

Alex the parrot: no ordinary bird

Stephanie Spinner
Random House, 2012
48 pages

SUMMARY:

The true story of an African Grey Parrot and the thirty-year experiment by animal psychologist, Irene Pepperberg, and her quest to dialogue with the bird.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Buddy, the First Seeing Eye Dog, Eva Moore
The Chimpanzees I Love, Jane Goodall

WEBSITES:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2458346/Parrot-learned-say-I-love-mean-word.html>

IN HER OWN WORDS: Read an article by Irene Pepperberg herself!

http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/assets/img/posters/profile-irene-pepperberg-vi.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/nature/profile-irene-pepperberg-alex.html&h=168&w=299&sz=1&tbnid=LQH0TktCP2-sYM:&tbnh=112&tbnw=198&zoom=1&usq=_zNMRmGI3-vlryythZzPpp-R0rPM=&docid=HOUUeBgOq9O6QM&itg=1&sa=X&ei=OxWmUvOIO4TSkQeBtYHwDw&sqi=2&ved=0CIsBEPwdMAo See Irene Pepperberg and Alex on video!

BOOKTALK:

I enjoyed this book...being a non-fiction reader I was hooked at the title: "a true story." Do parrots talk? Yes, we have that answer today, but there was a time when this was only an hypothesis until someone very curious discovered truth.....that someone is Irene Pepperberg, an animal psychologist. Imagine working with an animal and discovering something amazing about that animal that no one else knows! Take a look at contrast of artsy, colorful, fun illustrations...you wouldn't immediately think of this book as nonfiction at first sight, right?? Well, that's what hooked me too....and the cover is such an intriguing contrast to the slow, tedious task of scientific research that lead to Irene Pepperberg's discovery. This book is 48 pages, but there is another book, entitled Alex and Me, and it is 232 pages.....so that's an indication of how extensive the research process can be. The artwork is also a tribute to the personality of the bird! After reading this book, you won't think of the term 'bird brain' the same way ever again!

Prepared by:

Rose Davis. Arden Elementary School, rosdavis@richlandone.org

Almost Home

Joan Bauer
Viking, 2012
240 pages

SUMMARY:

When twelve-year-old Sugar's grandfather dies and her gambling father takes off yet again, Sugar and her mother lose their home in Missouri. They head to Chicago for a fresh start, only to discover that fresh starts aren't so easy to come by for the homeless. Nevertheless, Sugar's mother has taught her to be grateful no matter what, so Sugar does her best. With the help of a rescue dog, Shush; a foster family; a supportive teacher; a love of poetry; and her own grace and good humor, Sugar comes to understand that while she can't control the hand life deals her, she can control how she responds.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Hold Fast, Blue Balliett

How to Steal a Dog, Barbara O'Conner

WEBSITES:

Joan Bauer, <http://www.joanbauer.com/index.html> , author's website featuring an interview with the author as well as reviews of her other books

BOOKTALK:

Sometimes you just need a fresh start. That's what her mama tells twelve-year-old Sugar as they move to Chicago. Sugar's grandfather has died and her gambling daddy has disappeared once again. Unfortunately, things don't go as planned and Sugar finds herself alone in the strange city after her mother suffers a mental breakdown. Well, maybe not quite alone... she does have Shush, a rescued dog that she hides in her bag. Together Sugar and Shush face each day and learn that while you can't control the breaks life hands you, you can control how you respond.

Prepared by:

Cynthia Collins, Dewey L. Carter Elementary School, ccollins@fsd1.org

Barbed Wire Baseball

Marissa Moss

Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2013

39 pages

SUMMARY:

Traces the childhood dream of Japanese-American baseball pioneer Kenichi Zenimura of playing professionally and his family's struggles in a World War II internment camp where he introduces baseball to raise hope.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Baseball Saved Us, Ken Mochizuki

The Bracelet, Yoshiko Uchida

The Journal of Ben Uchida: Citizen 13449 Mirror Lake Internment Camp, Barry Denenberg

Fish for Jimmy : Inspired by One Family's Experience in a Japanese Internment Camp, Katie Yamasaki

Sylvia & Aki, Winifred Conkling

A Diamond in the Desert, Kathryn Fitzmaurice

WEBSITES:

PRI's The World: Baseball Behind Barbed Wire:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b91t7pEu4yk>, an audio slideshow looking at Japanese and Japanese-American internment during World War II, and how baseball became a lifeline for those in the camps.

Barbed Wire Baseball Curriculum Guide,

http://www.abramsbooks.com/academic/BarbedWireBaseball_Guide.pdf.

Ansel Adams's Photographs of Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar,

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/manz/>, images from Library of Congress.

