
BEGINNING

Bang, Molly

When Sophie Gets Angry

ISBN 0590189794

Oooh! Sophie is so angry at having to share her toys that she turns into a raging volcano. She bursts out the door and runs until she cannot run another step. Then, she cries. In her own inimitable way Sophie shows us a very effective way to deal with anger that is uncontrolled. After the tears, she begins to notice the peace of her surroundings and comes eventually to a tree she loves to climb. As she surveys the beauty, she becomes more composed and is able to return to the loving arms of family. Bang's use of colour to create the moods of fury and serenity add great depth to this simple story.

🍁 Bourgeois, Paulette

Franklin in the Dark

ISBN 092110331X

What a charming story arose from watching an episode of *M*A*S*H*, when Hawkeye expressed his fear of the dark while holed up in a cave. Paulette Bourgeois used that event to create her lovable and timeless turtle and his first dilemma. Kids appreciate his curiosity and his vulnerability as he discovers that what other animals fear is not what bothers him. His newfound friends cannot help him overcome his greatest fear. It's Mama to the rescue and soon Franklin is 'snug as a bug', tucked in for the night.

Carle, Eric

Mister Seahorse

ISBN 0399242694

Eric Carle has an astonishing way of teaching children lessons in his books and making it seem like the best kind of play. He introduces us to the father seahorse as the caregiver in the family and then takes us on an underwater journey to show us other dads who take responsibility for the nurture and protection of their young ones. His signature and brilliant tissue paper collages provide the perfect setting. We come away from the story with great respect for those caring dads and with new knowledge about some creatures of the sea.

🍁 Carter, Anne Laurel

Under a Prairie Sky

ISBN 155143282X

The illustrations for this book provide a lesson in prairie living and make a strong case for the beauty we find here. A young boy dreams of being a Mountie and, one day, gets a chance to prove his mettle. Donning similar attire to that of his heroes, he mounts his trusty steed and sets off in search of his younger brother who has wandered away. A fierce prairie storm adds some tension; but, even at a very tender age, this young boy proves the adage that the Mounties 'always get their man.' The sights, the sounds, the drama of life on the prairie provinces should put this book at the top of your list.

Cowley, Joy

Red Eyed Tree Frog

ISBN 0590871757

Now here is a frog with personality. He's slimy and he lives in the rain forest. He's been sleeping all day and he's hungry, so he sets out to find some grub. Unbeknownst to him, there are many dangers in his environs and he must do his best to find a meal, not become one. The brilliance of this magnificent setting is evident on every page. Nic Bishop's perspectives are quite spectacular and the reader definitely understands what it means to be such a tiny, vulnerable creature. The text is simple, but effective. Which is your favourite... the escape from the boa or the capture of that huge moth?

🍁 Denton, Kady

Amber Waiting

ISBN 0889952582

Amber loves every minute of her kindergarten day; but that pleasure is soon wiped out by the misery of waiting for her father to pick her up...a task he doesn't take too seriously. Amber waits, and waits, and waits. She fancies herself in a world where roles are reversed and it is her Dad who does the waiting. When he finally does arrive, she admonishes him for his tardiness and he realizes what he has done. Amber is overcome with relief and forgiveness, but she had made her point. Kady Denton's illustrations give such honour to the child and her world, filling every space with Amber's thoughts and feelings.

Donaldson, Julia

The Gruffalo

ISBN 0333710932

This book reveals another case of the tiny taking on the immense and winning through cunning and trickery. What child wouldn't love that? When the mouse meets a fox, an owl, and a snake, all intent on making him their dinner, he quickly invents a terrifyingly fantastic character who will knock their socks off...and who just happens to love roasted fox and other such delectable treats for his dinner. They are not deterred until they meet said GRUFFALO. Then, the tables are turned. Imagine the gruffalo's surprise when he discovers that all the predatory creatures of the forest are afraid of the mouse...and the mouse's favourite food is *gruffalo crumble*.

Fleischman, Paul

Sidewalk Circus

ISBN 0763611077

What an extraordinary view for a young girl waiting patiently for an early morning bus! As she watches circus posters being put up, her everyday world becomes imaginatively entangled with the imminent arrival of the world famous Garibaldi Circus. The only text is found on the posters and the collaboration of this team is quite spectacular...they create a world of shadows and drama that only she can see. And when her bus comes, there is another to take her place and dream his own circus dreams.

