

**RANDOM  
HOUSE**



**READING  
WITH  
PURPOSE  
AND  
UNDERSTANDING**

**GRADES 3-6**

**EDUCATOR GUIDE CORRELATED TO**



**COMMON CORE  
STATE STANDARDS**

Text Exemplars

Compare & Contrast

Point of View

Close Reading

Interdisciplinary  
Connections

Key Details

Research

**[RHTeachersLibrarians.com/commoncore](http://RHTeachersLibrarians.com/commoncore)**

Dear Educator,

Your young students are likely able to proudly exclaim, “I know how to read!” and now that they’re in the third grade, they’ll learn to do more than just read—they’ll begin reading with purpose and understanding. They will be exposed to diverse and challenging reading lists and gain the skills necessary to become thoughtful, critical readers. Your students are entering a phase in which a richer understanding of the text will deepen their appreciation for literature and help develop in them a lifelong love of books.

In this guide, we’ve highlighted eight wonderful titles for classroom instruction and included extension activities that range from pre-reading to close reading to post-reading activities, all of which are aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Whether you decide to use the books for whole class instruction, literacy circles, or independent reading, the intention is for these activities to focus your students’ attention on the text and their understanding of it. We suspect you’ll recognize at least some of these classroom favorites, such as *Bud, Not Buddy*, *The Black Stallion*, *Hoot*, and *Vincent Van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist*. It was a difficult task to select only a handful of books to highlight, so this guide also includes clusters of books we think make for great anchor texts, content literacy supplements, and independent reading recommendations. You’ll find clusters on engaging nonfiction, genre reading, and go-to middle-grade authors. This guide also provides the Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) and Lexile measurements of each title when available, with the understanding that these quantitative measures are just one third of the necessary evaluations needed to determine text complexity. We hope that knowing these measurements will be useful to you as you engage in your own qualitative evaluations and consider how best to match your students to texts and tasks.

The anchor and grade-specific standards being exercised in each extension activity are included herein, but depending on your process, others will most definitely apply. We hope having the anchor standards as well as the grade-specific ones will be useful to you in adjusting activities so that they best develop grade-appropriate skills. Many of the activities can be slightly adjusted to use with other books; it is our hope that you will find them useful and inspiring for your practice in general.

We love books. You love books. And we couldn’t be happier to be working with you to ensure that our young people love books too!

Read On!

From all of us at Random House Children’s Books



An Appendix B Text Exemplar Selection  
Lexile: 680L  
PB: 978-0-679-81343-9  
HC: 978-0-375-85582-5

# THE BLACK STALLION

Walter Farley

If you're looking to take your students on an adventure, then this book is for you. From Alec Ramsay and the Black's first meeting on an ill-fated ship to their adventures on a desert island, eventual rescue, and success on the racetrack, this story is gripping from beginning to end. Reading this beloved novel about a boy and his friendship with a wild horse is an early introduction to the canon of American classics.

## Setting

This novel is clearly divided into different settings. Allow students to select the setting in the novel (e.g., the boat, the island, the stable, the racetrack) that they most enjoyed reading about. Then guide the students in generating a list of details about that setting that they can use and hand in with the follow-up project. For the project, students re-create their chosen setting in any way they choose (e.g., diorama, mobile, collage, painting), including as many details from their list as possible. Students present their projects, explaining how they incorporated the details from the novel into the setting they created.

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:  
R.CCR.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.  
RL. 4.3: Describe in depth a character, a setting, or an event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

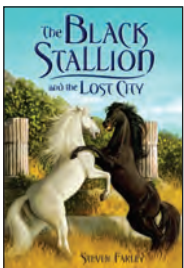
## Also by Walter Farley



**The Black Stallion and Flame**  
Lexile: 920L  
PB: 978-0-679-82020-8  
EL: 978-0-307-80498-3



**The Black Stallion and the Girl**  
Lexile: 890L  
PB: 978-0-679-82021-5  
EL: 978-0-307-80499-0



**The Black Stallion and the Lost City**  
PB: 978-0-375-87208-2  
HC: 978-0-375-86837-5  
GLB: 978-0-375-96837-2

## Compare and Contrast Stories in the Same Genre

Consider teaching both *The Black Stallion* and Patricia Reilly Giff's *Wild Girl* to your students. Both authors explore the exciting world of horse racing and develop characters coming of age as they set out on a journey for "home." Guide students in comparing and contrasting the two novels with sentence starters or your favorite graphic organizers. Hold a class panel where some students pretend to be Alec and others Lidia. You be the host and speak with your panel guests about their love of horses and what it means for them to be home.

\* Perhaps you and your students are craving another survival story. Pair this book with *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor and compare and contrast!

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:  
CCRA.R.9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.  
RL.5.9: Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.



**Wild Girl** •   
Patricia Reilly Giff  
Lexile: 640L  
PB: 978-0-440-42177-1  
EL: 978-0-375-89391-9



**The Cay** • • •   
Theodore Taylor  
Lexile: 860L  
PB: 978-0-440-41663-0  
HC: 978-0-385-07906-8  
EL: 978-0-307-80014-5

## MULTIMEDIA CONNECTION!

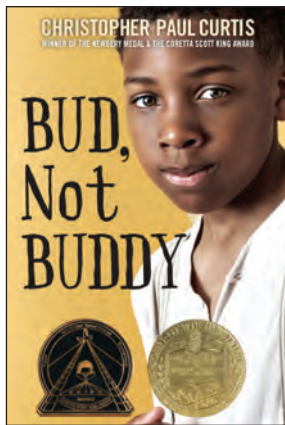
Share the movie version of *The Black Stallion* with your students and have them contribute their thoughts about the book at [TheBlackStallion.com](http://TheBlackStallion.com).