Marissa Moss, Author-Illustrator, <http://www.marissamoss.com>, author's homepage.

BOOKTALK:

Kenichi "Zeni" Zenimura's dream to be a professional baseball player started when he was eight years old and saw his first baseball game in Hawaii. Even though people told him he was too small to play professionally, he grew up to become a successful player, coach and manager in the Japanese American leagues. He even played with baseball greats Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig! After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Zeni and his family were sent with over 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry to a Japanese-American internment camp in the Arizona desert and imprisoned without trial. The camp was overcrowded and the living conditions were harsh. Zeni's love of baseball led him to build a baseball field in the desert, complete with grass and bleachers. *Barbed Wire Baseball* is a nonfiction story that tells the story of how the "father of Japanese-American baseball" kept his dream alive during unbearable conditions and in the face of many obstacles and gave hope to the residents of Gila River War Relocation Camp during World War Two.

Prepared by:

Kate Byrd, Belton Elementary School, kbyrd@anderson2.k12.sc.us

Buddy
M.H. Herlong
Viking Juvenile, 2012
256 Pages

SUMMARY:

Tyrone Roberts must leave his dog behind when his family evacuates for Hurricane Katrina. When they are able to return Buddy is gone.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Hooper Finds a Family: A Hurricane Katrina Dog's Survival Tale, Jane Paley

Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival, Kirby Lawson

A Storm Called Katrina, Myron Uhlberg

St. Louis Armstrong Beach, Brenda Woods

Ninth Ward, Jewel Parker Rhodes

I Survived Hurricane Katrina, Lauren Tarshis

A Place Where Hurricanes Happen, Renee Watson

Story of a Storm: A Book About Hurricane Katrina, Reona Visser

Saving Animals From Hurricanes, Stephen Person

WEBSITES:

Teaching Guide

http://www.us.penguinroup.com/static/pages/youngreaders/pdf/BUDDY_Classroom%20Guide.pdf

Book Trailer www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLGgPIV1070

Hurricanes -- <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/kids/forces-of-nature-kids/hurricanes-101-kids/>

Border Collies <http://animal.discovery.com/tv-shows/dogs-101/videos/border-collie.htm>

BOOKTALK:

Twelve-year-old Li'l T, lives with his parents and beloved grandfather in the Ninth Ward in New Orleans. They have very little money but their family is filled with love. Li'l T has wanted a dog for as long as he can remember, so when his father accidentally hits a stray dog with his car, Li'l T adopts the injured animal and names him Buddy. The two become best friends but Hurricane Katrina's ominous approach forces the family to evacuate to stay with family in Mississippi. There is no room for the family and Buddy in the car. Believing they will be gone for only two days, they leave him with food and water on the second floor of their home. Hurricane Katrina is far more destructive than anyone expects and when the family is finally allowed to return, the house is still standing, but Buddy is missing. The only clue to his fate is a water-stained, incomplete toll-free telephone number from his rescuers. Li'l T is devastated and fears he will never find Buddy. But Li'l T will not give up and searches any way he can for his beloved friend. Readers will figure out the eventual ending long before the conclusion of the book, but Herlong has a final twist at the end that takes this story to a completely differently level.

Prepared by:

Leslie Cooper, St. Andrews School of Math and Science, leslie_cooper@charleston.k12.sc.us

Capture the Flag

Kate Messner
Scholastic, 2013
240 pages

SUMMARY

The scene is an airport.....a flag is stolen and for an investigative team the perfect scenario arrives: flights are cancelled due to weather! So that means *somebody's* still on the premises?? And who realizes this one key fact: kids of course.....and a dog! That's the investigative team!

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Titles by Anthony Horowitz (New York Times best-selling author of *Stormbreaker* and *Scorpia*)

WEBSITES:

<http://www.katemessner.com/blog/> Check out the Kids' Section of Kate Messner's blog!

<https://twitter.com/KateMessner> Join over 13, 000 books lovers and follow Kate Messner on Twitter!

BOOKTALK:

This is a fast paced mystery! From page one, the plot begins and thickens. It reads like a kid's action movie! The flag is stolen and we're introduced briefly to the three kids the guard notices.....THEN the author really lets us know who they are via a long paragraph about each kid: Anna, Jose, & Henry. I promise you: from the jump, you'll be riveted to a screen only the screen will be your imagination....and if three kids isn't enough...the author involves another kid Sinan and his dog Hammurabi....now everyone knows how a dog and an even younger kid, eight, can mix things up when you're trying to capture a thief at an airport—big aisles, a chase, a rotating baggage claim where all the luggage looks the same, only one has the _____.....you get the picture, right?! Get captured by *Capture the Flag*!

