

Best Books For Libraries 2019 - Elementary School

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Picture Books

Carle, Eric. ***What's Your Favorite Food?*** (Grades K-5)

I like this book because it showcased individuality of personal food preferences, unique colorful illustrations, and a variety of writing styles. It would be a great purchase for teachers to read to the class to help instigate creative writing and/or drawing assignments. Students will like to read what makes each food choice special for each author and why they illustrated their page the way they did. It is a relatable subject matter for any reader! A great story starter book.

Cherry, Matthew A. ***Hair Love*** (Grades K-3)

Striking vibrant illustrations. Hair Love shares a heart-warming story of a dad who is charged with the challenging task of styling his daughter's hair the way it looks in a photo she has! The story highlights the relationship between an African American dad and his daughter. The dad won't give up, even after multiple failed attempts. The daughter wants to look perfect for her working mom who has been away, and is coming home that day. Both want to surprise the mom and have the home-coming be perfect and special.

Dockrill, Laura. ***Angry Cookie*** (Grades K-2)

The title alone pulls the reader in! The angry cookie dares the reader not to turn the page...or else...challenging the reader to do just so. The cookie begins to share why he is so angry. The repetitive tune his roommate plays on his recorder annoys him, yucky toothpaste, and a bad haircut is just the beginning. After sharing all this and realizing he still has a captive audience who is still willing to listen (the reader), he becomes introspective to find all is not so bad if one has someone who listens even when they are grumpy! A great read-aloud with bright illustrations.

Ken-Wilson-Max. ***Astro Girl*** (Grades K-3)

The stars are the limit for a little girl who acts out her wish to be an astronaut-inspired by a very special person. Astrid has loved the stars and space as long as she can remember. While her

mama is away, Astrid and her papa have fun acting out challenges an astronaut faces on a space mission-like being in zero gravity and eating food out of a tube. At the end of the book readers get a sweet surprise when they find out Astrid's mother is an astronaut. The last page of this beautifully illustrated book includes brief information on famous women astronauts. This book cheers on children to have dreams and encourages hope in a simple way.

Cabrera, Jane. ***The Thank You Letter***. (Grades K-2)

A beautifully illustrated picture book that teaches children the valuable lessons of gratitude and appreciation. Grace has a wonderful birthday party and receives lots of nice gifts. She decides to handwrite a thank you letter to all of her guests with her new pens and pencils. A great book to read when discussing manners and the importance of saying a simple thank you.

Phi, Bao. ***My Footprints*** (Grades K-3)

A timeless and important book that deals with the fallout of bullying and the power of a child's imagination to overcome it with the strength and support of a loving family. The story opens with a young Vietnamese-American girl named Thuy being laughed at again by two kids as she's leaving school alone on a winter day. It's clear in Thuy's expressions how upsetting the bullies' taunts are. Walking through the crunchy snow, she looks behind her and notices her footprints. Thuy continues on her way home "dipping the tips of her boots deep into the snow...., wanting to feel peaceful, quiet, left alone." When Thuy gets home she does not want to talk about the bullying with her two moms. Instead, she makes footprints of animals who are strong and able to stand up to bullies, like a grizzly bear. Then, the three play a game by making footprints of their favorite animals in the snow. Thuy makes up her own creature who is never mean or unkind and she comes up with a very clever name for it. The story ends with the three making heart shapes in the snow.

Shea, Bob. ***Who Wet My Pants?*** (Grades K-2)

Why he mysteriously has wet pants is the over "bearing" problem bear has to solve right from the start! Instantly the reader has been sucked into the injustice of the bear's plight, and now has to keep reading to find out who is the culprit. Bear abruptly and furiously blames his close animal friends for wetting his pants. As they all denied having anything to do with bear's wet pants, he begins to back track through his day to solve this all consuming mystery. This laugh out loud "who don it" story has colorful illustrations that parallel the ingenious plot, and would be a great read-a-loud story.

Sotomayor, Sonia. ***Just Ask*** (Grades K-3)

In a time when educators are promoting mindfulness, tolerance, and kindness, Sonia Sotomayor nails these virtuous concepts. It reminds me of ***Wonder***, only for the younger grade levels! Each page describes a different issue children face from allergies to Tourette's syndrome, and what questions children may have about it. The author begins with using the example of a garden, with its many different items planted in it, to express how we are all different and need different things to help us in life...and that is not a bad thing. Every student

and caregiver would benefit from reading this title, as well as use it as a springboard to foster open conversations about our differences.