All: Grades 3–7

= Listening Library Audio Available

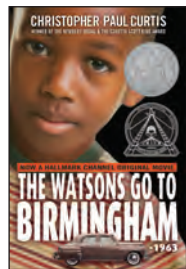
= Teaching activities available at [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](http://RHTeachersLibrarians.com)





An Appendix B Text Exemplar Selection  
 Lexile: 950L • F&P: U •   
 PB: 978-0-440-41328-8  
 HC: 978-0-385-32306-2  
 EL: 978-0-385-72995-6

**Also by  
Christopher Paul Curtis**



**The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963**  
 Lexile: 1000L • F&P: U •   
 PB: 978-0-440-41412-4  
 HC: 978-0-385-32175-4  
 EL: 978-0-385-72985-7



**Mr. Chickee's Funny Money**  
 Lexile: 1010L •   
 PB: 978-0-440-22919-3  
 EL: 978-0-307-48845-9



**Mr. Chickee's Messy Mission**  
 Lexile: 990L •   
 PB: 978-0-440-22922-3  
 EL: 978-0-307-48846-6

# BUD, NOT BUDDY

Christopher Paul Curtis

This novel will have you and your students laughing out loud from beginning to end, even with some serious subjects—foster care, the Great Depression, and labor union strikes. You and your students will adore the touching, poignant story of Bud and his journey to find his father.

## Primary and Secondary Sources

Learning about the historical context of a novel deepens understanding for the reader. In this novel, Christopher Paul Curtis scatters bits and pieces about the labor disputes in Flint, Michigan, in 1936. As a whole class, read pages 132 to 139 and generate a list of details that Mr. Lewis reveals to Buddy about the strike in Flint during this time. Then discuss the differences between primary and secondary sources ([collections.canada.gc.ca/education/008-3010-e.html#a](http://collections.canada.gc.ca/education/008-3010-e.html#a)). Create a large Venn diagram and label it Primary vs. Secondary Sources. Share with your students examples of primary and secondary sources that focus on Flint, Michigan, and the sit-down strike. As students listen, read, and view, encourage them to fill in their diagram, focusing on how the different sources provide different types of information. What do they have in common? Discuss what students learned about the Flint strikes and the reasons and evidence the speakers and other sources provide to support their points. See some sample primary and secondary sources below.

## Primary Sources

- Flint strike audio interviews with eyewitnesses/workers: [flint.matrix.msu.edu/strike.php](http://flint.matrix.msu.edu/strike.php)
- Flint strike photographs: [loc.gov/search/?q=flint+strike&sp=1](http://loc.gov/search/?q=flint+strike&sp=1)
- United Auto Workers video: [youtube.com/watch?v=Vzyb6GT14OQ](http://youtube.com/watch?v=Vzyb6GT14OQ)

## Secondary Sources

- Flint strike audio news report: [michiganradio.org/post/flint-sit-down-strike-75-years-later](http://michiganradio.org/post/flint-sit-down-strike-75-years-later)
- Flint strike article: [history.com/this-day-in-history/sit-down-strike-begins-in-flint](http://history.com/this-day-in-history/sit-down-strike-begins-in-flint)
- Flint strike article: [loc.gov/rr/business/businesshistory/February/flint.html](http://loc.gov/rr/business/businesshistory/February/flint.html)

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:  
 R.CCR.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.  
 RI.4.6: Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.

More teaching activities available at [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](http://RHTeachersLibrarians.com)

## Compare and Contrast Points of View

Who kissed whom first? It depends who's telling the story! With your students, either read both novels or simply excerpt pages 202 to 204 from *The Mighty Miss Malone* to compare the same moment told from two different perspectives. Some questions to explore with your students: Are these scenes written in first or third person perspective? How do you know? How does the narration style affect the storytelling? Read the text closely and as a class uncover the clues in the text that show which character is more believable and persuasive about who kissed whom first. Where do the characters agree and where do they disagree? Whom do you believe and why? Why is it important for a reader to identify and analyze the perspective from which a story is told?



### **The Mighty Miss Malone**

Lexile: 750L • F&P: U •   
PB: 978-0-440-42214-3  
HC: 978-0-385-73491-2  
GLB: 978-0-385-90487-2  
EL: 978-0-375-89736-8

### **BUD, NOT BUDDY** PAGES 74–75

We got the last four or five tin can plates and Deza said, “You ever kiss a girl at the orphanage?”

Uh-oh! “Are you kidding?”

“No. Why? You afraid of girls?”

“You must be kidding.”

She said “OK,” and closed her eyes and mooshed her lips up and leaned close to me.

Dangee! If I didn’t kiss her she’d think I was scared of girls, if I did kiss her she might blab or Bugs might see me and tell strangers about what happened. I looked down the crick to where Bugs and the other boy were still splashing in the water. It was dark enough that I didn’t think they see us too good.

I scooched my lips up and mashed my face on Deza Malone’s. We stuck like that for a hot second, but it felt like a long time.

When I opened my eyes and pulled back Deza kept hers closed and smiled. She looked down and stuck her hand in mine again and this time I let her keep it there. She look out at the crick and the woods on the other side and said, “Isn’t this romantic?”

### **THE MIGHTY MISS MALONE** PAGES 202–204

After a while I started touching his hand just to make him squirm. And squirm he did!

He counted softly, “One, two, three . . .,” then blurted out, “I’MNOTAFRAIDOFGIRLS!”

I laughed. “You aren’t?”

“Uh-uh. I even kissed some in the home.”

“Really?”

“Yup, I got three kisses.”

I looked up at the moon. It was huge and yellow and yolky. “Isn’t the moon lovely?”

I looked back. The little boy had closed his eyes, puckered his lips and leaned in toward me!

I started to slug him, just a arm punch. But looking at how sad he was made my heart melt.

He was all alone except for a person named Bugs.

What else could I do?

I kissed his forehead three times and said, “Kisses . . . kisses . . . kisses make you stronger.”

He blinked six or seven times and when his eyes came open he looked lost and befumbled.

I put his hand in mine.



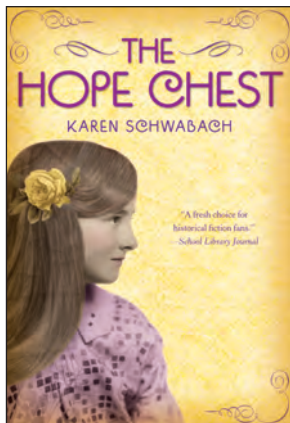
Correlates to Common Core State Standards:

R.CCR.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

RL.4.6: Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.