Prepared by:

Rose Davis. Arden Elementary School, rosdavis@richlandone.org

Dangerous Waters
Gregory Mone
Roaring Brook Press, 2012
240 pages

SUMMARY:

Determined to focus on work rather than books, as his father had, twelve-year-old Patrick Waters leaves Belfast as a steward on the Titanic, but the very wealthy Harry Widener arranges to tutor him, drawing Patrick into association with thieves seeking Harry's very rare edition of Francis Bacon's Essays.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Can You Survive the Titanic? : An Interactive Survival Adventure, Allison Lassieur

Ghosts of the Titanic, Julie Lawson

Stowaways, Steven Brezenoff

The Titanic Disaster, Peter Benoit

Titanic; Collision Course; S.O.S. (a 3 book series), Gordon Korman

WEBSITES:

Titanic | 100 Years: <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/titanic-100-years/>, features videos, interactives, unseen photos and more.

KidsKonnnect, <http://www.kidskonnnect.com/subjectindex/16-educational/history/281-titanic.html>, this website has fast facts, links, statistics, and a list of the passengers who lost their lives,

The Best Sites for Learning About the Titanic, <http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2012/03/15/the-best-sites-for-learning-about-the-titanic/>, an annotated listing of numerous sites for learning about the Titanic.

BOOKTALK:

Take a twelve-year old boy, Patrick Waters, a wealthy man with a rare and valuable book, and two villains who are desperate for money. Place them on the maiden voyage of the RMS Titanic and you'll get an exciting read, full of mystery and intrigue. You'll feel like you are right on the Titanic as Patrick moves about the ship in his job as steward, trying to thwart the criminals who will do anything to get their hands on the rare book. There is danger at every turn as the ship heads for the iceberg that spells disaster for Patrick and the passengers on board. Read *Dangerous Waters* to find out for yourself if Patrick can make the right choices and escape with his life.

Prepared by:

Kate Byrd, Belton Elementary School, kbyrd@anderson2.k12.sc.us

Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library

Chris Grabenstein

Random House Books for Young Readers, 2013

304 pages

SUMMARY:

Twelve-year-old Kyle is not a reader, but he does love games. Kyle enters an essay contest to win an overnight lock-in at the new library in town. The new public library is a marvel of technological delights, designed by the famous game maker, Mr. Luigi Lemoncello. The library has holographic images, an animated Mother Goose, and a sky dome made of digital screens that change scenery. The lock-in is full of food, fun, friends and other surprises, but the biggest surprise comes in the morning. Before they are allowed to leave the library, Kyle and the other students are offered a further challenge, "Find your way out of the library using only what's in the library." Kyle and his friends must solve puzzles, use reasoning skills, technology and ultimately the books themselves to find the escape route from Mr. Lemoncello's library.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Roald Dahl

The Gollywhopper Games, Jody Feldman

Alcatraz Versus the Evil Librarians, Brandon Sanderson

The Mysterious Benedict Society, Trenton Lee Stewart

WEBSITES:

Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library Official Website

<http://www.chrisgrabenstein.com/kids/escape-from-mr-lemoncellos-library.php>

Visit the author's official website for a study guide, author interview, book trailer and more.

Mr. Lemoncello's Great Library Escape Game

<http://www.chrisgrabenstein.com/kids/escape-from-mr-lemoncellos-library-game.php>

Educators can email Chris Grabenstein for ready-made materials to design a real life library scavenger hunt.

"Do We" Really Know Dewey?

<http://library.thinkquest.org/5002/Melvil/melvil.htm>

Learn about the **Dewey** Decimal system in a website designed by 6th graders. Includes basic prerequisite library skills.

BOOKTALK:

Nobody knows how to create a game more exciting than Luigi Lemoncello. Mr. Lemoncello creates board games, video games, and every other imaginable game. His game making skills have made him famous worldwide and also very rich. Mr. Lemoncello has decided to share some of his wealth to build a brand new library in a town that hasn't had a library in many years. The ideas for the new library were conceived and designed by Luigi Lemoncello. In this cross between *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *A Night in the Museum*, Chris Grabenstein uses rib-tickling humor to create the perfect tale for his quirky characters. Readers will be riveted with the crafty twists and turns of this ultimate library experience.

