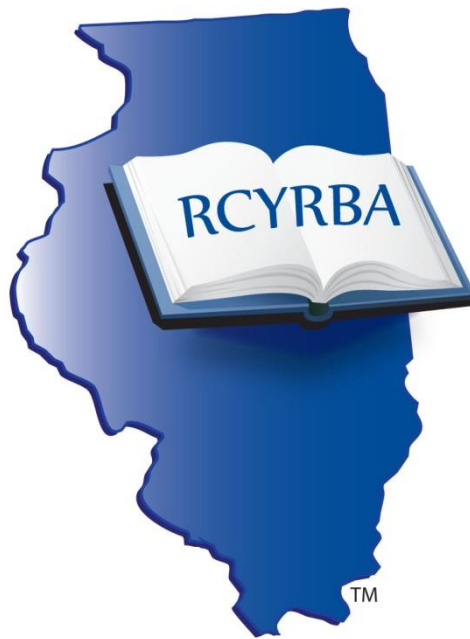


# LET'S TALK ABOUT BOOKS

Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award List 2019

Suggestions for Use



Edited by Ellen Popit

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Westfield High School (Bloomington)  
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## Introduction

The Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award (RCYRBA) is now celebrating its thirtieth year! Twenty titles are nominated each year, and any students in grades four through eight in participating Illinois schools and public libraries who have read or heard three books may vote for the most outstanding book in February. The winner is announced in March. Children are encouraged to read the books on this list and share their thoughts and reactions with others, thus making the reading experience more enjoyable.

This packet of materials is meant to be a guide for librarians and teachers to help children enjoy and interpret what they read. It is designed as a beginning step when looking in depth at the books on the Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award Master List for 2019. It is hoped that the packet will start creative thoughts flowing in librarians, teachers, and children, who are trying to read books enthusiastically and with joy. All the materials developed are meant to be used "with" children and not given to them in isolation.

The following suggestions for the twenty titles on the 2019 RCYRBA Master List were developed by a group of librarians and teachers. Information is provided in ten areas: a summary, questions for students, journal starters, and activities designed to extend the book into other curricular areas, reading recommendations, promotional booktalks, related materials, web sites, and book review citations.

**Summary:** The summary provides an overview of the book for anyone who has not read a particular title.

**Questions:** The questions included are primarily open-ended with neither a right nor a wrong answer. Since readers' reactions to stories are different, they should be encouraged to express different points of view. The questions encourage students to relate reading to their everyday lives and are designed to promote more questions and discussion as a result. Questions can be given to students when they begin to read the book, so they can think about their responses as they read and focus on the ideas that the author is trying to convey.

**Journal Starters:** These questions are designed to engage students in the writing process and to encourage them to put themselves in situations presented in the books.

**Activities:** There are a wide variety of activities included to suit different age and interest levels. Some are designed for groups, others for individuals.

**Interest Levels:** Interest levels are included to help librarians and teachers decide if a title will be of interest to a group of students or to an individual. The recommendation is only made with consideration for grades four through eight, which are the grades included in the award.

Occasionally, a caution is listed when a sensitive topic is included that may cause concern in some communities.

**Book Trailers:** Online “commercials” for books on this list have been added when available.

**Booktalks:** Booktalks have been added for the convenience of librarians and teachers who would like a prepared piece to use for book promotion. They are short, sometimes including a passage from the book, since hearing the voice of the author is often important when students are deciding whether or not to read a specific title.

**Read-Alikes:** A listing of related books that will aid in extending literature activities. Titles were suggested by teachers and librarians who have had experience with them. This list is not exhaustive, and materials have not been screened for literary merit. These related books are divided into three general categories: additional books by the same author, topics which are mentioned in the story and books which are similar. Because of their broad appeal throughout the curriculum, picture books are also included in this listing.

**Web Sites:** Sites were selected to expand the activities and learning of the students. Some sites are for author information and others for organizations, locations or topics related to the book. The sites were checked on September 28, 2018 and were active at that time. If links to .pdf files or other sites do not load, try copying and pasting them into your browser.

**Book Review Citations:** Book review citations have been included to aid teachers and librarians in case a challenge to any of the books on the list should occur.

This activities packet has been edited with care from materials developed by the contributors. The Rebecca Caudill Young Readers’ Book Award Committee would appreciate comments and suggestions concerning the packet. Please direct communications to anyone on the committee or to the editors of the packet.

Developing this packet was a challenging, invigorating experience for the participants. Enjoy!

**Alexander, Kwame. *Booked*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.**

**SUMMARY:**

“You’re the only kid/on your block/at school/in THE. ENTIRE. FREAKIN’. WORLD./who lives in a prison/of words./He calls it the pursuit of excellence./ You call it Shawshank”(5). Nick Hall hates reading, and with a dad who is a linguistics professor who has him read a dictionary he wrote called *Weird and Wonderful Words*, there’s bound to be conflict. Nick’s true passion is soccer, which he shares with his best friend Coby. They are also united by their struggles with a pair of bullies, Dean and Don Eggeston. Nick’s world is upended when his parents announce that they are separating, and his mom takes a job training horses in Kentucky. Things get even worse when Nick must have his appendix removed, resulting in him missing the Dallas Cup, a devastating blow for this soccer superfan. But his family and community gather together to support him while he recovers. His supporters include April, the girl on whom he has a crush and his intuitive librarian, Mr. “The Mac” MacDonald, who brings him books that help Nick realize that reading just might be fun and words just might have power after all.

**QUESTIONS:**

Why do you think Nick dislikes reading?

Why does Nick’s dad make him read his dictionary, *Weird and Wonderful Words*?

What makes Coby and Nick such good friends?