All: Grades 3–7

 = Listening Library Audio Available



A New York Expeditionary Learning List Selection  
Lexile: 800L  
PB: 978-0-375-84096-8  
EL: 978-0-307-49594-5

### Also by Karen Schwabach



**The Storm Before Atlanta**  
Lexile: 730L  
PB: 978-0-375-85867-3  
HC: 978-0-375-85866-6  
GLB: 978-0-375-95866-3  
EL: 978-0-375-89318-6

### Pair The Hope Chest with



**33 Things Every Girl Should Know About Women's History: From Suffragettes to Skirt Lengths to the E.R.A**  
Tonya Bolden  
PB: 978-0-375-81122-7

## THE HOPE CHEST

Karen Schwabach

If you're teaching about the women's suffrage movement, you must share this book with your students. This is a perfect example of a novel with a strong heroine and an engaging plot that also has a seamless curricular tie-in. The historical back matter included will be invaluable when teaching the novel to a group or recommending as an independent read. Eleven-year-old Violet has one goal in mind when she runs away from home: to find her sister, Chloe. By the time she catches up with her, Violet is fighting for a much larger issue than just her own independence.

### Write an Opinion Piece

"Even when you don't win, you don't always lose. Remember that." —Mr. Martin (p. 82)

After reading the novel, highlight this quotation from the novel and guide students in interpreting it. Hold a class discussion in which students use examples from their own life to explain why they agree or disagree. As a follow-up to the discussion, have students write an opinion piece analyzing the quotation and discussing whether Violet would agree with Mr. Martin by the end of the book. Use a graphic organizer that guides the students in planning the structure of their essays by having them fill in their topic sentence, two pieces of evidence from the novel, and a concluding statement.

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:  
W.CCR.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.  
W.4.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

### Close Reading & Social Studies Connection

How is a Constitutional amendment passed? Have your students close-read pages 71 to 73 and page 204 and list as many facts as they can about how a Constitutional amendment is passed. Then, in groups, have students research several nonfiction sources to supplement the details they drew from *The Hope Chest* about the passing of an amendment. As a follow-up assignment, have students brainstorm their own family's rules (or Constitution)! What might they want to change? What "amendments" would they make, and what steps do they think they should take to pass them?

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:  
W.CCR.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.  
CCRA.R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.  
RI.4.3: Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

More teaching activities available at [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](http://RHTeachersLibrarians.com)

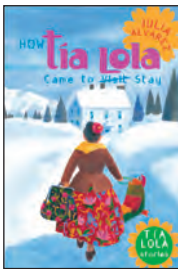
All: Grades 3–7





Grades 3–7  
Lexile: 540L  
PB: 978-0-440-40924-3  
EL: 978-0-307-83020-3

### More Latino-themed titles



#### **How Tía Lola Came to Visit Stay**

Julia Alvarez  
Grades 3–7 • ♻️  
Lexile: 740L  
PB: 978-0-440-41870-2  
HC: 978-0-375-80215-7  
EL: 978-0-307-53118-6



#### **The Red Umbrella**

Christina Diaz Gonzalez  
Grades 3–7  
PB: 978-0-375-85489-7  
EL: 978-0-375-89628-6



#### **Star in the Forest**

Laura Resau  
Grades 2–5  
Lexile: 780L  
PB: 978-0-375-85410-1  
EL: 978-0-375-89594-4

## THE SKIRT

Gary Soto

Miata has left her mother's beautiful folklórico skirt on the bus! She was going to wear the skirt on Sunday for her dance performance. Can Miata and her friend Ana rescue the precious skirt in time? *The Skirt* is a warm and wonderful novel that explores the joys of cultural heritage. The length and subject matter make it approachable for English-language learners, while the rich, descriptive language and focused plot make it an ideal text for close reading and storyboarding. Don't miss the author's note at the back of the book!

### Two Writers, One Theme

We all come from somewhere! Explore with your students how two different writers address cultural heritage. Excerpt chapter 1 from *The Skirt* onto an overhead projector. Before reading aloud, ask students to pay attention to how Miata feels about her Mexican heritage and how we know this. Periodically stop and ask students to come to the projector and underline words, phrases, or images that show how Miata feels about where she comes from. Repeat the process with the speaker in Grace Nichols's poem "They Were My People." Use this opportunity to remind students of the different terms to use when referring to a poem versus a novel (e.g., stanza vs chapter). What is a common theme in both pieces of writing? What techniques (e.g., repetition, imagery) do the writers use, and how are they different from one another? Follow up by having students practice these same techniques to write their own poems celebrating where they come from.



Correlates to Common Core State Standards:

R.CCR.9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCRA.R.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

RL.3.5: Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

### Write a Narrative

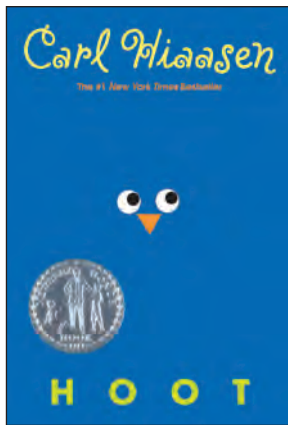
Time to come clean! Have students identify the places in the book where Miata is given the opportunity to come clean to her parents about losing the skirt. After creating a list, have students choose one of the instances and write a new scene directly following it in which she does admit to the loss of the skirt. Finish by having several students read their narratives aloud and discussing how this new scene would change the novel.



Correlates to Common Core State Standards:

RL 3.3: Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

W 3.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.