Prepared by:

Patty Taylor, Lexington County Public Library, ptaylor@lex.lib.sc.us

Finding Zasha
Randi Barrow
Scholastic Press, 2013
352 pages

SUMMARY:

In this prequel to *Saving Zasha*, twelve-year old Ivan leaves his Leningrad home to escape the Nazi bombings in 1941. The Nazis soon take over the village where he has taken refuge and Ivan becomes a dog trainer for the cruel Major Axel Recht, who wants to train his dogs to track down Russians. Ivan attempts to save the two puppies, Thor and Zasha, while also working as spy for the local villagers.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Cracker: The Best Dog in Vietnam, Cynthia Kadohata

Duke, Kirby Larson

Saving Zasha, Randi Barrow

Wild Life, Cynthia DeFelice

WEBSITES:

Author's website: <http://www.randibarrow.com/index.html>

Photo and more information about the ice road over Lake Ladoga <http://ww2today.com/26th-february-1942-lake-ladoga-the-ice-road-that-saved-leningrad>

BOOKTALK:

Ivan is 12 years old, but must leave his home in Leningrad. There has been very little to eat due to the siege of the city, a recent bombing by the Nazis nearly destroyed his apartment, and now his mother's job requires her to relocate to the mountains. With his elderly but resourceful neighbor, Ivan flees to a village in the country, hoping to find relatives. The Nazis soon take over the village, and Ivan becomes the dog trainer of two German shepherd puppies, Zasha and Thor. The cruel Major Recht wants to use the dogs to track down Russians, but Ivan wants the dogs to live free lives. Ivan has a chance to escape but how can he possibly leave Zasha and Thor? How can he free the dogs with the German soldiers watching his every move? What will happen to him if he is caught? Read this action packed story set in Russia during WWII to discover the answers to these questions. You will definitely want to continue the story by reading *Saving Zasha* also by Randi Barrow!

Prepared by:

Karen Zimmerman, St. John Neumann Catholic School, kzimmerman@sjncatholic.com

Keeper of the Lost Cities

Shannon Messenger

Aladdin Publishing, 2012

488 pages

SUMMARY:

After years of contending with unwanted telepathic powers and the feeling that she is not like everyone else, 12-year-old prodigy Sophie Foster discovers that there is a perfectly logical explanation: she is an elf. Moreover, she is an elf who has been hidden among humans, with secret elven information stored in her memory. An encounter with a mysterious boy named Fitz reveals Sophie's true heritage, and she returns to the elf world, a network of "lost cities" assumed to be mythical by humans. This series opener spends a lot of time world building and establishing Sophie's new life. Comparisons to Harry Potter are obvious, especially once Sophie starts studying at the exclusive Foxfire Academy to hone her elf abilities. Some mysteries, such as Sophie's role as a Keeper and why she was embedded amongst humans, remain largely unanswered. A large and varied cast of supporting characters and an intriguing premise contribute to make this an exciting start to a promising series.

(Summary by Booklist)

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Artemis Fowl series, Eoin Colfer

Fairest, Gail Carson Levine

Breadcrumbs, Anne Ursu

The Phantom Tollbooth, Norton Juster

Dragon Rider, Cornelia Caroline Funke

Eragon (Inheritance series), Christopher Paolini

WEBSITES:

<http://ramblingsofawannabescribe.blogspot.com/p/keeper-of-lost-cities.html>

<http://www.alagaesia.com/>

<http://www.eoincolfer.com/>

BOOKTALK:

Twelve-year-old Sophie Foster has a secret. She's a Telepath—someone who hears the thoughts of everyone around her. It's a talent she's never known how to explain. Everything changes the day she meets Fitz, a mysterious boy who appears out of nowhere and also reads minds. She discovers there's a place she does belong, and that staying with her family will place her in grave danger. In the blink of an eye, Sophie is forced to leave behind everything and start a new life in a place that is vastly different from anything she has ever known. Sophie has new rules to learn and new skills to master, and not everyone is thrilled that she has come "home." There are secrets buried deep in Sophie's memory—secrets about who she really is and why she was hidden among humans—that other people desperately want. Some would even kill for.

(Booktalk from Good Reads)

Prepared by:

Cindy Symonds, Round Top Elementary School, Blythewood, SC, csymonds@richland2.org

Keeping Safe the Stars

Shelia O'Connor

Putnam Juvenile, 2012

304 pages

SUMMARY:

Three orphaned children—Pride, Nightingale, and Baby—live with their grandfather, Old Finn, in a remote cabin in Minnesota. But when he becomes seriously ill and is shipped off to a hospital in Duluth, the kids, raised to be independent and keep the outside world at bay, must stick together to prevent the state from meddling. At 13, Pride is the oldest and steps up with various money-making schemes, from selling craft “souvenirs” at the cabin to offering pony rides for a quarter—all in an effort to procure round-trip bus tickets to Duluth. (summary from Booklist)

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Feathers, Jacqueline Woodson

The Cookcamp, Gary Paulsen

Breathing Room, Marsha Hayles

Inside Out & Back Again, Thanhha Lai

Crispin, Avi

On the Banks of Plum Creek, Laura Ingalls Wilder

Summer of the Gypsy Moths, Sara Pennypacker

WEBSITES:

GoodReads , <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13586749-keeping-safe-the-stars>,

GoodReads community discussion of the book.

