

Literacy Tips



Tips for middle school educators on various topics such as grammar, writing, reading, spelling, vocabulary, cooperative learning and more.

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Tip #76: Spring Break Reading List

We have made it to spring break, and I hope you have plans for some serious rest and relaxation. Most of us don't have the time to get caught up on literature recommendations in our busy, day-to-day lives; we wait until we have a period of uninterrupted time. With that in mind, this tip has a little bit of everything in it. Next time you are at the bookstore or at the library, take this list with you.

Daniels, Harvey and Seven Zemelman. Subjects Matter. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004

This is one of my favorite books right now on content area literacy. This is part of the Literacy Lending Library, and I would be happy to check it out to you. It is really easy to read and is full of practical ideas. Many of us know Harvey Daniels for his work with literature circles. Go to this web site to preview the table of contents and to read chapter 1 and chapter 4. It gives information on three reading strategies: anticipation guides, bookmarks, and vocabulary trees.

www.heinemann.com/shared/products/E00595.asp

Content Area Literature Recommendations

I took the liberty of highlighting a few books in math, social studies, science, and language

arts from *Subjects Matter*. To make your review of them easier, I [created a document so that you can have an interactive bibliography](#). I have included links directly to Amazon.com so that you can read summaries and reviews. (No, I don't have stock in Amazon.com. It is just one of several excellent on-line bookstores with fast information.) This document also explains how the authors chose these particular books.

Read Alouds

I am forever on the hunt for what I consider a good read aloud. My definition of a good read-aloud may be very different than yours. I look for books that have short chapters, a captivating plot, and lots of dialogue. I tend to drift mostly to realistic fiction. (I know I should branch out to fantasy and non-fiction, but I am stuck in a rut.) For what it is worth, here are three new books that I think would make good read alouds. I know three doesn't sound like a lot, but it is really hard to stumble upon that perfect read aloud. (If you and I have the same taste, email me and I will give you some other past favorites of mine, too.)

Death By Eggplant by Susan O'Keefe
www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1596430117/qid=1106265297/sr=2-1/ref=pd_ka_b_2_1/104-1560694-8006331



Swear to Howdy by Wendelin Van Draanen
www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0375825053/qid=1106265718/sr=2-1/ref=pd_ka_b_2_1/104-1560694-8006331

The Time Hackers by Gary Paulson
www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0385746598/qid=1106332851/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/104-1560694-8006331?v=glance&s=books

Making the Match

One of the best resources available right now for LA/reading teachers and librarians alike is Teri Lesesne's book, *Making the Match*. It was published by Stenhouse in 2003, and I have a copy in the Literacy Lending Library that you can request. Teri has a chapter that should help me get out of my rut - "Moving from Fictional to Informational Books." Her appendixes (A-Y) cover every kind of book list/resource you could ever want from "Alternatives to Book Reports" to "Books for Twenty-First Century Teens." LA department chairs got a sneak preview of this book from Suzanne Metcalfe at a recent MSLACC meeting.

www.stenhouse.com/productcart/pc/viewProd.asp?idProduct=381

Books Cafe

And speaking of Suzanne Metcalfe, have you seen the debut of Books Cafe? This on-line publication highlights book recommendations targeted for middle school readers around a central theme. It also includes extension books based on that theme. The current topic is on autism and Alcatraz. Books Cafe is located at LA On-Line. Thanks, Suzanne, for getting this off the ground.

www.asdk12.org/depts/reading/

Don Gallo's Best Picks

Don Gallo is best known for his collections of short stories. He pulls together some of the best YA authors and asks them to write short stories for his thematic collections. Every year he and his colleagues select their best picks for that particular publishing year. I am [attaching a copy of his annotated handout](#). Please be advised that their recommendations are for middle school, high school, and sometimes both. Research and read the titles carefully before using these with your students. (You will find a reference to *Death By Eggplant* on this bibliography. The presenter added it because everything else she was recommending was so "heavy.")

8th grade teachers - Please note that *The Eyes of the Emperor* is going to be released August, 2005. The summary is on the attached list and could connect nicely with *Journey to Topaz*: Japanese Americans become the bait for training attack dogs during WWII? I tried to research it on the Internet and found very limited information about it. Did I pique your interest enough to [check out the attachment](#)?

Happy reading everyone and enjoy spring break!

Have you filled out the High Five Staff Survey yet? Go to www.mylearningplan.com. We are up to 57 responses!