Grades 5 up •   
Lexile: 760L • F&P: W   
PB: 978-0-440-41939-6   
HC: 978-0-375-82181-3   
EL: 978-0-375-89027-7

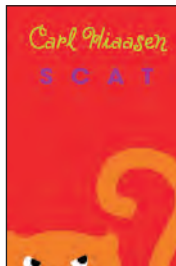
### Also by Carl Hiaasen



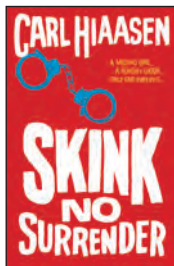
**Flush**   
Grades 5 up •   
Lexile: 830L • F&P: W   
PB: 978-0-375-84185-9   
HC: 978-0-375-82182-0   
EL: 978-0-375-83752-4



**Chomp**   
Grades 5 up •   
Lexile: 800L • F&P: W   
PB: 978-0-375-86827-6   
HC: 978-0-375-86842-9   
GLB: 978-0-375-96842-6   
EL: 978-0-375-89895-2



**Scat**   
Grades 5 up •   
Lexile: 810L • F&P: W   
PB: 978-0-440-42104-7   
HC: 978-0-375-83486-8   
EL: 978-0-375-89167-0



**Skink—No Surrender**   
Grades 7 up •   
HC: 978-0-375-87051-4   
GLB: 978-0-375-97051-1   
EL: 978-0-307-97406-8

### MULTIMEDIA CONNECTION!

Share the movie version of *Hoot* with your students and discuss the similarities and differences between the book and the movie.

## HOOT

Carl Hiaasen

Will Roy be able to survive the attention of his class bully, figure out who the barefoot running boy is, and save the baby owls from the development of a new pancake house? Yes! He does all that and more. This is a tremendously funny ecological mystery adventure—a perfect way to bring social action and the sciences into literacy learning. There is something for every student.

### Analyzing Humor in Writing

*Hoot* is hilarious and a wonderful tool for teaching how writers can effectively use humor in their writing. Watch the Ted Ed video about dramatic irony ([ed.ted.com/lessons/in-on-a-secret-that-s-dramatic-irony-christopher-warner](https://ed.ted.com/lessons/in-on-a-secret-that-s-dramatic-irony-christopher-warner)) with your students. After watching the video, define dramatic irony as a class and then read or review chapter 15, in which Roy tricks Dana into going to the Mother Paula's construction site. Show your students how to identify dramatic irony in this chapter. What secret are we, the readers, "in on"? What do we know that Dana does not know? How does this dramatic irony lead to an amusing experience for the reader? Next, have students work in pairs to find dramatic irony in other parts of the novel (e.g., the hospital scene in chapter 12, Beatrice telling Roy's mom they need beef on page 114). Have the pairs report back to the class which scenes they found, how those scenes create humor, and other ways the dramatic irony affects the telling. Finally, ask students to brainstorm other novels, TV shows, movies, plays, etc., in which the writers use dramatic irony and to what effect.

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:   
R.CCR.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.   
RL.5.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

### Discussing the Theme of Making Change

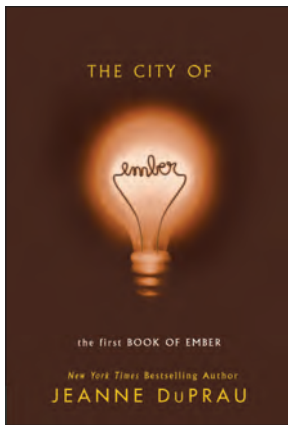
Carl Hiaasen writes passionately about his Florida home, and that passion seeps into his characters in *Hoot*. Roy, Mullet Fingers, and Beatrice care deeply about their local burrowing owls, and the theme of protecting the natural environment is woven throughout the novel. What strategies do Roy, Mullet Fingers, and Beatrice use to save the owls, and how do these strategies compare to one another? Research some environmental or conservation concerns in your town or state. As a class, investigate ways students and other young people can get involved and help. Students might create brochures to distribute in their school (and others!), listing conservation organizations that accept student volunteers; start a petition; host a student webinar or podcast; create or join a club. Roy, Beatrice, and Mullet Fingers effected change, and you can too!

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:   
R.CCR.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.   
RL.5.2: Determine the theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

More teaching activities available at [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](https://www.RHTeachersLibrarians.com)

= Listening Library Audio Available





Lexile: 680L • F&P: W •   
PB: 978-0-375-82274-2  
HC: 978-0-375-82273-5  
GLB: 978-0-375-92274-9  
EL: 978-0-375-89080-2

## THE CITY OF EMBER: *The First Book of Ember*

Jeanne DuPrau

Though the lights begin to flicker and waver in the city of Ember, your students' interest will not! This intense mystery will help you and your students shine light on what (if anything!) is behind Lina and Doon's dystopian society. *The City of Ember* is a perfect vehicle for creating a spark of curiosity about electricity and discovering new ideas and worlds.

### Science Investigations

How does electricity work? How is it possible for those little wires to generate power to light that bulb? These are the types of questions your students will be asking alongside Doon and Lina in *The City of Ember*—and what better way to help your students understand the characters' world than to explore it with them! Invite your school's science teacher into your class as a guest speaker and fellow researcher. As a class, investigate the different components of a turbine generator at [need.org/electricity](http://need.org/electricity) and/or electrical circuits at [bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/science/physical\\_processes/electrical\\_circuits/read/1](http://bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/science/physical_processes/electrical_circuits/read/1) and how each works. In groups, have students create their own visual representation of one, labeling the specific parts and using their research to explain in their own words how electricity is created. Doon and Lina need your students' help to light their way . . . so with all necessary safety precautions in place, consider conducting an experiment to light a lightbulb and then have students record their observations.