Voss, Jonathan. **Imagine That** (K-3)

Imaginative story for the dreamers in your classrooms! It is Winnie the Pooh mixed with Peter Pan. Hoot, an owl that looks suspiciously like Pooh, is having a hard time using his imagination to play with his best friend Olive, on a rainy day they can't go outside. Where Olive sees the house floating away in a storm, Hoot only sees a puddle. Olive doesn't give up trying to help Hoot find his "iminator", so he can also join in the fun. He shares how his heart hurts the most when he can't imagine. Olive tells him he needs to then imagine with his heart, which opens a wonderful world of creative imaginative play for both of them. Great story about not giving up with eye catching illustrations.

Easy Readers

Bell, Cece. **Chick & Brain: Smell My Foot.** (Grades 1-2) Chick and Brain are the modern reader's version of Dick and Jane. Four chapters tell the story of Chick's obsession with manners and Brain's need for his feet to be smelled. The villain in this story is the dog Spot who wants to eat Chick because her feet smell like chicken. The comic book format adds to the silliness of this story of miscommunication. Cece Bell won the Newbery Honor for *El Deafo* and this story has the potential to win a Geisel Award.

Fenske, Jonathan. **I Will Race You Through This Book.** (Grades K-1) Book-It Bunny wants to race the reader to the end of the book. This reading race will motivate beginning readers as they follow the sneaky bunny's path to the end. The cartoonish looking rabbit speaks in rhyming couplets making it easier for new readers to decipher the words.

May, Kyla. **Diary of a Pug: Pug Blasts Off.** (Grades K-2) The first book in a sweet and funny new series about a pug and his human, told from the Pug's POV. A great book for beginning readers with lots of adorable illustrations. Meet the cutest pug on earth and his best friend Bella and Dutchess the cat. When Bella enters the Inventor Challenge at school, Bub the pug, a nickname for Baron von Bubbles, wants to help her make the best project ever. But then Bub ruins Bella's project by mistake. Can he help fix it?

Milgrim, David. **Poof! A Bot!** (Grades K-1)

This Ready-to-Go story is perfect for new readers as it features sight words, rhyming words and repetition. Zip zaps a robot to life and tries to command it to do his bidding in this simple and funny easy reader.

Juvenile Fiction

Beaty, Andrea. **Ada Twist and the Perilous Pants.** (Grades 2-4) The second book in The Questioners series is a middle grade chapter book with lots of STEM and lots of humor. Ada

loves science and has a lot of questions about why things happen. These questions come in handy when her friend Rosie Revere needs help. Rosie's Uncle Ned has gotten carried away in his most famous helium pants and Ada needs some answers. Can Ada figure out how to get Uncle Ned down? With the help of her fellow Questioneers Iggy Peck and Rosie Revere, her brother Arthur, and some new friends, Ada Twist is ready to save the day. Filled with lots of scientific facts, easy diagrams and humor, kids will learn and laugh at the same time while reading this book.

Elliott, Zetta. ***The Dragon Thief***. (Grades 2-4) This sequel to *Dragons in a Bag* tells the story of what happened after Kavita stole her brother's friend Jaxon's baby dragon. Kavita finds an unexpected ally in her Auntie when she confides in her about the dragon, Mo. Jaxon and his friend, Vik search the city for Kavita and the dragon. They are helped by Kenny, a boy in their class who had a reputation as a bully but is actually a lonely kid. If Jaxon cannot find the dragon and return it to the magical realm, there will be consequences for all magical creatures and humans too. This chapter book has many positive messages, a diverse cast of characters, and illustrations that enhance the young reader's experience.

Freeman, Martha. ***Goldilocks, Go Home***. (Grades 3-5)

Bobby Bear AKA Baby Bear has a pretty peaceful life until the furless yellow-haired creature shows up at his cottage. This chapter book version of Goldilocks and the Three Bears will appeal to readers who like the humor of Jon Scieszka and Adam Rex. Illustrator Sevilla's black and white drawings are included throughout the text. This fast-paced fractured fairy tale will interest many children and they will recognize many characters including the Troll who guards the bridge, the three pigs, and the Big Bad Wolf. There is another book planned about Little Red Riding Hood.

Gray Gubler, Matthew. ***Rumple buttercup*** (Grades K & up)

Excellent for reluctant readers, ESL, and a great emotional boost for all of us who don't feel like we fit in. The creature who lives literally in the gutter, describes the seasons going by as he occasionally peaks above the grate, and yearns to be a part of society. He holds back, because he thinks of himself as too weird looking, only to learn that there are people who not only saw him during the year, but cared enough to ask if he is Okay. Very simple drawings. This book makes the reader feel safe enough to possibly risk stepping out of their comfort zone to make new friendships.