This is a list of recommended trade book titles for content-area reading from *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading* by Harvey Daniels and Steven Zemelman. You can find additional recommendations in there for books with higher reading levels. Each of these books has an "easier" label associated with it. The authors describe these books as easier books for younger readers, those who struggle, or kids who want to go "light." I have included a link to amazon.com to save you time surfing. Amazon.com provides reviews from journals as well as readers who submit reviews.

Science

Black Stars: African American Women Scientists and Inventors

By Otha Sullivan and Jim Haskins

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/047138707X/qid=1104886283/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/103-9974512-5235053?v=glance&s=books

Brainstorm!: The Stories of Twenty American Kid Inventors

by Tom Tucker, Richard Loehle

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0374309442/qid=1104886313/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/103-9974512-5235053?v=glance&s=books

The Encyclopedia of Preserved People : Pickled, Frozen, and Mummified Corpses from Around the World

by Natalie Jane Prior

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0375822879/qid%3D1104886344/sr%3D1-1/ref%3Dsr%5F11%5F1/103-9974512-5235053>

Girls Think of Everything : Stories of Ingenious Inventions by Women

by Catherine Thimmesh

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0395937442/qid=1104886410/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/103-9974512-5235053?v=glance&s=books

The New Way Things Work

by David Macaulay

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0395938473/qid=1104886441/sr=2-1/ref=pd_ka_b_2_1/103-9974512-5235053

Incredible Cross-Sections

by Richard H. Jr Platt

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0789485745/qid=1104886468/sr=2-1/ref=pd_ka_b_2_1/103-9974512-5235053

They Saw The Future : Oracles, Psychics, Scientists, Great Thinkers, And Pretty Good Guessers

by Kathleen Krull

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0689812957/qid%3D1104886504/sr%3D11-1/ref%3Dsr%5F11%5F1/103-9974512-5235053>

Math

The Adventures of Penrose the Mathematical Cat

by Theoni Pappas

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1884550142/qid=1104886533/sr=2-1/ref=pd_ka_b_2_1/103-9974512-5235053

The Further Adventures of Penrose the Mathematical Cat

by Theoni Pappas

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1884550320/qid=1104886533/sr=2-2/ref=pd_ka_b_2_2/103-9974512-5235053

Celebrating Women in Mathematics and Science

by Miriam P. Cooney

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0873534255/qid%3D1104886625/sr%3D11-1/ref%3Dsr%5F11%5F1/103-9974512-5235053>

Fractals, Googols and Other Mathematical Tales

by Theoni Pappas

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0933174896/qid%3D1104886651/sr%3D11-1/ref%3Dsr%5F11%5F1/103-9974512-5235053>

Math Curse

by Jon Scieszka, Lane Smith

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0670861944/qid=1104886675/sr=2-1/ref=pd_ka_b_2_1/103-9974512-5235053

History

The American Revolution for Kids: A History with 21 Activities

by Janis Herbert

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/1556524560/qid=1104886705/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/103-9974512-5235053?v=glance&s=books

The Civil War for Kids: A History With 21 Activities

by Janis Herbert

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/1556523556/ref=pd_bxgy_text_1/103-9974512-5235053?v=glance&s=books&st=*

At Her Majesty's Request: An African Princess in Victorian England

by Walter Dean Myers

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0590486691/qid=1104886784/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/103-9974512-5235053?v=glance&s=books

Black Stars of the Harlem Renaissance

by Jim Haskins

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0471211524/qid=1104886811/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/103-9974512-5235053?v=glance&s=books

Days of Jubilee: The End of Slavery in the United States

by Patricia C. McKissack

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/059010764X/qid%3D1104886839/sr%3D11-1/ref%3Dsr%5F11%5F1/103-9974512-5235053>

Fight On! : Mary Church Terrell's Battle for Integration

by Dennis Brindell Fradin

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0618133496/qid%3D1104886863/sr%3D11-1/ref%3Dsr%5F11%5F1/103-9974512-5235053>

Kids at Work : Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor

by Russell Freedman, Lewis Hine

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0395797268/qid=1104886885/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/103-9974512-5235053?v=glance&s=books

The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World

by Lynn Curlee

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/068983182X/qid=1104886910/sr=1-5/ref=sr_1_5/103-9974512-5235053?v=glance&s=books

Six Days in October: The Stock Market Crash of 1929: A Wall Street Journal Book for Children

by Karen Blumenthal

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0689842767/qid%3D1104886950/sr%3D11-1/ref%3Dsr%5F11%5F1/103-9974512-5235053>