Shelia O'Connor, <http://www.sheilaconnor.com/>, author's website

BOOKTALK:

Pride, Nightingale, and Baby have been through a lot in their short lives. Losing both of their parents and winding up in a shelter before their Grandfather, Old Finn, shows up to claim them. They move from the commune in New Mexico to Old Finn's quiet 40 acres known as Eden in rural Minnesota. Old Finn keeps to himself and they accept this arrangement and are home schooled in academics and life skills right up to the day Old Finn takes sick and goes into the hospital. Nothing Old Finn taught them prepared them for life on their own. Pride, the oldest, swings into protective mode and will stop at nothing to prevent others from stepping in and placing them into foster care. After starting their own business to earn money and deflecting questions from nearly everyone they have to accept they may not be able to stay on their own for long.

Prepared by:

Amanda Youmans, Pleasant Hill Elementary School, ayoumans2@lexington1.net

The Quilt Walk
Sandra Dallas
Sleeping Bear Press, 2012
213 pgs.

SUMMARY:

In this historical fiction novel, Emmy Blue and her family travel by wagon train to a new life in Colorado. There's anxiety about the trip on her mother's part, and her grandparents aren't happy to see them go. However, Emmy's father has a dream for a new, better life. On the journey, as Emmy Blue pieces the quilt her grandmother gave, she faces disappointment, loss, and becomes aware of a woman's abusive relationship. This book ties into fifth grade social studies standards of westward expansion and would be a great read aloud.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Hattie Big Sky, Kirby Larson

May B, Caroline Rose Starr

Out of the Dust, Karen Hesse

WEBSITES:

Sandra Dallas, www.sandradallas.com, The author's website provides a biography and information about her other, primarily adult-focused, books.

BOOKTALK:

In 1863 eleven-year-old Emmy Blue is sad to leave her grandparents, best friend, and familiar life in Illinois when her father decides to move their family to Colorado. They will make the long journey as part of a wagon train, and her grandmother gives her quilt pieces to sew as she walks across the country. Emmy hates quilting and isn't excited about the present. During her quilt walk, however, Emmy sees the country and learns about herself.

Prepared by:

Melanie Starks, East Aiken School of the Arts, mstarks@aiken.k12.sc.us

Red Thread Sisters
Carol Antoinette Peacock
Viking Juvenile, 2012
224 Pages

SUMMARY:

Wen and her best friend Shu Ling have lived 11 years in a Chinese orphanage. When Wen is adopted by an American family, as she has always dreamed, she must leave Shu Ling behind. Not only does Wen have to adjust to an entirely new culture and language, she longs for Shu Ling to find a home in America too.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Star of the Week: A Story of Love, Adoption, and Brownies with Sprinkles, Darlene Friedman
Lily, Keri Campbell

Three Names of Me, Mary Cummings

Kimchi and Calimari, Rose Kent

Betti on the High Wire, Lisa Railsbeck

Safe at Home, Mike Lupica

WEBSITES:

Watch a Video Book Traile:r <http://www.carolpeacock.com/>

Red Thread Teachers Guide: <http://www.carolpeacock.com/pdfs/teacher-guide-red-thread.pdf>

China/Time for Kids: <http://www.timeforkids.com/destination/china>

BOOKTALK:

According to an ancient Chinese legend, a red thread ties together those who are destined to meet and help one another throughout life. For eleven-year old Wen, this means a red thread binds her to her new American family. However, she struggles to adjust to her new home. Living in a new country is more difficult than she ever dreamed even if it means having more food and clothes than she could have ever imagined. Wen is overwhelmed by going to school and speaking English, feeling she belongs in her new family, and most of all, leaving behind her best friend Shu Ling, the only person who she knows truly loves her. Believing a red thread connects her to Shu Ling as well, Wen vows to find an adoptive family for her friend. But in order to do so, she must overcome her fears of being sent back to the orphanage for doing the wrong thing and race against a clock that will make Shu Ling ineligible for adoption once she turns fourteen. With every page, readers will find themselves not only rooting for Wen and Shu Ling, but also reflecting on the fascinating ways our lives intersect and impact others around us.