Greenland, Shannon. ***Scouts*** (Grades 3 - 8)

Fans of Stranger Things will love this title. It has similar aspects of pre-teen closely bonded friendships, night expedition, BMX bikes, and walkie talkies. It also reminds me of E.T with strange glowing spheres, a possible alien sighting, and the abrupt situation taken over by government agents. This book is great for older reluctant readers, easy to read with suspense and adventure. The book keeps the reader spellbound with new characters popping up in the woods and a kidnapping of sorts! Realistic testing of friendship bonds and growing pains, give this book aspects many young readers will relate to.

Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. ***Shouting at the Rain*** (Grades 4-6) Delsie has always lived with her Grammy on Cape Cod and she looks forward to seeing her summer friend Brandy every year. This year Brandy has dumped her for a rude girl named Tressa and Delsie learns that “some friends are just glitter and some friends are glue.” She makes a new friend, Ronan who is a fisherman’s son and defends her against Tressa’s cruel words and tricks. Although Delsie was abandoned by her mother at a young age, she is surrounded by adults who care about her including her neighbors.

Kadhota, Cynthia. ***A Place to Belong*** (Grades 5 and up)

A complex and emotionally impactful work of historical fiction set at the end of World War II. Hanako, a twelve year old girl, tells the story of her family during and after the war. In America, the only home she has ever known, her family, along with thousands of other innocent Americans, are sent to a camp to live for four years because of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and their Japanese heritage. In Japan, where they are forced to move after the war, Hanako and her family are supposed to start a new life but the country is in shambles because of the US bombing of Hiroshima. Filled with both sadness and unexpected joys, this book shows the great importance of family and sticking together. A wonderful book for middle grade readers who enjoy historical fiction.

Lin, Cindy. ***The Twelve***. (Grades 4-7) Usagi and her sister Uma have powers related to the Chinese Zodiac. Usagi has rabbitlike powers since she was born in the year of the wood rabbit and Uma has fire and horse powers because she was born in the year of the fire horse. Their island home was invaded several years ago and most people with Zodiac powers have been hunted by their oppressors led by the evil Dragonlord. When Usagi’s best friend and sister are captured by the Dragonguard, she joins three people who believe they are the Heirs of the Twelve. The Twelve once protected Usagi’s homeland with their special abilities. This adventure fantasy story is ideal for readers who liked the *Wings of Fire* series by Tui Sutherland.

Lindsay Lackey. ***All the Impossible Things*** (Grades 5 and up)

A beautiful book about family, friendship and loss with a touch of magic. Whenever Ruby “Red” Byrd is scared or angry, the wind picks up. Red has been placed in foster care, moving from family to family, which tends to keep her skies stormy. She is trying to control it but can’t figure out how. Red moves into the Groove family home this time and begins to feel peaceful and content with her new family and friends. However, just when Red starts to settle into her new life, a new storm rolls in, one Red knows too well: her mother, who is addicted to painkillers and fresh out of prison. A perfect middle grade book that is impossible to put down.

Maddox, Jake ***JV Back On Track (2019 title in JV series for boys/girls)*** (grades 4-8)

Addison, a middle schooler, wants to join the track team, but also needs to babysit her younger brother. Without Addison’s mom knowing, her best friend Sofia decides to help babysit, which allows Addison to make the track team. Guilt, and her mom finding out, ends with Addison and her mom talking about family. Her track coach steps in with a solution for all, and Addison learns

how honesty and the truth wins over any other action. Great hi-lo series for older students who are struggling readers.

Medina, Juana. ***Juana & Lucas Big Problemas***. (Grades 1-3)

Juana lives with her Mami and her dog in Columbia. She is very content with her life although she does wonder what life would be like if her dad were still alive. Juana notices some changes in her Mami starting with a new hairstyle and a new friend, Luis. Juana does not want her mother to get married again but she sees that Mami and Luis are getting closer. Juana discovers that her mother and Luis are getting married. Will Juana adjust to this change? Readers will love the full-color illustrations which depict Juana's experiences.

Milano, Alyssa. ***Project Middle School*** (Grades 4-6) Starting middle school is never easy but Hope Roberts has the added challenge of being separated from her best friend, Sam since Hope was accepted into the advanced classes track. Hope dreams of being a scientist and she is excited to join the science club. However the boys in the club do not listen to the girls. Hope is determined to change the world starting with the boys in her class. Cartoon style illustrations add an element of fun to this positive story.