Why do Coby and Nick love soccer so much?

What makes The Mac a good librarian? How does he help Nick?

What is Nick’s reaction to his parents’ separation? Why is his mom leaving particularly difficult for him?

How does Nick discover that books are “like amusement parks for readers”? Why do these books make the difference for him?

**JOURNAL STARTER:**

“The Mac let me open his dragonfly box. You’ll never believe what was inside...” Using the clues from *Booked*, describe what Nick found inside Freedom, the dragonfly box.

**ACTIVITIES:**

Find a word worthy of Nick’s dad and write your own entry with a Nick-style definition footnote.

*Booked* is full of poems that can be mentor texts to inspire creative writing. Examine these mentor poems such as question poems, blackout poems, conversation poems, concrete poems, text poems, acrostic poems, etc. to write your own poetry. Play with size, font, capitalization, etc. to express yourself.

Pair “Trash Talk” (34-35) with H.O.R.S.E.: A Game of Basketball and Imagination by Christopher Myers to create your own fanciful and exaggerated poetry.

Explore the power and wonder of metaphors and similes. Find these literary devices within *Booked* (ex: 34, 54, 58, 61) and write your own.

Nick is tasked with finding an example of a malapropism (“noun: the amusing and ludicrous misuse of a word, especially by confusing with one of a similar sound,” 18). Find other examples of malapropisms in *Booked* and seek out examples to share.

Consider the autobiographical elements in *Booked* by researching Kwame Alexander’s family history with books and words, his journey to getting published, and his reasons for creating *Booked*. Resources are available below.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-8

**BOOK TRAILER:**

**Lisa Hempstead:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wquDB-AUEs8>

**BOOKTALK:**

Nick Hall loves soccer, whether that means playing FIFA well into the night, daydreaming about the perfect kick in English class, playing futsal inside, or playing on the travel team with hopes of succeeding at the Dallas Cup. He shares this love with his best friend, Coby, even though they are now on rival teams. While they get along despite being on opposing teams, Nick has a conflicted relationship with his father, who is a linguistics professor who has him read a dictionary he wrote called *Weird and Wonderful Words*. His dad wants him to live words, to love words, but Nick isn’t having any of it; he hates reading. Tensions between him and his father escalate when his parents announce that they are separating, and his mom moves to Kentucky to train horses. Nick is profoundly devastated by this change, writing in a poem titled “Thought”: “It does not take/a math genius/to understand that/when you subtract/ a mother/from the equation/what remains/is negative” (59). Not only is he having trouble at home, but he also faces two bullies at school who torment him and Coby. And there’s also the matter of April, a girl he has a crush on, but is too afraid to call. Life gets even worse for Nick when he must have his appendix removed after a game, which makes him miss the Dallas Cup! How can he possibly escape this endless penalty box? It just might take the words he has been resisting for so long to find his way out.

**READ-ALIKES:**

Alexander, Kwame. *The Crossover*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.

Alexander, Kwame. *Rebound*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018.

Alexander, Kwame. *The Playbook: 52 Rules to Aim, Shoot, and Score in This Game Called Life*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.  
Allen, Crystal. *How Lamar's Bad Prank Won a Bubba-Sized Trophy*. HarperCollins, 2010.  
Grimes, Nikki. *Planet Middle School*. Bloomsburg, 2011.  
Grimes, Nikki. *Words with Wings*. Penguin Random House, 2013.  
Holt, K.A. *Rhyme Schemer*. Chronicle Books, 2014.  
Khan, Hena. *Power Forward*. Simon and Schuster, 2018.  
Krishnaswami, Uma. *Step Up to the Plate, Maria Singh*. Tu Books, 2017.  
Simon, Eddy & Brascaglia, Vincent. *Pelé, the King of Soccer*. First Second, 2017.  
Smith, Hope Anita. *Keeping the Night Watch*. Macmillan, 2008.  
Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Penguin Random House, 2014.

#### **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Kwame Alexander's Website:** <http://kwamealexander.com/>  
**Kwame Alexander's web series, Bookish:** <https://www.facebook.com/BookishShow/>  
**The Power of Yes: TEDxTalk by Kwame Alexander:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkTn312FnIY>  
**Itsy Bitsy Mom Booked Discussion Questions:**  
<https://itsybitsymom.wordpress.com/discussion-questions-booked-by-kwame-alexander/>  
**Beginners Guide to Soccer:** <https://ussoccerplayers.com/beginners-guide-to-soccer>  
**Poetry Foundation:** <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/search?query=Langston+Hughes>  
**Weird and Wonderful Words:** <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/explore/weird-and-wonderful-words/>

#### **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (February 1, 2016)  
*Horn Book Magazine* (April 12, 2016)  
*School Library Journal* (March 1, 2016)



**Anderson, John David. *Ms. Bixby's Last Day*. HarperCollins/Walden Books, 2016.**

**SUMMARY:**

Topher, Brand and Steve set out to visit their favorite teacher, Ms. Bixby because she has left their class without saying good-bye. They know Ms. Bixby is sick and she needs to leave before the end of the year, but each one of them have their own special bond with their teacher and they want to say good-bye in a more personal way. This day becomes a day of discovering more about each other and their teacher that none of them will probably ever forget. Skipping school and trying to find the gifts they wish to give her is hilarious and quite an emotion packed day for all of them. Ms. Bixby is a unique and exceptional teacher;

**QUESTIONS:**

Why does each boy want to see Ms. Bixby?  
Why did Ms. Bixby leave before they could say good-bye?  
What's a Bixbyism? Can you share some examples?  
What's the difference between the truth and the whole truth?  
Steve described Topher as a constant in his life. Who are the constants in your life?  
What were the good choices the boys made? Which choices were not so good?  
What is the favorite book that you've had read aloud to you?