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:  
W.CCR.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.  
W.5.7: Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

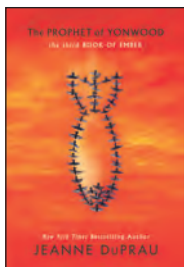
### Also by Jeanne DuPrau



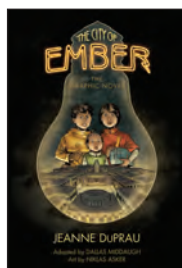
**The People of Sparks: The Second Book of Ember**  
Lexile: 760L •   
PB: 978-0-375-82825-6  
EL: 978-0-375-89050-5



**The Diamond of Darkhold: The Fourth Book of Ember**  
Lexile: 790L •   
PB: 978-0-375-85572-6  
EL: 978-0-375-89244-8



**The Prophet of Yonwood: The Third Book of Ember**  
Lexile: 760L •   
PB: 978-0-440-42124-5  
EL: 978-0-375-84070-8



**The City of Ember: The Graphic Novel**  
Adapted by Dallas Middaugh;  
Illustrated by Niklas Asker  
PB: 978-0-375-86793-4  
HC: 978-0-375-86821-4  
GLB: 978-0-375-96821-1

### Descriptive Writing

What would it be like to see the world and all its creatures for the first time? Closely reread pages 256 to 266 as a class. Then discuss how DuPrau shows Doon and Lina's amazement at the new creatures they are meeting (e.g., adjectives, imagery, appealing to the five senses). To help your students understand what Lina and Doon are experiencing, have students imagine they travel with Lina and Doon to this "new world." Have students choose two earthly animals and two other objects in nature and describe them in the form of a letter written to a citizen who stayed behind in Ember, using the same techniques DuPrau uses in her novel. Have students read their letters aloud to classmates to see if they can guess what the letters are describing!

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:  
W.CCR.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.  
W.5.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

### MULTIMEDIA CONNECTION!

Share the movie version of *The City of Ember* with your students and discuss the similarities and differences between the book and the movie.

More teaching activities available at [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](http://RHTeachersLibrarians.com)

All: Grades 3–7

= Listening Library Audio Available



Grades 5 up  
 An Appendix B Text  
 Exemplar Selection  
 Lexile: 1100L  
 PB: 978-0-440-41917-4  
 EL: 978-0-307-54874-0

**Also by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan**



**Andy Warhol, Prince of Pop**  
 Grades 4–7  
 Lexile: 1120L  
 PB: 978-0-385-73275-8  
 EL: 978-0-307-51306-9

# VINCENT VAN GOGH: Portrait of an Artist

Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan

After reading this ALA Sibert Honor Book, your students will never look at painting the same way again. This is a visually rich text, with timelines, colored photos, maps, and more, and a gripping telling of Vincent van Gogh's life story. With this book you are guaranteed to win your students over to reading and enjoying nonfiction.

## Reading for Key Details

Greenberg and Jordan seamlessly explore the connection between Vincent van Gogh's emotional state and his letters and paintings. Have your students experience this exploration! Before reading, hang several of van Gogh's paintings from the book around the room. Guide groups of students through a gallery walk. While students examine the paintings, encourage them to fill in the "1st Reading" section of the graphic organizer (see below) and discuss as a whole class these first impressions. Throughout the reading of the book, encourage students to complete the remainder of the chart, noting what they've learned about Van Gogh's interests and emotional state. After reading the book, discuss with students how understanding more about an artist and his/her backstory affects their "reading" of and appreciation for a painting (or a book, poem, song, etc.).

PAINTINGS	BEFORE READING What stands out to you? What's happening in the painting? What is interesting about it?	AFTER READING What is Van Gogh's backstory? What is now interesting about the painting?	PAGE NUMBERS
<i>The Starry Night</i>			
<i>Self-Portrait at the Easel</i>			
<i>The Potato Eaters</i>			
<i>Vase with Sunflowers</i>			
<i>Wheatfield with Crows</i>			

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:  
 R.CCR.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.  
 RI.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

## Preparing Students for Independent Research

*Vincent van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist* is a good tool for reviewing the elements of nonfiction and for supporting students in learning how to independently locate important information. Tell students they will play Who Can Find It First! In small groups, have students answer questions that will require them to use the book to locate the answers. (Sample questions below.) The group that finds the answers first wins a prize. After each question, have the groups share their approach to finding the answers. At the end of the game, generate a class list of the different elements of nonfiction that helped the groups locate information more easily. Discuss how a novel is different from a nonfiction book and why it is important to be able to distinguish between the two genres. Sample questions:

- According to the authors, what effect do the stars have on someone looking at *The Starry Night*?
- What "movement" does Van Gogh learn about when he first visits Paris, and how do the authors describe it?
- What does "Flemish" mean?

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:  
 CCRA.R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.  
 RI.5.7: Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.



A New York Expeditionary Learning List Selection  
Grades 3–7 •   
Lexile: 1070L  
PB: 978-0-440-40694-5  
HC: 978-0-385-01583-7

## D'AULAIRES' BOOK OF GREEK MYTHS

Ingri d'Aulaire and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire

This is a gorgeously illustrated oversized book of Greek myths. A must-have for every teacher. The size and art make it an engaging read-aloud, though you'll surely be pulling out excerpts and individual myths to close-read with your students throughout the school year, whether it's for a unit on mythology or to supplement other learning.

### Mythological Allusions

CCSS emphasizes that by fourth grade, students be able to recognize and interpret mythological allusions in literature. This means that first and foremost they need to have had experience reading mythology. Using this book, read the beginning origin myths aloud with your students. You might wish to model determining the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases as you read. After you finish, you'll take the necessary steps to prepare yourself to retell the story to the class in your own words. Once you're ready, begin the retelling with the line, "Can you believe that . . ." and ending with "And that's how. . . ." Then divide your class into small groups and assign each group one myth from the book. The group will actively read the story together, pausing as you did to interpret unfamiliar words and phrases. After finishing the story, the group will work together to prepare a retelling of the story in their own words for the rest of the class. Every group is to begin and end by completing the same lines you did. Encourage students to be creative in their approach.