Fox, Mem

Harriet, You'll Drive Me Wild!

ISBN 0152045988

Mem Fox is a master at creating text for our earliest readers. She uses repetitive phrases, familiar events, and perfect words to make her stories come alive for her audience. In this book we meet Harriet and her mother who are at odds with each other over Harriet's behaviour. She seems like an accident waiting to happen and Mom gets mighty ornery as each new event unfolds. Harriet doesn't mean to have accidents and Mom doesn't mean to yell, but such things happen for small children and their mothers. In the end, love wins out...and all is as it should be.

🍁 Gilman, Phoebe

Something from Nothing

ISBN 0590745573

When the birth gift that Joseph receives from his grandfather becomes tattered, Joseph's mother suggests it be discarded. Grandpa to the rescue! From the shabby remains of his grandson's favourite blanket, Grandpa first fashions a jacket, then a vest, a tie, and, finally, a button. When the button is lost, there is nothing to be done. Now it is up to Joseph to solve the problem...surprise! Oh...and be sure to follow the parallel story happening below the floorboards of the family home in the Polish shtetl.

🍁 Heidbreder, Robert **Drumheller Dinosaur Dance** ISBN 1553373936

If you've ever wandered the hills near Drumheller and tried to imagine what must have taken place there millions of years ago, this book will set your toes to tapping and your imagination on a wild ride. While most adults think that the noise that emanates from the earth at night is really thunder, budding paleontologists know that the sounds come from landlocked dinos in search of fun and frolic. They creep across the Badlands to celebrate in rhythmic reverie while humans sleep. Kids can join them...if they believe!

🍁 Jocelyn, Marthe **Hannah's Collections** ISBN 0887766900

Hannah loves to collect 'things' and does so with zest. Her room features an endless assortment of each of her treasured collections. When the teacher suggests that the children in Hannah's class might bring a favoured group of items to school on Friday, Hannah is faced with a dilemma. How will she choose? Her ingenious solution is perfect, and she is delighted with the result.

🍁 Jocelyn, Marthe **Mayfly** ISBN 0887766765

A memoir of the best kind for our young readers, this book tells the story of one family's annual summer vacation. As the school closes its doors in late June, Mom and the kids prepare for their yearly trek to the cottage. Each event is a part of the traditions, from packing the suitcases to saying goodbye to the streets and stores and hello to summer. When the lazy days have been enjoyed in a myriad of ways, they head for home...new shoes, and a new school year. It won't be long, though, until their return.

🍁 Lee, Dennis **Alligator Pie** ISBN 1552633381

Prior to its initial publication in 1974, Canadian children often only recited familiar Mother Goose rhymes. With the release of *Alligator Pie*, they found new words to get their tongues around and a whole new set of poems to savour. They recited them with gusto, and great pleasure. This is Canadian children's poetry at its best...memorable, fun, and full of words and names that give us pride of place. It's the perfect way to get young readers hooked on poetry!

Lester, Mike **A is for Salad** ISBN 0698119266

This is one of those alphabet books that have kids thinking 'I can do that!' It won't take them long to realize the premise that Lester has chosen to stand the alphabet on its head. It is the alligator eating the salad that begins this nonsense trip. Cartoon-like creatures sporting surprising duds will have kids laughing out loud and begging for more. A lesson in abstract thinking using simple cartoon characters might encourage kids to put their thinking caps on and see what they can deliver. Finally, the author uses an endnote to suggest other words that might have been used for each letter.

✻ Lesynski, Loris

Nothing Beats a Pizza

ISBN 1550377000

Read these poems aloud, and do it with pizzazz! So suggests poet extraordinaire Lesynski who fills her pages with riotous rhyme and quirky characters that live life to its fullest, and with the best intentions. She is a master of wordplay and this book again promises many happy hours of reading. Her illustrations invite comment and suggest ways to use the poetry and to create your own. Filled with a delight in language, Lesynski does her best to pass it along with a subject sure to grab even the most reluctant, aspiring poet.

