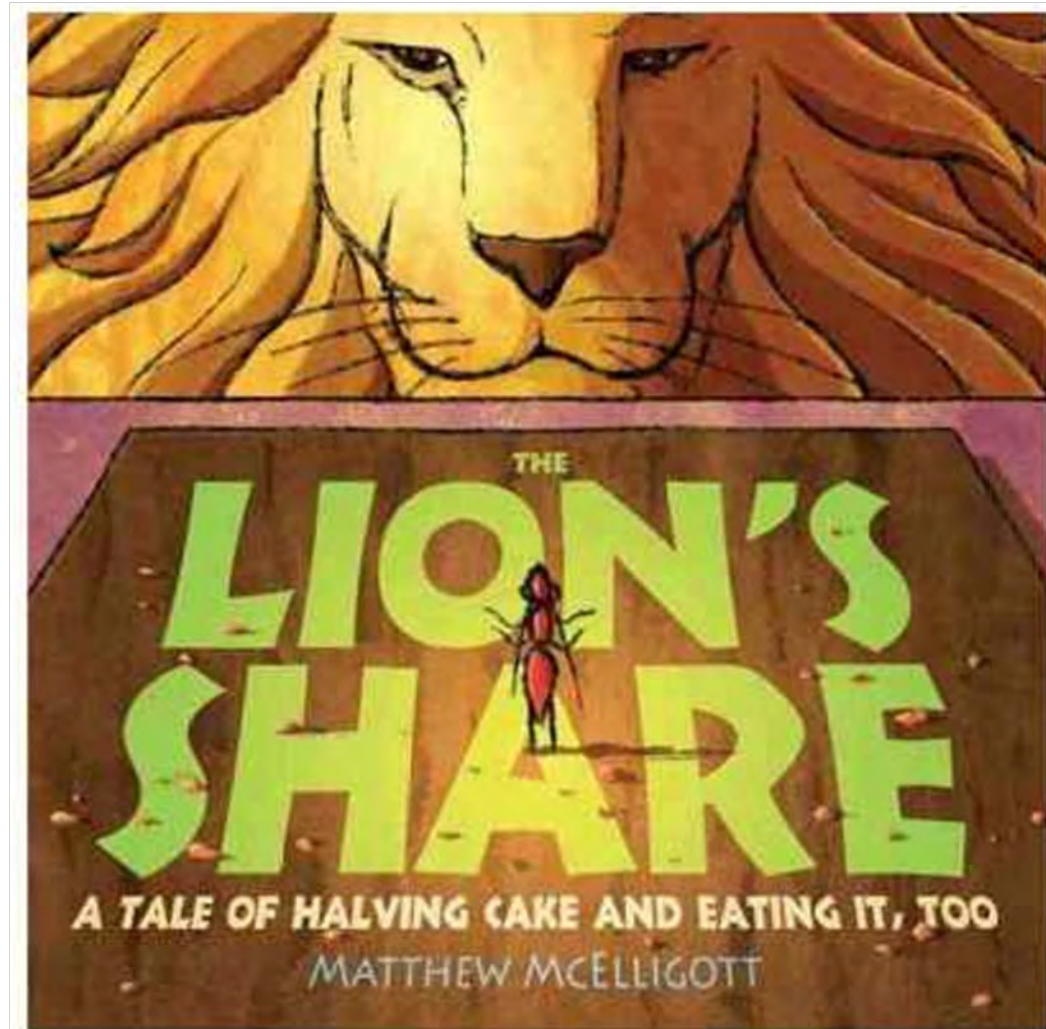


# The Lion's Share

by Matthew McElligott

This book is perfect way to talk about sharing and fractions. The lion invites a group over to eat dinner and when the cake comes each person takes only  $\frac{1}{2}$ . However, as we see in the book  $\frac{1}{2}$  shrinks each time so that when it gets to the lion there is little left. The ant is mortified and offers to bake the king a cake. The other animals, still unaware they caused the problem, try to do more by baking more cakes, but the lion is most impressed by the one made by the ant.

- The author includes great details and layouts with the illustrations to demonstrate the idea of cutting the cake in half showing the fractions involved. Use a cake in the classroom to replicate it for students. (Then of course the class can decide how to solve the problem so everyone gets some cake!)
- Talk about the idea of sharing and greed. Most of the animals in this book did not treat each other right. What might have been some better options?



# “Best of 2009”

## Other great resources to consider.

- Trends in Children’s Literature over the Last 10 years
  - <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/1790000379/post/1080051108.html>
- Early Word Best of 2009
  - <http://www.earlyword.com/2009/12/22/best-childrens-books-update/>
- Amazon’s Best of 2009
  - [http://www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html/ref=pe\\_31480\\_13828680\\_fe\\_txt\\_1/?plgroup=1&docId=1000446401](http://www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html/ref=pe_31480_13828680_fe_txt_1/?plgroup=1&docId=1000446401)
- Peggy Sharp’s Best Lists!
  - <http://www.peggysharp.com/index.php>
  - Usually posts her favorite of the year at some point, so check back later for 2009. (Check out previous years, too!)
- NY Times Best Illustrated Books 2009
  - [http://www.nytimes.com/gift-guide/holiday-2009/20091108\\_best-illustrated\\_gg/list.html](http://www.nytimes.com/gift-guide/holiday-2009/20091108_best-illustrated_gg/list.html)
- Newbery and Caldecott Medals will be announced Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>.
  - Check <http://www.ala.or/alsc/> to see the winners.
- Publisher’s Weekly’s Best of 2009
  - <http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6704596.html>
- School Library Journal’s Best of 2009
  - <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6708210.html>
- Our Best of 2008 and 2007 are posted on the C.L.A.S.S. wiki
  - <http://joyofclass.pbworks.com/E-Tools+Archives>