NEW CHOICES FOR SIGNIFICANT LITERARY EXPERIENCES FOR TEENS

Significant Books About Journeys and Adventures (Don Gallo)

The Young Man and the Sea by Rodman Philbrick. Blue Sky Press, 2004. After his mother dies and his father is immobilized by grief, 12-year-old Skiff Beaman takes action by repairing their sunken boat and then setting out alone to try to harpoon a giant tuna that he hopes to sell at a huge price. (M)

Leaving Protection by Will Hobbs. HarperCollins, 2004. When Robbie Daniels, age 16, leaves home to work on a salmon fishing boat off the coast of Southeast Alaska, he gets more adventure and suspense than he bargained for. (M/H)

Tree Girl by Ben Mikaelson. HarperTempest, 2004. When soldiers massacre everyone in 15-year-old Gabriela's Mayan village, she escapes with her traumatized sister and makes a long and terrifying journey to safety in a Mexican refugee camp. (M/H)

One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies by Sonya Sones. Simon & Schuster, 2004. After her mother's death, 15-year-old Ruby leaves her boyfriend as well as her best friend and goes to Los Angeles to live with her movie star father who divorced her mother before Ruby was born. A novel in verse. (M/H)

Significant Books about Relationships (Sarah Herz)

Finding Miracles by Julia Alvarez. Knopf, 2004. Milly Kaufman, who is adopted, confronts her identity when a new student, Pablo, enrolls in her high school. She travels with Pablo and his family to Latin America to find her roots. (M/H)

The Truth About Forever by Sarah Dessen. Viking, 2004. Macy finally breaks her dependency on Jason and learns to cope with her father's death. Artistic Wes unlocks her guilt and she views life anew. (M/H)

Nothing to Lose by Alex Flinn. HarperTempest, 2004. After running away from an abusive stepfather, Michael has to decide whether to come out of hiding to testify on behalf of his mother who is on trial for murder. (M/H)

Margaux with an X by Ron Koertge. Candlewick, 2004. Margaux is the embodiment of beauty, popularity, and cruelty until she meets Danny Riley. She comes to terms with her anger at her father and finds peace in her life. (H)

Significant Books about Social Problems (C.J. Bott)

The Beckoners by Carrie Mac. Orca, 2004. At her new school, Zoe attracts the attention of Beck, leader of the Beckoners, a mean girls' gang, and she lets herself be drawn in until the violence against April starts. (H)

How I Fell in Love and Learned to Shoot Free Throws by Jon Ripslinger. Roaring Brook, 2003. Danny Henderson has never really been attracted to girls, until he sees Angle McPherson shoot free throws. In his campaign to win her heart he must break down her walls of secrecy. (H)

The Burn Journals by Brent Runyon. Knopf, 2004. Brent has feebly attempted suicide in the past, but this time, he puts on his gasoline-soaked bathrobe and lights the match. Nonfiction. (H)

Blue Highway by Diane Tullson. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2004. Truth and Skye have been friends since elementary school, but now in high school, alcohol is beginning to take over their lives. (M/H)

Significant Books about Other Worlds, Other Times (Bill Mollineaux)

Dragon and Thief by Timothy Zahn. Starscape, 2003. While hiding out on an obscure planet, 14-year-old Jack witnesses a battle between space ships and discovers in the wreckage dragon-like Draycos, with whom he works to prove his own innocence and discover the identity of the attackers. (M/H) See sequel, *Dragon and Soldier*.

The Ghost in the Tokaido Inn by Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler. Philomel, 1999. Fourteen-year-old Seikei, the wannabe samurai son of a wealthy tea merchant, is asked by Judge Ooka to help him solve the mystery of the theft of a precious jewel from a cruel samurai lord. (M) Also see *The Demon in the Teahouse* and *In Darkness, Death*.

Enna Burning by Shannon Hale. Bloomsbury, 2004. In this page-turning companion to *The Goose Girl*, 16-year-old Enna decides to use her newly-learned power to wield fire against Tira, a kingdom-threatening Bayern; although it helps her defeat Tira, it quickly gets out of control, endangering her life as well her loved ones. (M/H)

New Skies: An Anthology of Today's Science Fiction by Patrick Nielsen Hayden, ed. Tor Teen, 2003. An outstanding collection of 17 stories written over the last twenty years by top writers in the field, such as Greg Bear, Terry Bisson, Orson Scott Card, Philip K. Dick, Steven Gould, Nancy Kress, Will Shetterly, and Jane Yolen. (H)

More Significant Books About Journeys and Adventures (Don Gallo)