Prepared by:

Leslie Cooper, St. Andrews School of Math and Science, leslie_cooper@charleston.k12.sc.us

Sugar

Jewell Parker Rhodes

Little, Brown, & Company, 2013

272 pages

SUMMARY:

Ten-year-old Sugar lives on the River Road sugar plantation along the banks of the Mississippi. Slavery is over, but laboring in the fields all day doesn't make her feel very free. Thankfully, Sugar has a knack for finding her own fun, especially when she joins forces with forbidden friend Billy, the white plantation owner's son.

Sugar has always yearned to learn more about the world, and she sees her chance when Chinese workers are brought in to help harvest the cane. The older River Road folks feel threatened, but Sugar is fascinated. As she befriends young Beau and elder Master Liu, they introduce her to the traditions of their culture, and she, in turn, shares the ways of plantation life. Sugar soon realizes that she must be the one to bridge the cultural gap and bring the community together. Here is a story of unlikely friendships and how they can change our lives forever.

(Publisher summary, Little, Brown)

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Friendship, Mildred D. Taylor

I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly: The Diary of Patsy, a Freed Girl, Joyce Hansen

The Land, Mildred D. Taylor

WEBSITES:

<http://jewellparkerrhodes.com/children/meet-jewell/>

<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/reconstruction.htm>

BOOKTALK:

Publishers Weekly (March 25, 2013)

"I'm ten now. I'm not a slave anymore. I'm free. Except from sugar." In 1870 Louisiana, five years after the Thirteenth Amendment outlawed slavery, Sugar is still bound to the crop whose name she shares. Sugar and her mother had been waiting for the return of her father, who was sold shortly after Sugar was born; when Sugar's mother died, her daughter was left with nowhere to go. Sugar's caring guardians and her occasional adventures in the woods are bright spots in her life, but she feels left behind as friends head north. When "Chinamen" are hired to work on the plantation, Sugar's community feels threatened. What will happen to Sugar and her community now? Read, *Sugar* by Jewell Parker Rhodes to find out.

Prepared by:

Cindy Symonds, Round Top Elementary School, Blythewood, SC, csymonds@richland2.org

Summer of the Gypsy Moths

Sara Pennypacker
Harper Collins, 2012
288 pages

SUMMARY:

While her unstable mother moves around at whim, Stella stays with her Great Aunt Louise on Cape Cod, helping her prepare the Linger Longer summer cottages for guests. Angel, a foster child who is also living with Aunt Louise, is not interested in being Stella's friend, at least until tragedy strikes and they have to work together to figure out what to do.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Love, Aubrey, Suzanne LaFleur
The Great Gilly Hopkins, Katherine Paterson
The Invention of Hugo Cabret, Brian Selznick
Eggs, Jerry Spinelli

WEBSITES:

Sara Pennypacker, www.sarapennypacker.com, author's website
Harper Collins Children's Books, <http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/books/Summer-Gypsy-Moths-Sara>, publisher's website which includes a book discussion guide
United States Forest Service, <http://www.fs.fed.us/ne/morgantown/4557/gmoth/>, information sheet on gypsy moths
Cape Cod Tourism, <http://www.capecod.com/>, pictures and descriptions of Cape Cod, Massachusetts
Linger Longer by the Sea, <http://www.lingerlongerbythesea.com/beach-access-cottages.php>, real (not necessarily the ones in the novel) Cape Cod cottages to rent
Heloise <http://www.heloise.com>, website of the famous writer of household hints

BOOKTALK:

So what do you do when you find a dead body? Call the police? Run away? Bury it? Who do you ask? Stella is staying with Great Aunt Louise while her mother is off trying to "find herself" but she can't help. There is only one person Stella can turn to: Angel, a disagreeable foster child who wants nothing to do with Stella or her problems. Find out what they do with that body and how they manage to spend a whole summer by themselves, running a rental cottage business!

Prepared by:

Serena DuBose, Fairfax Elementary School, duboses@acs.k12.sc.us

Summer of the Wolves
Polly Carlson-Voiles
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012
#352 pages

SUMMARY:

Thirteen year-old Nika and her brother must go to live with their uncle in northern Minnesota, after the death of their mother. Nika helps her uncle raise a rescued wolf pup and learns a great deal about family as well as wildlife. Alternating chapters tell another story from a wolf's perspective.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Julie of the Wolves, Jean Craighead George

My Side of the Mountain, Jean Craighead George

Ruby Holler, Sharon Creech

Pictures of Hollis Woods, Patricia Reilly Giff

When the Wolves Returned: Restoring Nature's Balance in Yellowstone, Dorothy Hinshaw Patent

Wolves of the Beyond Series, Kathryn Lasky

WEBSITES:

<http://annemarieobrienaauthor.com/2013/06/q-a-with-polly-carlson-voiles-smmer-of-the-wolves/>

Questions and answers by the author, blurbs, and reviews to share

<https://www.teachervision.com/discussion-guide/printable/72284.html>

-an excellent discussion guide with reading and writing activities

<http://pollycarlsonvoiles.wordpress.com/> - author's homepage

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson110.shtml - list of wolf activities and links to wolf resources

BOOKTALK:

Nika knows the wolf pup is not a pet and not a dog, but she feels such a connection to the young wolf she calls Khan. She helped rescue the wolf pup, has slept with it, fed it with a bottle, and just feels better being near the wolf. Ever since she and her brother were orphaned two years ago, Nika has felt out of place and doesn't trust anyone. When she comes to live with her uncle in Minnesota, Nika begins to find place for herself. She becomes friends with Thomas and together they find a female wolf, Luna, and begin to feed her. But there is a man who is trying to kill wolves. How can they protect Luna? What will happen to Khan once he is full-grown? Should Nika try to run away and take Khan with her? If you love wildlife, adventure, and action, then this is the book for you!

Prepared by:

Karen Zimmerman, St. John Neumann Catholic School, kzimmerman@sjncatholic.com

Third Grade Angels
Jerry Spinelli
Arthur A. Levine Books, 2012
133 pgs.

SUMMARY:

In this prequel to *Fourth Grade Rats*, Suds and his classmates are excited when Mrs. Simms, their third grade teacher, announces she will award a halo each month to students who demonstrate spectacular behavior. At first everyone tries really hard to earn the halo, but soon many kids don't seem to care that much. For Suds, however, earning the halo is his focus! This book is a great choice for beginning chapter book readers or to start off third grade.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Gooney Bird on the Map, Lois Lowry
Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing, Judy Blume
Clementine, Sara Penny Parker

WEBSITES:

Jerry Spinelli, www.jerryspinelli.com, The author's website has information about his books, life, and even a discussion forum.

BOOKTALK:

"First grade babies, second grade cats, third grade angels, fourth grade rats" Suds is excited to be in third grade and for the opportunity to be an angel once he hears his teacher talk about awarding a halo to a student who demonstrates wonderful behavior and character. He's determined to be the first to get a halo and focuses solely on that prize, but sometimes it's hard to be an angel. Can Suds earn his halo? Read *Third Grade Angels* to find out.

Prepared by:

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This Journal Belongs to Ratchet

Nancy Cavanaugh

Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2013

320 pages

SUMMARY:

Eleven-year-old Rachel, aka Ratchet, is determined to change her life. As if being homeschooled by her eccentric father isn't bad enough, she barely remembers her mother and longs for a real friend. So, she develops a plan to completely change her life one step at a time. Along the way she helps save a park, builds a race car, and learns who she really is.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Doodlebug, a Novel in Doodles, Karen Romano Young

What would Joey do?, Jack Gantos

WEBSITES:

Nancy J. Cavanaugh, <http://www.nancyjcavanaugh.com/>, the author's website which includes reviews of this book, fun facts about the author and a link to her blog

BOOKTALK:

"If only getting a new life were as easy as getting a new notebook.

But it's not.

It's the first day of school for all the kids in the neighborhood. But not for me. I'm homeschooled. That means nothing new. No new book bag, no new clothes, and no friends – old or new. The best I've got is this notebook. I'm supposed to use it for my writing assignments, but my dad never checks. Here's what I'm really going to use it for:

Ratchet's Top Secret Plan

Project Goal: turn my old, recycled, freakish, friendless, motherless life into something shiny and new. This year, I'm going to make something change."

Prepared by:

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Ungifted
Gordon Korman
Balzer & Bray, 2012
280 pages

SUMMARY:

Donovan Curtis is an eighth grader with a knack for getting caught in the middle of trouble. His last spontaneous middle school prank may have gone too far. He causes unintended damage to his middle school and he ends up sitting in the superintendent's office. A paperwork mishap ends up sending Donovan to a school for gifted students instead of to a punishment. This may be the perfect place for him to escape punishment if he can keep the teachers and students at the Academy fooled.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Pickle: the (formerly) anonymous prank club of Fountain Point Middle School, Kimberly Baker
Cheesie Mack is Not a Genius or Anything, Steve Cotler
Funny Business, Mark Barnett... et al.

WEBSITES:

The Official Gordon Korman Website, <http://www.gordonkorman.com>. This website gives information about Gordon Korman's latest writing, travel, and interest.

