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Annotated Bibliography: Children’s Literature

Davies, Nicola. *One Tiny Turtle*. Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 2008

Informational Text, Grade Level K – 5. This book features the life cycle and journey of a loggerhead sea turtle through well written text and beautiful illustrations. Readers learn a lot about the creature such as where she lives, what a loggerhead eats, and how she lays her eggs, which happens to be on the same beach where she was born. The pictures will appeal to both younger and older readers. There is also a nice section at the back of the book that provides some “did you know” information. Great for a read aloud whether discussing life cycles or ocean life.

DePaola, Tomie. *The Legend of the Bluebonnet: An Old Tale of Texas*. New York: Putnam, 1983

Traditional Literature- Folktale, Grade Level 3 – 6. This is a folktale telling how the state flower of Texas, the bluebonnet, came to be. The story tells of a little girl, She-Who-Is-Alone, and the how she sacrificed her beloved doll to the Great Spirits to end a horrible drought. As a sign that the spirits accepted her gift they cover the land in bluebonnets each Spring. This is a great story to read when teaching Texas history or even symbols of Texas.

Grimes, Nikki. *Almost Zero*. New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2010

Realistic Fiction, Grade Level 2 – 5. I’m going to need both my own children and students to read this book. In the story a little girl, Dyamonde, really wants a pair of red high-top sneakers. She goes to her mom and demands that her mom buy her the shoes that she “needs”, and in turn her mom gives her a reality check of what she really “needs” to survive. Dyamonde, is left with one outfit which she must wear to school repeatedly. A tragic event happens in the story, when another student’s home burns down. This event truly open Dyamonde’s eyes and she organizes away to help the student in need. Great read to help students see the realities of life and needs vs. wants.

Higgins, Ryan T. *Mother Bruce.* New York: Disney/Hyperion, 2015.

Animal Fantasy, Grade Level K – 3. This book tells the story of a grumpy bear named, Bruce, who doesn’t like to be bothered by anyone or anything, expect eggs. One day Bruce has some eggs that hatch in goslings. These goslings think Bruce is their mother. He tries several different antics to rid himself of the goslings but they are there to stay. What will Bruce do with his new found “friends”? This would be a great read aloud for studying character traits and changes, and migration.

Hills, Tad. *What's up, Duck?: A Book of Opposites.* New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2008

Picture Book, Grade Level Toddler – PreK. This adorable and brightly illustrated board book, features a duck and a goose, which show children an assortment of things that are opposite. Since this book is part of a series of other “Duck and Goose” books, these characters may already be familiar to the young reader. The book is easy for small children to turn the pages on their own. They can also follow along with the actions of duck and goose.

Jenkins, Steve. *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003

Informational, Grade Level K – 3. This is a very creative and well-designed book featuring close-ups of different animal parts. Each page features a single body part from multiple animals. The fun part is you get to guess which animal each body part belongs to, as well as, how the animal uses that particular part. I used this with students for learning about animal characteristics, as well as, predicting using the facts we are given.

Katz, Susan. *The President's Stuck in the Bathtub: Poems About the Presidents.* Boston:

Clarion Books, 2012.

Poetry, Grade Level K – 4. A book of poems, each is set as either a poem (rhymed and free verse) or a prose poem, that sheds light on some fun and silly secrets of our past presidents. The poems in this book are based on facts or true incidents, and the author adds a brief footnote that gives extra background about each. This is always a fun book to bring out around election time or when teaching about government. It adds something fun to learning facts about past presidents.

Lane, Kathleen. *The Best Worst Thing.* New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2016

Realistic Fiction, Grade Level 3 – 6. When Maggie, an eleven-year-old girl, learns of a robbery and murder at a local convenient store, that she just visited, she becomes increasingly worried. The suspect got away on foot and escaped by means of her street. This book shows us what it’s like, being an adolescent in today’s world, and coming to the reality that the world isn’t always what we thought it was growing up. We see Maggie as she struggles with all the many things that most other kids her age do when they are coming of age. We also see how Maggie learns to deal with her anxieties. I think this would be a great read for a book club of kids in 4th-5th grade to open up a discussion about handling the issues they are dealing with today.