**JOURNAL STARTER:**

On one perfect day, I would.....

**ACTIVITIES:**

Make up a list of 10 mashed up words like Brand does.  
Make a sketchbook like Topher and keep it throughout the year.  
Keep a Journal and give a topic every day to write about like Ms. Bixby (p.44) "*Describe a time when you discovered something surprising about yourself*" or "*Tell me about a person you admire*".  
Break into 3 groups for Brand, Topher and Steve. Each group should make a plan for make your own plan on how they would create a last day for a favorite teacher.  
Find a monologue from a movie, memorize it and share it with your group.  
Interview an adult about the teacher who made a difference in his or her life and share the story with your group.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4-8

## **BOOK TRAILER:**

**Ms. Bixby's Last Day Book Trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFU2Q4SbYQs>

## **BOOKTALK:**

Three friends find out their favorite teacher Ms. Bixby is leaving before the end of the school year. Each boy has their own special relationship with her and they just want to say good-bye. They decide to skip school and visit her at the hospital. They get mixed up in some crazy adventures trying to find their way to the hospital and obtain all the favorite things Ms. Bixby would like as a going away gift. See if Brand, Topher and Steve make it in time to see Ms. Bixby.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Gephart, Donna. *Death by Toilet Paper*. Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2014  
Buyea, Rob *Saving Mr. Terupt*. Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2015  
Hyde, Catherine Ryan. *Pay it Forward*. Simon & Schuster, 1999  
Pearsall, Shelley. *All of the Above: a novel*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2006

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**John David Anderson's website:** <http://www.johndavidanderson.org/>

**Books By the Stack:** <https://www.grpl.org/uploads/book-club/Ms%20Bixby%27s%20Last%20Day.pdf>

**Educator's Guide:** <https://www.walden.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Ms.-Bixby-Educators-Guide.pdf>

**Teaching Guide:** <https://b0f646cfbd7462424f7a-f9758a43fb7c33cc8adda0fd36101899.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/teaching-guides/TG-9780062338204.pdf>

**Young Hoosier's Book Award:**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ERdmd4wR72N7NUM\\_G34qB4dm7RVo\\_8mxzaBylY6JdfA/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ERdmd4wR72N7NUM_G34qB4dm7RVo_8mxzaBylY6JdfA/edit)

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (April 1, 2016)

*Publishers Weekly* (April 25, 2016)

*School Library Journal* (December 1, 2016)

**Black, Holly & Clare, Cassandra. *The Iron Trial*. Scholastic Press, 2014.**

**SUMMARY:**

Callum Hunt has grown up with the idea that magic is bad. After all, it killed his mother, and his father wants Call to fail his tests for the Iron Trial. No matter how hard Call tries to fail, he somehow finds a way to show he is creative and has a sort of gift with magic. Once in the Magisterium, Call is no longer protected by his father. He must train hard with his Master and teammates Tamara and Aaron to learn to control the elements before they get the best of him. What Call once thought was the worst place he could be, ends up being a place he finds friendship, loyalty, his strengths, and weaknesses. He also needs to make some decisions about the path he wants to follow, whether or not it be the path fate has chosen for him.

**QUESTIONS:**

How does the Prologue set the scene?

Why does Call not fit in at school?

Why is Alastair so against the Magisterium?

Even when Call tried to fail his entrance exams, how did he show he had promise as an applicant?

How does Master Rufus train his group? What do the kids realize about his method of training?

How do Call's feelings about the Magisterium change as he works through the Iron Trial?

What is an elemental?

What is a Makar and why are they important?

Who is Constantine? Who is Drew?

What are the clues that there is more to Call's abilities than he thought? Think back throughout the book and list examples that hinted at Call's fate in the Magisterium.

Do you think a person can change their fate? Explain and give examples.

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

If I had to choose one element to be an expert at, I'd choose...

The character I am most like is \_\_\_\_\_ because...

**ACTIVITIES:**

What are the 5 elements, their properties, and their symbols? Create your own symbol for each element and explain the meaning behind your designs.

There are 5 years to complete in the Magisterium, and each year is marked by a precious metal. What are they and what are the properties that make each special/important? Can you create any other hierarchy of items to symbolize making it from the beginning to the end like the metals used in Iron Trial?

Explain this quote by Cassandra Clare: “Fire wants to burn/Water wants to flow/Air wants to rise/Earth wants to bind/Chaos wants to devour/Cal wants to live”

Call takes in a Chaos-ridden pup, Havoc, who is an unlikely pet. If you could have a pet of ANY kind, what would you choose, why, and how would you keep it a secret?

Create your own book trailer for the novel .

Create a computer paper sized trading card (like a baseball card) about one of the characters from the story. Look up together what the format of cards are. The front should have a picture of the character--hand drawn or clipart that fills the page. They may need to research a little or look back in the book for the rest of the card. On the back should list: Name, Description, Status/Role, Strengths, Weaknesses, Allies, Rivals

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 3-7

### **BOOK TRAILER:**

**Iron Trial Book Trailer.** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqEAdxHPxtM>

### **BOOKTALK:**

Callum, Call, Hunt comes from a family of magic. He has been warned by his father to stay away from it. At 12 years old Call has to try NOT to pass the Iron Trial and be admitted into the Magisterium. Unfortunately, even with his history of trouble-making, Call fails at failing and gets himself selected by one of the top mages, Master Rufus. Now Call gets himself into a world that’s both fascinating and dark and sinister at the same time. Teamed up with Aaron Stewart, Captain America himself, and Tamara Rajavi, determined not to follow in her older sister’s footsteps, Call learns about magic, teamwork, unlikely friendship, and just how powerful he may be. Call’s future in the Magisterium is constantly up in the air. With the help of his new friends and the leadership of Master Rufus, will Call use his natural gift with the elements for good, or will he fall into his fate?