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:**  
CCRA.R.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.  
RL.4.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

### More books with mythological allusions



**The Coming of the Dragon**  
Rebecca Barnhouse  
Grades 3–7 •   
Lexile: 840L  
PB: 978-0-375-86173-4  
HC: 978-0-375-86193-2  
GLB: 978-0-375-96193-9  
EL: 978-0-375-89349-0



**The Alchemyst**  
Michael Scott  
Grades 7 up •   
Lexile: 890L • F&P: X  
PB: 978-0-385-73600-8  
HC: 978-0-385-73357-1  
EL: 978-0-375-84317-4



**Oracles of Delphi Keep**  
Victoria Laurie  
Grades 3–7 •   
Lexile: 960L  
PB: 978-0-440-42258-7  
EL: 978-0-375-89258-5



**Greek Gods and Heroes**  
Robert Graves  
Grades 7 up  
Lexile: 990L  
PB: 978-0-440-93221-5

### Analyzing Text Through Tableau

The Greek myths are brimming with drama—and what better way to get your students excited about them than through the use of a theater activity! Divide the class into groups and assign each group a different myth. Direct the groups to read the myth together, to identify the main character/god/goddess, and to list specific textual details that show the reason for this myth (e.g., What does the myth explain? What came to be and how? What did this myth help people better understand?). Then have each group prepare and present a tableau or frozen scene that illustrates the reason for this myth. Encourage the class to interpret the tableaus, and after each, discuss as a class the importance of this myth to the people trying to better understand their world.

- Correlates to Common Core State Standards:**  
R.CCR.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.  
RL.6.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.  
R.CCR.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.  
RL.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

= Listening Library Audio Available



# BOOK CLUSTERS

## Content Connections

Use these works along with appropriate primary and secondary sources on the same topic to exercise your students' skills in comparing and contrasting a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic (RI.4.6) and integrating information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably (RI.4.9).



**The American Story: 100 True Tales from American History**  
Jennifer Armstrong;  
Illustrated by Roger Roth  
Grades 3-7 •   
HC: 978-0-375-81256-9



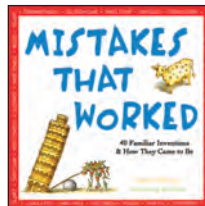
**Children of the Dust Bowl: The True Story of the School at Weedpatch Camp**  
Jerry Stanley  
Grades 3-7  
Lexile: 1120L  
PB: 978-0-517-88094-4



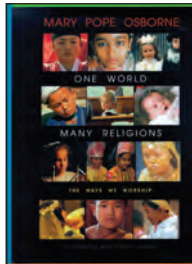
**The Genius of Islam: How Muslims Made the Modern World**  
Bryn Barnard  
Grades 3-7 •   
Lexile: NC1210L  
HC: 978-0-375-84072-2  
EL: 978-0-449-81494-9



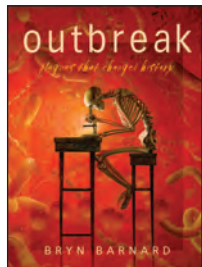
**Many Thousand Gone: African Americans from Slavery to Freedom**  
Virginia Hamilton;  
Illustrated by Leo Dillon and Diane Dillon  
Grades 3-7  
F&P: X  
PB: 978-0-679-87936-7



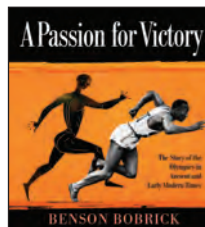
**Mistakes That Worked: 40 Familiar Inventions & How They Came to Be**  
Charlotte Jones;  
Illustrated by John O'Brien  
Grades 3 up •   
Lexile: 104L • F&P: T  
PB: 978-0-385-32043-6



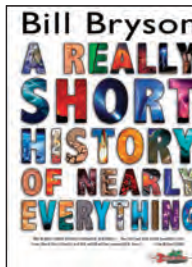
**One World, Many Religions: The Ways We Worship**  
Mary Pope Osborne  
Grades 4-7  
PB: 978-0-679-83930-9



**Outbreak!: Plagues That Changed History**  
Bryn Barnard  
Grades 4-7  
Lexile: 1080L  
HC: 978-0-375-82986-4  
EL: 978-0-307-48925-8



**A Passion for Victory: The Story of the Olympics in Ancient and Early Modern Times**  
Benson Bobrick  
Grades 5 up  
Lexile: 1220L •   
PB: 978-0-375-87252-5  
HC: 978-0-375-86869-6  
GLB: 978-0-375-96869-3  
EL: 978-0-307-97447-1



**A Really Short History of Nearly Everything**  
Bill Bryson  
Grades 3 up  
Lexile: 1190L  
HC: 978-0-385-73810-1

## Historic Heroes

This is a wonderful assortment of nonfiction titles to help students analyze, debate, and compare the qualities of true-life heroes! Who is really a hero and why? By determining the main ideas of the texts and drawing specific key details and evidence from the true texts, heroes will be uncovered (RI.5.2).



By Mary Pope Osborne and Natalie Pope Boyce;  
Illustrated by Sal Murdocca • Grades 2-5

Teachers.MagicTreeHouse.com

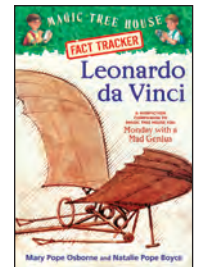
MTHClassroomAdventures.org



**Abraham Lincoln**  
Lexile: 750L • F&P: S  
PB: 978-0-375-87024-8  
GLB: 978-0-375-97024-5  
EL: 978-0-375-98861-5

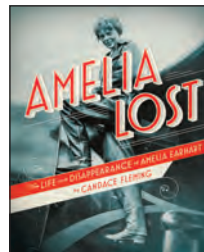


**Heroes for All Times**  
Lexile: 820L • F&P: S  
PB: 978-0-375-87027-9  
GLB: 978-0-375-97027-6  
EL: 978-0-375-98864-6

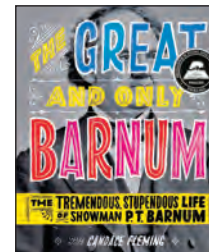


**Leonardo da Vinci**  
Lexile: 740L • F&P: S  
PB: 978-0-375-84665-6  
GLB: 978-0-375-94665-3  
EL: 978-0-307-97549-2

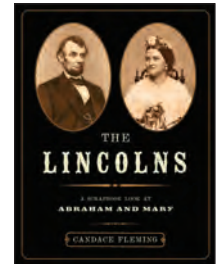
## By Candace Fleming



**Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart**  
Grades 3-7 •   
Lexile: 930L • F&P: U  
HC: 978-0-375-84198-9  
GLB: 978-0-375-94598-4