Nayari, Daniel. ***Sasha and Puck and the Potion of Luck (The Elixir Fixers Book 1)*** (Grades 2-4)

A great beginning chapter book for lovers of both mystery and magic. Sasha's father sells magic potions, but the potions don't work. Can twelve year old Sasha find a way to help make magic happen? When chocolate maker Ms. Kozlow comes to the Juicy Gizzard potion shop asking for luck, Sasha needs to find out why so she can help her father keep the shop open! Maybe Ms. Kozlow needs luck because she has a matchmaking appointment with Granny Yenta this afternoon? Or is it something else? Can Sasha and her new friend Puck make it Ms. Kozlow's lucky day? A cute map of the village is included at the beginning of the book. The first book in a promising new series.

Renee Watson. ***Some Places More Than Others*** (Grades 3-7)

Amara, who has grown up in Oregon, has worn her parents down for approval to go to Harlem with her dad, on a business trip, to visit her dad's family whom she has never met in all her 12 years. While Amara and her dad share a close bond with her being the only child up until now, as her mom is pregnant with her new sibling, the void of family connections on her dad's side has become all consuming. Amara feels incomplete as a person. She needs to find answers to her family history for a school project, her goal is to breakdown the barriers between her dad and grandfather as they visit Harlem and her dad's childhood home. This coming of age, realistic fictional story has Amara exploring the city with her new found cousins. When she gets separated from them a few days into her visit, and of course her phone dies, Amara bravely finds familiar landmarks to help her get back safely to her grandfather's house and learns more about who she is in the process.

Sheth, Kashmira. ***Nina Soni, Former Best Friend.*** (Grades 2-5)

The first title in a new series featuring Nina, a lovable nine year old Indian-American girl and her family and friends. Nina, easily distracted, tried as hard as she could, but still somehow she forgot about her school project. And her best friend is mad at her. With little sister Kavita's birthday party around the corner and her longtime friendship with Jay on the rocks, there's a lot going on. Will she be able to get it all done?

Biography

Biebow, Natascha. ***The Crayon Man: The True Story of the Invention of Crayola Crayons.*** (Grades 1-4)

It's easy to take today's ubiquitous colored crayons for granted. However, they were a result of one individual's innovation. Biebow introduces Edwin Binney- head of a carbon black company in the early 1900s- who wished to make color-pigmented wax crayons that reflected the world outside. The illustrations reflect the formality of the era, which he playfully disrupts with splashes of color. Readers are likely to be fascinated with the process of "grinding, grinding, grinding up rocks and materials into fine powders" and the rich colors that result. Back matter is attention grabbing as well, with photographs of crayon production today. A colorful addition for picture books about inventors and inventions and all things STEAM.

Chaffee, Kim. ***Her Fearless Run*** (Grades K-3)

This story is inspirational for all readers. The story begins with Kathrine, a young girl who likes to run, being looked at funny as girls and women did not run anywhere during the 1950s. In college, Kathrine met and trained with the men's running team. Volunteer team manager, Arnie Briggs supported Kathrine as she ran the Boston marathon with him in 1967. She was the first female to run the Boston marathon officially. This biography shows passion and personal determination to accomplish life goals. Soft mixed media collage illustrations.

Winter, Jonah. ***Elvis Is King!*** (Grades K-4)

Interesting 3D illustrations and stop motion animation by Award winning illustrator Red Nose Studio visualizes Elvis's young life. They make the reader want to turn the page to see more! Readers will learn how insecure, vulnerable and poor Elvis was growing up. On the other side, his passion for music was what drove him forward to stardom. Short text chalked full of biographical information about Elvis from birth to his first big hit record. Visually appealing.

Wittenstein, Barry. ***A Place to Land: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Speech That Inspired a Nation*** (Grades 3-5)

A beautiful historical narrative about Martin Luther King's famous speech with Pinkney's lovely pencil and watercolor art which includes maps, sheet music and blurry period photos of marchers and key historical figures. On the night before the historic march on Washington, Martin Luther King Jr. debated, worked, and wrote late into the night, trying to decide what to say-and how to say it. This little known story celebrates not only the famed 'I Have a Dream'

speech, but the influences of many other pioneering Civil Rights leaders who helped shape those famous words.