### **READ-ALIKES:**

Clare, Cassandra. *The Mortal Instruments*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2007. (6 book series)

Rowling, JK. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*. Thorndike Press, 1999. (7 book series)

Sands, Kevin. *The Blackthorn Key*. Aladdin, 2015. (4 book series)

Scott, Michael. *The Alchemyst*. Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2007. (5 book series)

### **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Holly Black:** <https://blackholly.com/>

**Cassandra Clare:** <http://www.cassandraclare.com/shadowhunter-chronicles/the-mortal-instruments/>

**Scholastic Discussion Guide Lesson Plans:** <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/discussion-guide-magisterium-series/>

**Scholastic Mother-Daughter Book Club Questions:**

[http://www.scholastic.com/MotherDaughterBookClub/pdf/Scholastic\\_MDBC\\_IronTrialDG.pdf](http://www.scholastic.com/MotherDaughterBookClub/pdf/Scholastic_MDBC_IronTrialDG.pdf)

**Q & A with authors Holly Black & Cassandra Clare:**

<https://www.tor.com/2014/09/17/cassandra-clare-holly-black-apple-chat-the-iron-trial/>

**The Five Principles of Magic Wiki:** <http://themagisterium.wikia.com/wiki/Magic>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (August 1, 2014)

*Kirkus* (August 1, 2014)

Publishers Weekly (July 21, 2014)

**Burg, Ann E. *Unbound: A Novel in Verse*. New York, Scholastic Press, 2016.**

**SUMMARY:**

Grace, a nine-year-old slave, is chosen to work in the “big house”. It is meant to be a privilege and easier than working in the fields, but Grace’s mother knows how Grace likes to speak her mind and warns her she must lower her eyes and not speak unless spoken too when she is with the Missus (the master’s wife).

Grace tries to keep the promise she made to her mother but gets in trouble. Her punishment is to sell her mother and brothers, separating her family forever. Mom and Uncle Jim decide it is time to risk an escape into the Great Dismal Swamp instead of breaking up their family.

**QUESTIONS:**

Why was Grace chosen to work in the big house?

How does Aunt Tempie help runaways? Why does this surprise Grace?

How does the author’s decision to tell the story in first person from Grace’s point of view affect the story? How would it have been different from Mama’s point of view?

Explain OleGeorgeCooper’s role in the story.

Do you agree with Aunt Sara’s decision to stay in the cave? Why or why not?

*Unbound* is a work of fiction, but similar stories happened to real people in the earlier history of our country. Why is it important that we not forget what happened then?

**JOURNAL STARTER:**

To protect my free and my family, I would.....

**ACTIVITIES:**

Compare the lives of the slaves in the Pre-Civil War South to the lives of African Americans prior to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

You are a tour guide in the Great Dismal Swamp. Visit

<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/great-dismal-swamp/> and describe the sights to your visitors in Grace’s time period or describe the swamp to contemporary visitors.

Research different slave jobs and present to class.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4-8

## **BOOKTRAILER:**

**Angie Dickerson:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJ6juexNUjM>

## **BOOKTALK:**

The Great Dismal Swamp does not sound like a place you would want to escape to, but for Grace's family it is a risk they take to stay together.

Grace and her family are slaves on a plantation in the south before the Civil War. It was considered an honor to work in the house instead of doing the back-breaking labor of the fields in the hot sun all day. When Grace turned 9, she was summoned to the "big house" to work under the Missus. Mama warned her to keep her eyes down and her mouth shut.

Grace could not stop herself from talking when she thought it was important. Grace's punishment - the Missus was going to separate her family by selling the off to different slave owners . The family quickly made plans to escape or risk losing each other forever.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Chains*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. 2008.

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Forge*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 2010.

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Ashes*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 2016.

Bryan, Ashley. *Freedom over me : eleven slaves, their lives and dreams brought to life.*, Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 2016

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Madman of Piney Woods*. Scholastic. 2014.

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Elijah of Buxton*. Scholastic. 2007.

McDonough, Yona Zeldis. *What was the Underground Railroad?* New York: Grosset & Dunlap. 2013.

Pearsall, Shelley. *Trouble Don't Last*. Knopf, 2002

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Ann Burg:** <http://www.annburg.com>

**Zinn Education Project:** <https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/unbound/>

**The Great Dismal Swamp:** [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/great\\_dismal\\_swamp/](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/great_dismal_swamp/)

**Great Dismal Swamp Discoveries:** <https://tinyurl.com/yc8onuog>

**99% Invisible: The Great Dismal Swamp:** <https://tinyurl.com/ycnw79og>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (September 15, 2016)

*Publishers Weekly* (July 18, 2016)

*School Library Journal* (August 1, 2016)

**Creech, Sharon. *Moo*. HarperCollins Children's Books, 2016.**

**SUMMARY:**

When Reena and Luke's family move to Maine life isn't quite what they expect. They didn't imagine they would spend their time learning how to take care of animals on a farm or spending time with an old lady. But, they end up spending time with their neighbor, Mrs. Falala. Her appearance and demeanor scare the kids and when it is perceived that they have been disrespectful to her, they are volunteered to be her help. Their first assignment: Clean the cow pen. They have a lot to learn about life with animals and they find kids who will teach them much of that. They also learn that they have something to give back, when Luke begins to teach drawing to Mrs. Falala. What starts as drudgery leads Reena and Luke to a whole new understanding of life and learning and love.