**The Great and Only Barnum: The Tremendous, Stupendous Life of Showman P. T. Barnum**  
Grades 3-7 •   
Lexile: 980L  
HC: 978-0-375-84197-2



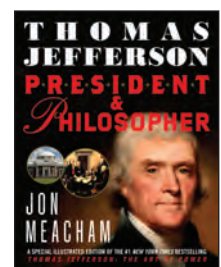
**The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary**  
Grades 5 up •   
Lexile: 1050L  
HC: 978-0-375-83618-3



**The \$25,000 Flight: How Lindbergh Set a Daring Record**  
Lori Haskins Houran;  
Illustrated by Wesley Lowe  
Grades 1-4 •   
F&P: O  
PB: 978-0-385-38284-7  
GLB: 978-0-385-38285-4  
EL: 978-0-385-38286-1



**The Look-It-Up Book of Presidents**  
Wyatt Blassingame  
Grades 3-7  
PB: 978-0-679-80358-4  
GLB: 978-0-394-96839-1



**Thomas Jefferson: President & Philosopher**  
Jon Meacham  
Grades 5 up •   
HC: 978-0-385-38749-1  
GLB: 978-0-385-38750-7

## More Mainstays of Middle Grade Literature

Whether you're looking to grow your school or class library or find the perfect books to build your curriculum around, we recommend you check out these amazing authors. Their novels have become mainstays in school libraries and classrooms across the country and are loved equally by students and educators.



Photo © Joanne Dugan

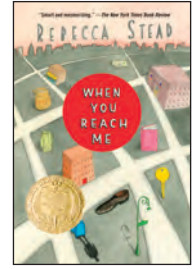
**Rebecca Stead**  
Newbery Medal Winner  
[RebeccaStead.com](http://RebeccaStead.com)  
Grades 4-7 • 🎧 • 📖



**First Light**  
Lexile: 760L  
PB: 978-0-440-42222-8  
HC: 978-0-375-84017-3  
EL: 978-0-307-49547-1



**Liar & Spy**  
Lexile: 670L  
PB: 978-0-375-85087-5  
HC: 978-0-385-73743-2  
GLB: 978-0-385-90665-4



**When You Reach Me**  
Lexile: 750L • F&P: W  
PB: 978-0-375-85086-8  
HC: 978-0-385-73742-5  
EL: 978-0-375-89269-1



Photo © Todd Rafalovich

**Jennifer L. Holm** • 📖  
Three-time Newbery Honor Winner  
[JenniferHolm.com](http://JenniferHolm.com)



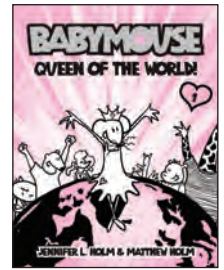
**The Fourteenth Goldfish**  
Grades 3-7 • 🎧  
HC: 978-0-375-87064-4  
GLB: 978-0-375-97064-1  
EL: 978-0-307-97436-5



**Penny from Heaven**  
Grades 3-7 • 🎧  
Lexile: 730L • F&P: T  
PB: 978-0-375-83689-3  
EL: 978-0-375-84926-8



**Turtle in Paradise**  
Grades 3-7 • 🎧  
Lexile: 610L  
PB: 978-0-375-83690-9  
HC: 978-0-375-83688-6  
GLB: 978-0-375-93688-3  
EL: 978-0-375-89316-2



**Babymouse #1: Queen of the World!**  
Grades 2-5  
PB: 978-0-375-83229-1  
GLB: 978-0-375-93229-8



Photo © Judith Pzenica

**Patricia Reilly Giff**  
Two-time Newbery Honor Winner  
[PatriciaReillyGiff.com](http://PatriciaReillyGiff.com)  
Grades 3-7 • 🎧 • 📖



**Lily's Crossing**  
Lexile: 720L • F&P: S  
PB: 978-0-440-41453-7  
HC: 978-0-385-32142-6  
EL: 978-0-385-72993-2



**Nory Ryan's Song**  
Lexile: 600L • F&P: T  
PB: 978-0-440-41829-0  
EL: 978-0-307-53898-7



**Pictures of Hollis Woods**  
Lexile: • 650L  
PB: 978-0-440-41578-7  
HC: 978-0-385-32655-1  
EL: 978-0-307-54228-1



**Winter Sky**  
HC: 978-0-375-83892-7  
GLB: 978-0-385-37192-2  
EL: 978-0-385-37193-3

## Series Reading

Not only do series give you the opportunity to hook your students and keep them reading, but by reading more than one title in a series, your students can exercise their skills to compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (RL.3.9).

**Junie B. Jones®**

[JunieBJones.com](http://JunieBJones.com)



[RonRoy.com](http://RonRoy.com)

**Calvin Coconut**

[GrahamSalisbury.com](http://GrahamSalisbury.com)

**CHEESIE MACK**

[CheesieMack.com](http://CheesieMack.com)

**DRAGON KEEPERS**

[TheDragonKeepers.com](http://TheDragonKeepers.com)

**THE PENDERWICKS**

[Penderwicks.com](http://Penderwicks.com)

**THE SIXTY-EIGHT ROOMS**

[MarianneMalone.com](http://MarianneMalone.com)

**LUNCH LADY**

[LunchLadyComics.com](http://LunchLadyComics.com)

**STONE RABBIT**

[StoneRabbitBooks.com](http://StoneRabbitBooks.com)







# BOOK CLUSTERS (CONTINUED)

## Be a Matchmaker: Match Your Students to the Perfect Book!

Help to instill a love of reading in your students by recommending books based on their interests. In most cases, these clusters also provide you and your students an opportunity to compare and contrast stories in the same genre on their approaches to similar themes and topics (RL.5.9).