Juvenile Nonfiction

Brown, Tami Lewis. ***Instructions Not Included: How a Team of Women Coded the Future.*** (Grades 2-4) Betty Snyder, Jean Jennings, and Kay McNulty were female mathematicians and engineers whose major task was to program one of the first computers, ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer). Although the women were barely recognized at the time for accomplishing their task, they were pioneers in the new world of computer science. The lyrical text and pastel art show the personalities of these different women who may inspire young girls today to pursue a career in computer science.

Challoner, Jack. ***Stem Lab: 25 Super-cool Projects: Build, Invent, Create, Discover.*** (Grades 3-7) Kid-friendly projects are arranged into four categories: forces and motion, liquids and reactions, shapes and structures, and light and sound. Photos of the completed craft, a list of materials required, the time requirement and difficulty level are included with each project. Young makers will be eager to try out these projects and will also learn about real-world applications of different STEM concepts.

Paul, Miranda. ***Little Libraries Big Heroes.*** (Grades K-3)
Todd and his friends loved heroes. But in school, Todd didn't feel very heroic. Reading was difficult for him and he was scolded for asking too many questions. From an award-winning author and illustrator, this book tells the inspiring story of how the Little Free Library organization brings communities together through books, from founder Todd Bol's first installation of the little library to the creation of more than 75,000 mini-libraries around the world. Lovely illustrations are included in this picture book of little libraries in the United States and around the world.

Perl, Erica. ***Truth or Lie: Dinosaurs!*** and ***Truth or Lie: Sharks!*** (Grades 1-3)
Young readers will enjoy the question-and-answer format of these nonfiction early readers. Children will read four statements but only three of the statements are true in these funny Step 3 Readers. Each book includes a short list of suggested titles about the specific topic and a list of websites at the back of the book.

Rajcak, Helene. ***Unseen Worlds: Real Life Microscopic Creatures Hiding All Around Us*** (Grades 2-5)
Discover a hidden universe of microscopic monsters right before your eyes. Unfold each page to reveal stunningly detailed illustrations bursting with jelly-like amoeba, predatory centipedes, ravenous mosquitos and more mites than you could imagine. Kids are going to love the gross out factor and be entranced with the creatures that hide all around us, every day.

Deborah Lee Rose. ***Scientists Get Dressed*** (Grades K-4)
This title shows the reader what various scientists need to wear to successfully complete their job task using clear, colorful photographs. The photos help the reader comprehend why each

item of clothing and/or instrumental tool is required. Plus it offers real-life picture of a scientist in action. I liked this book because it is simple, yet draws the reader in with text boxes and captions explaining in detail as to “why” they need this clothing or instrument. There is a wider range of audience, because of the layout of the book.

Juvenile Graphic Novels

Craft, Jerry. ***New Kid***. (Grades 4-7) Jordan Banks is one of only a handful of students of color at Riverdale Academy. He would have preferred to go to art school. One teacher confuses the names of the black students and even Jordan’s parents don’t fully comprehend his situation. Jordan sketches in his notebook as a way to record his experiences.

Peirce, Lincoln. ***Max & the Midknights*** (Grades 4-6) Max wants to be a knight in this humorous story set in the Middle Ages. Her uncle who is a troubadour is kidnapped by King Gastley and it is up to Max and a group of brave kids to rescue him and bring peace back to the Kingdom of Byjovia. Peirce’s comic panels are spread throughout the book which is completely different than the Big Nate series but will still appeal to fans of the series.

Telgemeirer, Raina. ***Guts*** (Grades 4-7)

A relatable and true story for any child dealing with anxiety or fear. Raina is a fourth grader who suddenly begins experiencing stomach aches all the time and an extreme fear of vomiting. She is dealing with the usual ups and downs of school and friendships. It soon becomes clear that Raina’s tummy troubles are not going away and may be due to her constant worry. Therapy and fear coping mechanisms help Raina to deal with her anxiety. Telgemeier brings us another humorous story about growing up filled with family and friendships.

Wang, Jen ***Stargazing*** (Grades 4-6)

Stargazing deals with many realistic family and friendship issues such as honesty, acceptance, bullying, illness, parenting, loneliness, anger and forgiveness. Single mother Mrs. Lin and her daughter Moon move into a new neighborhood. The Hong family rents a small cottage to them. Christine Hong and Moon find they are in the same grade and become fast friends.. As the girls navigate through this new friendship, they are also learning about themselves, who they are and what type of person they want to become. Moon is her own self assured person, but has anger issues. Christine wants to please, but is finding she is becoming jealous of Moon. Moon has emergency surgery on a brain tumor that is successful. Everything in this book is handled well and most issues were resolved with a happy ending.