**QUESTIONS:**

How does drawing help Luke to communicate and express his feelings with others?  
When Luke realizes where the meat comes from, how does Mrs. Falala help Luke cope?  
Reena discovers new things about herself from working with Zora. How does Reena grow from this experience?  
Why is Zora's bloodline special?  
Why do you think Mrs. Falala was found in the Remembering Room?  
What do you think is the impact of the mix of free verse and prose used in this book?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

The most unique individual I have ever met is \_\_\_\_\_, because.....

**ACTIVITIES:**

Research Belted Galloways and draw a picture of a Beltie.  
Do some research and make a list of the qualities it would take to make a person "All Maine-y."  
Create a portrait of Mrs. Falala.  
If your town has a group, ask someone from FFA (Future Farmers of America) to come and talk to you about showing animals at fairs.  
Plan an activity and participate with a group of senior citizens.  
Arrange for some preliminary drawing lessons.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4 --- 6.

**BOOK TRAILER:**



**Mooresville IN Public Library:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0sI8gndr61g>

### **BOOKTALK:**

*The truth is, she was ornery and stubborn, wouldn't listen to **a n y b o d y**, and selfish beyond selfish, and filthy, caked with mud and dust, and moody; you'd better watch it or she'd knock you flat.*

*That's Zora I'm talking about. Nobody wanted anything to do with her.*

*Zora: that cow,*

Reena and Luke's parents have relocated to Maine when their journalism careers are threatened. It's a big change for two city kids. When they "disrespect" their new neighbor, Mrs. Falala, they are charged with helping her out and that means learning to deal with her animals, most especially Zora the Belted Galloway cow. Mrs. Falala intimidates both kids, with her brusque ways, but over time.....

Over time Luke and Reena learn what it means to open their minds and hearts to new people and new ways of doing things

*Zora: that cow!*

### **READ-ALIKES:**

Arnold, Elana K. *A Boy Called Bat*. HarperCollins Children's Books, 2017

Banks, Kate. *Boy's Best Friend*. Frances Foster Books, 2015

Holm, Jennifer L. *The Fourteenth Goldfish*. Random House, 2014

O'Connor, Barbara. *Wish*. Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2016

### **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Sharon Creech:** <http://www.sharoncreech.com/>

**Teach Creech:** <https://d195xzopy6hwbd.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/30114731/TeachCreech2016.pdf>

**16 Things You Should Know About the Belted Galloway:**

<http://www.thatsfarming.com/news/belted-galloway-cattle>

### **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (July 1, 2016)

*Kirkus* (June 1, 2016)

*Publishers Weekly* (May 26, 2016)

**Dumas, Firoozeh. *It Ain't So Awful, Falafel*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016**

**SUMMARY:**

No one wants to be the new kid in middle school. Zomorod Yousefzadeh is the new kid for the fourth time. But now she has a plan to help her fit in-she will hide her Iranian heritage and become as American as she can. This includes changing her name to Cindy. But as Cindy begins to navigate her new world, anti-Iranian feelings in America increase due to the Iranian Hostage situation. It hits close to home when Cindy's father loses his job and is not able to get another one. Will Cindy and her family have to move back to Iran where women have fewer rights than men? How will Cindy survive once her new-found freedom is taken away?

**QUESTIONS:**

What are some ways Cindy tried to Americanize herself?  
How does Cindy's mom feel about being in America?  
Who is a better friend to Cindy: the other Cindy or Carolyn?  
How does Cindy's family experience the prejudice towards Iranians during this time period?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

Have you ever been the new kid at school? If so, how did it feel? If not, have you friended a new kid before?  
What is the history of your name? Would you change it if you could?  
In this story, Cindy helps Brock with his reading. Have you ever helped someone?

**ACTIVITIES:**

Research more about the author Firoozeh Dumas by reading excerpts from her memoir: *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in American*.  
<http://firoozehdumas.com/books/it-aint-so-awful-falafel/>  
Explore the music mentioned in *It Ain't So Awful, Falafel*  
<http://firoozehdumas.com/educational-resources/music/>  
Learn more about Iran <https://www.atozkidsstuff.com/iran.html>  
Create a timeline with major events of the Iranian Hostage Crisis  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-WgNf6mn2k>  
Explore the Falafel Kindness project described on the author's website  
(<http://firoozehdumas.com/educational-resources/falafel-kindness-project/>)

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4-8

## **BOOK TRAILER:**

**Stella Christiansen:** <https://tinyurl.com/y86n9o5x>

## **BOOKTALK:**

When your name is Zomorod Yousefdeh and you're entering sixth grade in a new school, there are bound to be challenges. Zomorod is an Iranian immigrant and she deals with her name, by changing her first name to Cindy. Other challenges are more serious. Her mother doesn't want to learn English and Cindy typically acts as the family translator. But, when fifty two Americans are taken hostage by the Iranian government in November of 1979, things change and become difficult for Zomorod and her family. Although much prejudice and ignorance is shown about Iran and that culture, much kindness also exists.

Zomorod and her family lived part of very recent American history. Pick up *It Ain't So Awful, Falafel*, and see what it was like!