Messenger by Lois Lowry. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. Characters from *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue* come together in a peaceful community that's suddenly threatened with dissension until a young hero with healing powers makes the ultimate sacrifice. (M/H)

Splintering by Eireann Corrigan. Scholastic, 2004. Paulie and her brother Jeremy, in alternating poems, tell what happened to their family members when a deranged man breaks into the house and attacks them with a knife. (H)

First Crossing: Stories About Teen Immigrants edited by Donald R. Gallo. Candlewick, 2004. Ten stories by Minfong Ho, David Lubar, Marie G. Lee, Pam Muñoz Ryan, and others about teens from various countries, including Mexico, Venezuela, China, Korea, and Sweden, establishing new lives in the U.S. (M/H)

Eyes of the Emperor by Graham Salisbury. Wendy Lamb Books, 2005. Just before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a Hawaiian teenager of Japanese ancestry joins the U.S. Army, only to find himself and his Hawaiian comrades discriminated against, and then they are sent to a secret island in Mississippi where they become the bait for training attack dogs. (M/H)

More Significant Books about Relationships (Sarah Herz)

How I Live Now by Meg Rosoff. Wendy Lamb Books, 2004. When Daisy is sent to live with eccentric relatives in England, she and her cousins learn to cope with war. She returns years later to help Edmund heal. (H)

Vote for Larry by Janet Tashjian. Henry Holt, 2003. Larry's best friend, Beth, and her boyfriend find Larry in Colorado and kidnap him. On the trip home, he decides to run for president of the U.S. and energizes teenagers across the U.S. to bring important issues to the attention of the media and voters. (M/H)

Behind You by Jacqueline Woodson. Putnam, 2004. The effect of Miah's accidental death on Ellie, his parents, and his friends recalls his relationship with each of them. His senseless death focuses on love and healing and the strength of Miah's spirit to help them continue. (M/H)

Playing in Traffic by Gail Giles. Roaring Brook, 2004. Two opposites, Skye Colby, the Goth girl, and Matt Lathrop, the invisible student, form a bizarre relationship. Matt's curiosity about Skye's interest in him evolves into a dangerous and deadly situation. (H)

More Significant Books about Social Problems (C.J. Bott)

The Beat Goes On by Adele Minchin. Simon & Schuster, 2004. Leyla and Emma are more like sisters than cousins; now Emma needs Leyla more than ever because Emma has just tested positive for HIV. (H)

So Hard to Say by Alex Sanchez. Simon & Schuster 2004. At his new middle school, Fredrick meets Xio, an open-hearted Mexican American girl, who would like to be more than friends, but Fredrick is beginning to accept his attraction to boys. (M/H)

Luna by Julie Anne Peters. Little, Brown, 2004. Regan and Liam share a secret most brothers and sisters don't have: Liam, deep down inside, is really a girl named Luna. (H)

Death by Eggplant by Susan Heyboer O'Keefe. Roaring Brook, 2004. Bertie Hooks spends his day avoiding his tormentor, Nick Dekker, and planning new recipes, until his math teacher gives him an assignment in responsibility. (M)

More Significant Books about Other Worlds, Other Times (Bill Mollineaux)

The Blue Girl by Charles de Lint. Viking, 2004. When 17-year-old Imogene Yeck moves to Newford, she manages to stay out of trouble, except for a few run-ins with the main football jock and his cheerleader girlfriend, until she draws the attention of Adrian, a ghost who had been the target of bullies and the victim of fairies. (H)

Burying the Sun by Gloria Whelan. HarperCollins, 2004. Whelan brings to life the German siege of Leningrad during World War II through the eyes of 14-year-old Georgi Ivanova, who is too young to join the army but manages to help starving Russians in many ways, including transporting food across frozen Lake Ladoga. (M)

Trickster's Choice by Tamora Pierce. Random House, 2003. When 16-year-old Aly's parents refuse to allow her to become a spy, she sails off in her boat, is kidnapped and sold into slavery, makes a bet with the trickster god, and becomes involved in political intrigue. (M/H) See sequel, *Trickster's Queen* and www.fullcastaudio.com.

Raising the Griffin by Melissa Wyatt. Wendy Lamb Books, 2004. When the country of Rovenia decides to have a constitutional monarchy after years of communist rule, 16-year-old Alexei resents leaving his British school and his familiar life for the confining role of a prince . . . until an assassination plot forces him to accept his duty and destiny. (M/H)

Presented at the NCTE Convention, November 19, 2004 by
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