Scholastic Biography, <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/contributor/gordon-korman>. This website has a biography and interview with Gordon Korman.

BOOKTALK:

Have you ever had one of those days at school that you know is going to result in a phone call home? You walk home as slowly as possible, and then try to be the one that gets the phone every time it rings. That is exactly how Donovan Curtis feels the night that he accidentally destroys his middle school gym. He makes it through the night only to be called to the office the next day at school. Imagine his surprise when he finds out that he has been accepted into the Academy of Scholastic Distinction, a special program for gifted and talented students. Donovan is excited that he has found a way to escape his punishment, but how will he ever fit in with all the kids at the Academy. Read *Ungifted* by Gordon Korman in order to find out if Donovan can fool everyone and find a place at his new school.

Prepared by:

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The Vengekeep Prophecies

Brian Farrey
Harper, 2012
390 pages

SUMMARY:

Jaxter Grimjinx is part of a clan of thieves. His family is well known in the village for all the clever tricks they pull off during their thievery. Jaxter is coming of the age to help take part in the cons, but has trouble because he is very clumsy. His first solo act causes a house fire and his family ends up in jail. His family is released when a con that his parents had set in place starts to unfold. It seems like the perfect plan until the doomsday prophecy starts coming true and destroying the town. Jaxter and a friend set out to try and stop the prophecy and save the town.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Magyk, Angie Sage

Tuesdays at the Castle, Jessica George

The Emerald Atlas, John Stephens

The False Prince, Jennifer Nielsen

WEBSITES:

Grimjinx.com, <http://www.grimjinx.com>, Grimjinx.com explores the life of Jaxter and his family of thieves. The site contains information about Jaxter's family and clues about a sequel.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=VU1klWgpKIU, YouTube video where Brian Farrey gives a book talk about his book.

BOOKTALK:

Jaxter Grimjinx is part of a famous family of thieves. That should make him an automatic expert in the world of thievery, but unfortunately that doesn't work out for Jaxter. In his first major heist he manages to land himself and other family members in jail. A con that his parents put in place helps with the release of the Grimjinx family, but suddenly the predictions are coming true. Can Jaxter find a way to help his family and his town survive? He sets off on a journey with his friend Callie in order to track down a solution to their problems. Read *The Vengekeep Prophecies* in order to find out if Jaxter can save the day.

Prepared by:

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White House Kids

Joe Rhatigan

Imagine Publishing, 2012

280 pages

SUMMARY:

The Perks, Pleasures, Problems and Pratfalls of the Presidents' Children

Living in America's most famous residence might seem glamorous at first - it's the most fun place any kid could live! There's a bowling alley in the basement, chefs are always available to prepare whatever you're craving, and sometimes presidential aides will even help you with your homework! But life isn't always easy for the youngsters who call the White House home. They're always in the spotlight, and those pesky Secret Service agents are always around. For every perk, there's a problem. .

From Washington to Obama, see the White House through the eyes of the children and grandchildren. Filled with wacky, weird, and wonderful stories, it shows what it's like to call the president Dad (or Granddad or Uncle). Find out what schools they went to, what mischief they caused, and what pets they had. There are first-person accounts from letters and interviews, fascinating photos, original illustrations, and even a section that follows the children after they left the White House. *(Summary from Imagine Publishing)*

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

So You Want To Be President?, Judith St. George

Lives of the Presidents: Fame, Shame, and What the Neighbors Thought, Kathleen Krull

First Kids: The True Stories of All the Presidents' Children, Noah McCullough

WEBSITES:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

<http://www.potus.com/>

BOOKTALK:

Do you think being a kid in the White House would be awesome or the pits? Downsides?

There's a lack of privacy, extremely busy parents, and the possibility of doing something embarrassing that could end up in the media. The upsides? You get to travel in Air Force One with your dad. Your new home has a movie theater, a basketball court, a bowling alley, a swimming pool, and a tennis court. Some First Kids had personalities as remarkable as their fathers'. Abraham Lincoln's boy Tad set up a table and sold refreshments to visitors by the White House entrance. Gerald Ford's daughter, Susan, held her high school prom in the East Room. Ulysses Grant asked his son Jesse why he often showed up late for breakfast. "When I was your age, I had to get up, feed four or five horses, cut wood for the family, take breakfast, and be off to school by eight o'clock," the president said. Jesse smiled at his father and replied, "Oh, yes, but you did not have such a papa as I have." And then there was Alice, Teddy Roosevelt's beautiful daughter. She attended formal dinners with her pet snake, Emily Spinach, wrapped around her arm. To find out more about these famous *White House Kids*, read the book by Joe Rhatigan.

(SLJ, 10/1/12)

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