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Applegate, Katherine. *The Wish Tree*. Felwel and Friends, 2017

Rosenblatt, Darcy. *Lost Boys*. Henry Holt, 2017

Shihab Nye, Naomi. *Habibi*. Simon & Schuster, 1997

Clements, Andrew. *Extra Credit*. Atheneum Books, 2011

Senzai, N.H. *Shooting Kabul*. Simon & Schuster, 2011

Lai, Thanhha. *Inside Out and Back Again*. HarperCollins, 2013

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Firoozeh Dumas:** <http://firoozehdumas.com/>

**Educator's Guide:** <http://firoozehdumas.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ItAintSoAwfulFalafelguide.pdf>

**Study Guide:** [https://www.floridamediaed.org/uploads/6/1/4/2/61420659/ms\\_-\\_it\\_ain't\\_so\\_awful\\_falafel.pdf](https://www.floridamediaed.org/uploads/6/1/4/2/61420659/ms_-_it_ain't_so_awful_falafel.pdf)

**Interview with Author:** <http://newsok.com/article/5507542>

**Iran Hostage Crisis:** <https://www.history.com/topics/iran-hostage-crisis>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (April 15, 2016)

*Publishers Weekly* (March 1, 2016)

*School Library Journal* (February 1, 2016)

**Federle, Tim. *Better Nate than Ever*. Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2013.**

**SUMMARY:**

Nate Foster loves Broadway! When he finds out there is an open casting for *E.T.: The Musical*, he knows that he must make the trip to New York to audition by leaving his hometown of Jankburg, Pennsylvania. With the help of his best friend Libby, he is able to successfully escape overnight to New York without his brother and parents knowing. When he gets to New York, he finds a way to make it to the audition by navigating through the streets to the building. Will he get the part? Will his parents find out where he is? This is a laugh-out loud hilarious story about a teenage boy finding out who he really is.

**QUESTIONS:**

- What are Nate's hopes, fears, and concerns growing up in Pennsylvania?
- What can you tell about Nate's relationship with Libby throughout the story?
- Who is Heidi and how does she help Nate while he is in New York?
- How does Libby cover up Nate being missing?
- What is Nate's biggest dreams and what steps does he do to accomplish this goal?
- What do you think the judges were thinking while Nate was auditioning?
- What do you think the phone call was for at the end of the book?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

- My biggest dream that I want to accomplish is \_\_\_\_\_ and my steps to accomplish this goal is to .....
- If I could spend 24 hours anywhere in the world, it would be \_\_\_\_\_ and I would go and do.....
- If you were one of the judges during the audition process, what qualities would you be looking for to fill the roles?

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Create a movie poster of the Broadway musical for E.T.
- Write the next few pages of the first chapter to the sequel to *Better Nate than Ever*.
- Print out a map of New York and mark the route that Nate walks and visits while he is there. There is a sequence to *Better Nate than Ever*. Make a checklist of what you think will happen and after reading the book and mark off which ones you were right predicting.
- In the book, Nate and Libby have a secret language. Create a secret language or code with your friends.
- If you can, try to attend a performance of a Musical and discuss the experience.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-8

**BOOK TRAILER:**

**Nikki Gregerson:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PXtwA5G12E>

**BOOKTALK:**

If you've got the bug to be a performer, you've got the bug! There's just no way around it. Nate Foster has the bug BAD. But, he lives in Janksburg, PA and that's just a little removed from Broadway. Until Nate learns that auditions are being held for *ET: The Musical*. He knows he has to get there. He and his best friend Libby devise a plan to get him there with no one else the wiser! He makes it to New York, but what happens next is for the reader to discover!

**READ-ALIKES:**

Gephart, Donna. *Lily and Dunkin*. Delacorte Press, 2016  
Federle, Tim. *Five, Six, Seven, Nate!* Simon & Schuster, 2014  
Telgemeier, Raina. *Drama*. Graphix, 2012  
Urban, Linda. *The Center of Everything*. Harcourt, 2013

**RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Tim Federle:** <https://timfederle.com/>

**Interviews with Tim Federle:** <https://youtu.be/1YrxIFlp87s>  
<https://youtu.be/l-NcUb-sxDE>

**Reading Group Guide:** [https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Better-Nate-Than-Ever/Tim-Federle/Nate/9781442446892/reading\\_group\\_guide](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Better-Nate-Than-Ever/Tim-Federle/Nate/9781442446892/reading_group_guide)

**Curriculum Guide:**

[http://d28hgpr18am2if.cloudfront.net/tagged\\_assets/11975\\_better%20nate%20than%20ever\\_cg.pdf](http://d28hgpr18am2if.cloudfront.net/tagged_assets/11975_better%20nate%20than%20ever_cg.pdf)

**ET Trailer:** <https://youtu.be/qYAETtIIClk> -Trailer of ET

**REVIEWS:**

*Kirkus* (January 1, 2013)  
*Publishers Weekly* (December 17, 2012)  
*School Library Journal* (March 1, 2013)

**Freedman, Russell. *We Will Not Be Silent*. Clarion Books, 2016**

**SUMMARY:**

*We Will Not Be Silent* tells the story of Hans and Sophie Scholl and the movement they led against the Nazi's and Hitler during World War II. Hans and Sophie grew disillusioned with the growing oppression during Hitler's reign and thus the White Rose movement began. The "White Rose" would mail out flyers that would denounce Hitler and ask the German people to overthrow Hitler and his fellow leaders. The leaders of the White Rose paid the ultimate prize for their efforts to stop Hitler as they were put to death for their acts.

**QUESTIONS:**

- Why did Sophie and Hans join the Hitler Youth?
- How did Robert Scholl feel about his children joining the Hitler Youth?
- What was it that led Hans to grow disillusioned of the Hitler Youth?
- Why were Werner, Inge and Sophie arrested?
- Why was the night of November 9, 1938 called Kristallnacht or night of the broken glass?
- Why did Sophie and Hans name their group White Rose?
- What was written in the White Rose flyers?
- Why did Hitler dislike the Jewish people so much?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

- I would stand up against the government if...
- If my best friend was not allowed to go to the same school, swimming pool, theater as I was I would...