-  = Listening Library Audio Available
-  = Teaching activities available at RHTeachersLibrarians.com

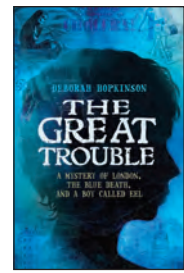
### HISTORY




**Counting on Grace**  
Elizabeth Winthrop  
Grades 3-7 •    
Lexile: 760L  
PB: 978-0-553-48783-1  
EL: 978-0-307-51822-4



**Crow**  
Barbara Wright  
Grades 5 up •    
Lexile: 800L  
PB: 978-0-375-87367-6  
HC: 978-0-375-86928-0  
GLB: 978-0-375-96928-7  
EL: 978-0-375-98270-5



**The Great Trouble:**  
*A Mystery of London, the Blue Death, and a Boy Called Eel*  
Deborah Hopkinson  
Grades 5 up •    
Lexile: 660L  
HC: 978-0-375-84818-6  
GLB: 978-0-375-94818-3  
EL: 978-0-449-81819-0

### HISTORY



**Hattie Big Sky**  
Kirby Larson  
Grades 3-7 •    
Lexile: 700L • F&P: W  
PB: 978-0-385-73595-7  
EL: 978-0-375-84641-0



**May B.: A Novel**  
Caroline Starr Rose  
Grades 3-7  
Lexile: 680L  
PB: 978-0-385-37414-9  
HC: 978-1-58246-393-3  
EL: 978-1-58246-437-4



**Moon over Manifest**  
Clare Vanderpool  
Grades 3-7 •    
Lexile: 800L • F&P: U  
PB: 978-0-375-85829-1  
HC: 978-0-385-73883-5  
EL: 978-0-375-89616-3





**Navigating Early**  
Clare Vanderpool  
Grades 5 up •    
Lexile: 790L  
HC: 978-0-385-74209-2  
GLB: 978-0-375-99040-3  
EL: 978-0-307-97412-9





**A Thousand Never Evers**  
Shana Burg  
Grades 5 up •    
Lexile: 830L  
PB: 978-0-440-42209-9  
EL: 978-0-375-84893-3

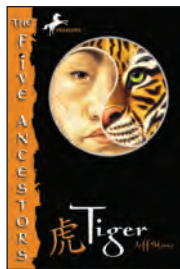
### ADVENTURE





**The Dragon's Tooth**  
*(Ashtown Burials #1)*  
N. D. Wilson  
Grades 3-7 •    
Lexile: 640L  
PB: 978-0-375-86396-7  
HC: 978-0-375-86439-1  
EL: 978-0-375-89572-2




**The Emerald Atlas**  
John Stephens  
Grades 3-7 •    
Lexile: 720L  
PB: 978-0-375-87271-6  
HC: 978-0-375-86870-2  
EL: 978-0-375-89955-3



**The Five Ancestors**  
*Book #1: Tiger*  
Jeff Stone  
Grades 5 up •    
Lexile: 800L  
PB: 978-0-375-83072-3  
EL: 978-0-375-89179-3





**Joshua Dread**  
Lee Bacon  
Grades 4-7 •   
Lexile: 700L  
PB: 978-0-307-92998-3  
GLB: 978-0-375-99027-4  
EL: 978-0-375-98721-2



**Where the Red Fern Grows**  
Wilson Rawls  
Grades 4-7 •    
Lexile: 700L • F&P: X  
PB: 978-0-440-41267-0  
HC: 978-0-385-32330-7  
EL: 978-0-307-78156-7

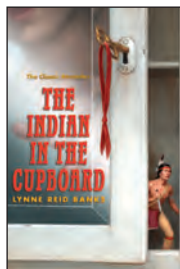
### FANTASY





**The Golden Compass:**  
*His Dark Materials, Book 1*  
Philip Pullman  
Grades 5 up •    
Lexile: 930L  
PB: 978-0-440-41832-0  
HC: 978-0-679-87924-4  
EL: 978-0-440-41860-3




**The Hound of Rowan**  
Henry H. Neff  
Grades 3-7  
Lexile: 810L • F&P: X  
PB: 978-0-375-83895-8  
HC: 978-0-375-83894-1  
EL: 978-0-375-89077-2




**The Indian in the Cupboard**  
Lynne Reid Banks  
Grades 3-7 •    
Lexile: 780L  
PB: 978-0-375-84753-0  
HC: 978-0-385-17051-2  
EL: 978-0-307-57624-8



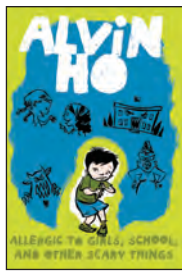
**The Mark of the Dragonfly**  
Jaleigh Johnson  
Grades 5 up •   
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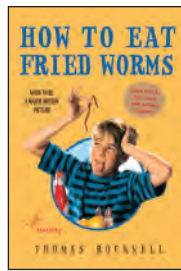
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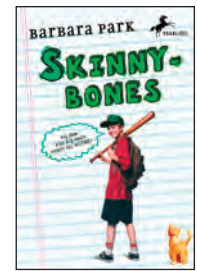
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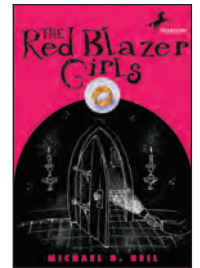
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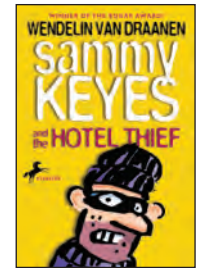
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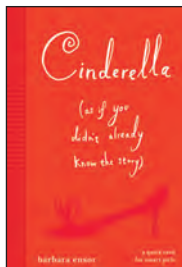


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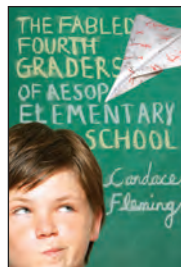


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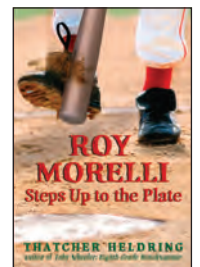
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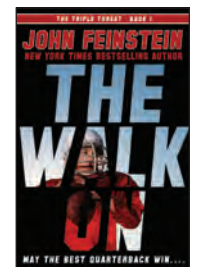
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