Levenson, George

Bread Comes to Life

ISBN 1582461147

The Little Red Hen would have loved this stunningly photographed book that truly brings life to the oldest food that remains part of our modern diet. It would have helped her understand the origin of the many delicious and colourful loaves that adorn dining tables throughout the world. The simple, rhythmic text provides all the information needed in this high-quality nonfiction piece of writing. Pair it with the video of the same name and a trip to the mentioned website for a true culinary experience and much new learning.

Liu, Jae-Soo

Yellow Umbrella

ISBN 1929122360

This wordless book begins with one yellow umbrella. A red and then a blue umbrella join it. They are followed by many other colours and they set themselves out in a variety of configurations as they make a long and interesting journey toward school. The dazzling hues of the umbrella tops stand out in contrast to the dull grey of the rain-laden sky. As with other books without text, there is no end to the interpretations that young children will make when sharing this book. The fact that it has an accompanying CD, filled with the sounds of falling rain and gentle piano pieces, adds to the anticipated pleasure.

✻ Reid, Barbara

The Party

ISBN 0590124285

If you have ever been to a family party, you will know what inspired Barbara Reid to tell this story. From the cheek pinching adulation of an embarrassing aunt to the heavily laden picnic table, you will recognize someone from your family as you participate in this 90th birthday party for Gran. Personalities jump off the page, as does the energy and excitement of the events of this daylong affair. The initial apprehension soon disappears as the children connect with each other once again. When the time comes to leave, all are reluctant to end the fun.

Riley, Linda

Elephants Swim

ISBN 0395934893

In rhyming text we are introduced to sixteen animals and their activities in the water. There is much to learn. The author is not content to leave us with the accompanying text. She adds further information in an afterword and thus encourages additional interest. The cut paper collages afford us a clear and close-up look at the ways in which a diverse group of appealing animals finds solace in the water. The language is gentle and well chosen; the illustrations are charming. This is a terrific example of nonfiction and is accessible to our young readers.

☀ Schwartz, Roslyn

The Mole Sisters

ISBN 155037883X

If you have not met the Mole Sisters yet, you are in for a special surprise! In this book that contains their ten tiny treasured adventures, you will come to know and love them as many young children do. Each sister is the perfect companion to the other. They are feisty, thoughtful, bright, and charming. Their adventurous natures rouse envy and admiration in their fans. Although the publisher has chosen to compile this collection, teachers would be wont to have each tiny little book in the hands of the children in my class. They are perfect for holding and for taking home for a bedtime read.

Shannon, George

Tomorrow's Alphabet

ISBN 0688164242

Alphabet books abound and it takes some looking to find the truly excellent ones. In this book George Shannon uses the premise that what we have with us today will be something quite different tomorrow. (A is for seed...tomorrow's apple.) It's true magic is to sit back and watch as young listeners discover the author's premise...that AHA! moment. The illustrations fill the pages with realistic and brilliant visual depictions of the game that he is playing with his audience.

Silverstein, Shel

The Giving Tree

ISBN 0060256656

Many educators have been reading this book aloud for as long as they've been teaching and it never loses its appeal. It is a lesson in selfless giving and serves to teach us that unconditional love is a wondrous, and sad, affair. When the boy is young, the tree provides shade, a place to play, and food. As he grows and his demands increase, the tree gives all that is asked. When there is nothing left but a stump, the tree is still able to offer comfort and love. Simple text and perfect illustrations make this book a bestseller forty years after it was originally published.

Walsh, Ellen Stoll

Mouse Paint

ISBN 0152081182

This author's books offer tiny, winsome creatures that teach us a thing or two and they are often requested for shared reading times. The three tiny mice in this book about colour mixing are the perfect characters for this charming display. They finagle themselves into primary coloured paint jars and then wander through the pages mixing colour with abandon, thus teaching the reader the principle that mixing the three primary colours on the colour wheel results in the creation of three additional colours. All work together to present a world of beauty.

Wood, Audrey

Quick as a Cricket

ISBN 0859531511

A simile can be a difficult concept to teach young children and, yet, it is a most effective way of helping them visualize what they are reading or hearing. Audrey and Don Wood have here created a wonderful book filled with similes that kids will understand, and with engaging artwork that brings this descriptive strategy to full and vibrant life. It won't be long until they are testing their own powers of observation and language.