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Design a flag that represents you and what you stand for.
- Read and discuss a banned book.
- Look up the Nuremberg Race Laws.
- Make a map of the concentration camps and labor camps.
- Research when the Nazi party started and why it came to power.
- Make a list of 10 things you could do to make the world a better place.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 7-8

## **BOOK TRAILER:**

**Ally Watkins:** <https://youtu.be/qu2UpsJeLKw>

## **BOOKTALK:**

“But isn’t it preposterous, “ one of his friends interrupted, “that we sit in our rooms and study how to heal mankind when on the outside the state every day sends countless young people to their death?” Thus began the White Rose. Sick of sitting by and doing nothing a small group of friends decided to distribute flyers to those they felt would be sympathetic to the cause of ridding the world of Hitler and the Nazi’s. We will not be Silent follows Sophie and Hans Scholl, two of the main activists within the group, from childhood to their ultimate death.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Atwood, Kathryn J. *Women heroes of World War II : 26 stories of espionage, sabotage, resistance, and rescue* Chicago Review Press, 2011.

Hoose, Phillip. *The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen and the Churchill Club.* Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2015

Rappaport, Doreen. *Beyond courage : the untold story of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust.* Candlewick Press, 2012

Roy, Jennifer. *Jars of Hope* Capstone Press, 2016

Sahgal, Lara. *Hans and Sophie Scholl.* Rosen Publishing, 2016.

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Russell Freedman:** <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/authors/russell-freedman>

**The White Rose:** <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007188>

**The White Rose:** <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/revolt/whiterose.html>

**Germans Who Tried to Topple Hitler:** <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-21521060>

**A Lesson in Dissent:** <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-white-rose-a-lesson-in-dissent>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Kirkus* (February 1, 2016)

*Publishers Weekly* (February 8, 2016)

*School Library Journal* (March 1, 2016)

**Gephart, Donna. *Lily and Dunkin*. Delacorte, 2016.**

**SUMMARY:**

The book is told from alternating viewpoints. Lily, born Timothy, is a girl. It's not easy to be a girl when you look like a boy, especially in grade 8. Norbert, nicknamed Dunkin by Lily, is newly moved to the neighborhood and suffers with bipolar disorder. The two meet before they begin school, and the story continues throughout the school year. Lily has a wonderful support system, but it doesn't make school any easier and being the new student is hard enough for Dunkin, but this is made more difficult because he is hiding from a painful secret.

**QUESTIONS:**

How might the name, Dare, be significant?

Does Dunkin understand the significance of sitting with the basketball players rather than with Lily and Dare?

What pressures does Dunkin experience?

Does Dunkin feel the basketball players are true friends?

Why does Dunkin stop taking his medication?

Is Lily's father mean? What motivates Lily's father to do the things he does regarding Lily?

Should Dare have pushed Lily to dress and act according to her gender identity? Was that supportive or mean?

What support did each character have? What additional support did they need?

Why might it be wrong to protect someone?

**JOURNAL STARTER:**

10 things that make it difficult to reveal my true self include:

**ACTIVITIES**

What can schools do to prevent bullying? Create a poster or public service announcement depicting your idea.

What resources are there are students who experience bullying? Research this and again create either a poster or a public service announcement.

Explain how William Shakespeare's quote "Above all else, to thine own self be true" relates to this story.

Lily tries to prevent her tree, Bob, from being cut down. Research an environmental group that might have been interested in her cause.

Grandparents play a role in both Lily and Dunkin's life. Write about someone who has played an important role in your life. Describe what you learned from them.



Write a journal entry as either Lily or Dunkin that describes a typical day at school and the pressures they might face there.

**INTEREST LEVEL:** Grades 6-8

**BOOK TRAILER:**

Ctrainrox: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evhQPvrCfLQ>

**BOOKTALK:**

Lily: *“Lots of people are staring at me, and I let them. I stand tall, tip my chin up and take a deep breath. I let them see me. Lily Jo McGrother. Girl.”*

Dunkin: *“I thought he waws a girl, with pretty blue eyes and long blond hair. I had hoped...How can I tell him the truth about me? How can I tell him any of it without scaring him away?”*

What happens when you don't feel comfortable in your own body or safe in your own head?

Where do you go for support, where do you find your friends? Lily and Dunkin find each other, but each one must struggle to find their niche in the larger world.

**READ-ALIKES:**

Gina, Alex. *George*. Scholastic, 2015

Henessey, M.G. *The Other Boy*. Harper, 2016

Howe, James. *The Misfits*. Atheneum, 2001

Polonsky, Amy. *Gracefully Grayson*. Hyperion, 2014

**RELATED WEBSITES:**

Donna Gephart: <http://www.donnagephart.com/>

Educator's Guide: <https://www.perma-bound.com/static/TPR/000457607.pdf>

Discussion Questions: <https://tinyurl.com/yddd5pmw>

Human Rights Campaign: <https://tinyurl.com/ybz4kh9x>

National Institute of Mental Health: <https://tinyurl.com/ydcxs7vk>

Protecting Trees: <https://tinyurl.com/yb38w9o4>

**REVIEWS**

*Booklist* (February 15, 2016)

*Kirkus* (February 15, 2016)

*Publishers Weekly* (March 7, 2016)

**Gidwitz, Adam. *The Inquisitor's Tale: Or, The Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog*. Penguin Random House, 2016.**

**SUMMARY:**

Gathering in a French inn in 1242, travelers each share their own knowledge of the story of the three children who are being sought by King Louis. Jeanne is a peasant girl who has visions of the future, William, the son of a lord and a North African woman, is a monk in training who has extraordinary strength, and Jacob is a Jewish boy with healing abilities. Their paths cross in unexpected ways and despite their differences, they must unite to survive. Together they face danger, disgraced knights, a dragon, the King of France and his mother, quicksand, and more, and discover an unexpected friendship.