Medina, Meg. *Mango, Abuela, and Me.* Sommerville, Massachusetts: Candlewick Press, 2015.

Multicultural Literature, Grade Level K – 3. This story features a girl named, Mia, whose Abuela, or grandmother as we say in English, is coming to live with her and her family, from far away. The two cannot communicate well due to the language barrier. While they both begin to learn each other’s language it’s not enough, but with the help of a new friend, a parrot named Mango, Mia and Abuela begin to communicate better and have a sense of common ground. This is a heartwarming story that would be great to use for teaching anything from cultural differences, to patience, families and finding common ground.

Muth, Jon J. *Hi, Koo!: A Year Of Seasons*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2014.

Poetry Picture Book, Grade Level K – 3. In this story, we go on a journey with an adorable little panda bear, named Koo, who explores the fours season in twenty-six haiku poems. The illustrations in the book really help to set the tone, since haiku poetry is more of a simple form. I think this would be a great book to use for teaching about seasons, poetry or even the use of illustrations within a text when teaching about publishing.

Pinkney, Jerry. *The Ugly Duckling*. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1999.

Traditional Literature- Fairy Tale, Grade Level K – 3. This is a great retelling of a classic story that many of us are familiar with. We follow the story of a duck who feels like he’s ugly and doesn’t fit in. He faces challenges, meets friends and overcomes his feelings of “ugliness”, as he transforms into a beautiful swan. This is a great story for teaching students about story elements and character transformation. It would also work well for students discussing feelings and overcoming differences.

Stanley, Diane. *Ada Lovelace, Poet of Science: The First Computer Programmer*. New York:

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2016.

Biography, Grade Level K – 5. I never realized that the first computer programmer was a woman. This is an interesting book of the life of Ada Lovelace. It gives insight into how she came to be a computer programmer, starting with her unique parents. Her mother was a mathematician and scientist, while her father was a poet. Lovelace used her strengths from both of her parents to become such an important woman in the history of CS. While she was often told to just be a wife and mom, Lovelace found an outlet for her scientific talents through her work with Charles Babbage. Her job was to write the notes for the invention, which by doing so she created with the first algorithm.

Tarshis, Lauren. *I Survived Hurricane Katrina, 2005*. New York: Scholastic, 2011

Historical Fiction, Grade Level 3 – 6. Eleven-year-old, Barry Tucker, lives with his family in New Orleans, when Hurricane Katrina hits. His family tries to evacuate before the storm hits their home. However, Barry’s little sister gets sick, so the family is forced to stay and ride out the horrible storm. Things seem fine until the levees break, and Barry's swept away by the flooding. We continue to follow to see if Barry can survive on his own during this awful event. There are many real details that account for the events which happened during Hurricane Katrina, which would make it a great read in a history class.

Watt, Fiona. *That’s Not My Kitten*. Usborne, EDC, 2006.

Interactive Picture Book, Grade Level Toddler – PreK. This interactive book explores different kittens, with repetitive text and patches of textures to feel. It’s a good weight board book with bright and bold illustrations. As you turn each page it shows a new kitten with a different texture (soft fur, rough tongue, smooth ear, etc.). The text reads, “That’s not my kitten, it’s ears are too soft” and continues that way featuring each texture. This book is great for sensory and language development.

Willems, Mo. *We Are in a Book.* New York, N.Y.: Hyperion, 2010

Animal Fantasy, Grade Level K – 2. This favorite among my students is great for teaching students how to use voice in their reading. The characters, Elephant and Piggie, are in constant dialogue. Students can take on the voice of each character and read with emotion. This is the first book in this series. Here Elephant and Piggie discover that they can get the reader to say things and by the end they encourage us to continue reading their stories. Very clever and useful story featuring talking animals.