**QUESTIONS:**

What do you think is the purpose and benefit of telling this story from multiple points of view?  
What are the miracles that each child performs? How do these special skills help them survive?  
Why are the three children suspicious of each other? How do they become friends?  
Where do you see examples of “things are not as they appear to be” in *The Inquisitor's Tale*?  
What makes the children a threat to King Louis?  
How does Adam Gidwitz use humor to reveal truths and discuss important issues?  
The book is described as being “illuminated,” not illustrated. What does that mean?  
How does the author’s note at the end of the book expand your understanding of the story?  
How does hearing the children’s stories change *The Inquisitor*?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

Gidwitz’s descriptions of the cheese dip are particularly pungent, a feast for all the senses, or as Jeanne says, “It tastes like life” (138). Use his style to describe tasting a new food for the first time that uses all of the senses.  
The character I relate to the most is . . .

**ACTIVITIES:**

Illuminate a piece of text like Hatem Aly has done in the novel. Use the art to contradict, question, and expand upon the text.  
Examine clips from media inspired by medieval history such as *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, *Galavant*, *A Knight's Tale*, etc. and discuss how archetypes from this era are portrayed. Religious persecution and racial prejudice are examined throughout the book, from Brother Bartholomew’s hateful classist, racist, Islamophobic, and sexist stereotypes to the attack on Jacob’s village to the burning of the Talmud. This is an opportunity to discuss prejudice and bias and how they can be challenged. It can be especially important to discuss how implicit bias

works. This is a useful resource to discuss implicit bias:

<https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000004818663/peanut-butter-jelly-and-racism.html>

Research an aspect of medieval life that you want to know more about and consider how it fits within the world of the novel.

Make a list of how the history in the book might reflect upon current events.

Examine *The Song of Hildebrand* and how it speaks to the book's themes. How do you understand, as Chretien, the troubadour, says, "life is a song"? (284-286)

Research and prepare a presentation for your group on the real history of the burning of the Talmud and other times throughout history when those in power have burned books.

Jacob shares a passage from the Talmud that states, "whoever destroys a single life destroys the whole world. And whoever saves a single life saves the whole world" (304). Discuss how the children apply this idea to rescuing the books and how it might be found in our own lives. Adam

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-8

### **BOOK TRAILER:**

**Kristen Kwisnek:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQhDTp1A7Q4>

### **BOOKTALK:**

On a dark night in medieval France, a group of travelers gather together on a roadside inn and tell stories. But these are not ordinary stories; they tell the tale of three extraordinary children and of course, their holy dog, Gwenforte. This is the tale of Jeanne, a peasant girl who has visions of the future, William, the son of a lord and a North African woman, who is a monk in training with superhero-like strength, and Jacob, a Jewish boy with healing abilities. Each has suffered a loss or misfortune, which compels them to leave home and set out on a journey. But while some see their skills as blessed, others see them as heretics, which puts them in danger from literally the king of France himself, King Louis. To survive, they will face their own prejudices about each other, disgraced knights, wicked monks, a farting dragon, smelly cheese that tastes like "being punched in the face", a book burning, and horse swallowing quicksand. This book is also illuminated by Hatem Aly like a medieval manuscript with often hilarious and insightful drawings that make you think differently about the text. If you enjoy adventure stories full of twists of turns because things are not entirely as they seem, characters like Jeanne, William, and Jacob who you will want to champion, and a window into a time long ago that reflects our own world, then this is a book for you. And did I mention the farting dragon?

### **READ-ALIKES:**

Armstrong, Alan. *Whittington*. Random House, 2005.

Avi. *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*. Hyperion Books, 2002.

Cushman, Karen. *Catherine, Called Birdy*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1994.

Cushman, Karen. *The Midwife's Apprentice*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1995.  
Gidwitz, Adam. *A Tale Dark and Grimm*. Penguin Random House, 2010.  
Gidwitz, Adam and Hatem Aly. *The Unicorn Rescue Society*. Penguin Random House, 2018.  
Hinds, Gareth. *Beowulf*. Candlewick Press, 2007.  
Johnson, E.K. *The Story of Owen: Dragon Slayer of Trondheim*. Carolrhoda Books, 2014.  
Konigsburg, E.L. *A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1973.  
Schlitz, Laura Amy. *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village*. Candlewick Press, 2007.  
Yolen, Jane and Robert J. Harris. *Girl in a Cage*. Penguin Random House, 2002.

#### **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Adam Gidwitz:** <http://www.adamgidwitz.com>  
**Hatem Aly:** <http://metahatem.tumblr.com/>  
**The Classroom Bookshelf Teaching Guide:**  
<http://www.theclassroombookshelf.com/2016/10/the-inquisitors-tale/>

#### **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (August 1, 2016)  
*Horn Book Magazine* (November 1, 2016)  
*Publishers Weekly* (July 11, 2016)  
*School Library Journal* (August 1, 2016)

**Hashimi, Nadia. *One Half from the East*. Harper Collins Publishers, 2016**

**SUMMARY:**

Obayda's family has fallen upon hard times after her father loses his leg in a bombing. In order to regain their good luck, Obayda's aunt suggests she become a *bacha posh*-dressing as a boy. In Afghanistan, the people believe that in dressing a girl as a boy, God will give them a son which is something Obayda's father has always wanted. Obayda embraces her "boyness-" playing with the other boys at recess, riding her bike, and having the freedom to travel throughout the community she lives in. However, she begins to realize that this cannot last forever and she must look for other ways to bring her family good luck.

**QUESTIONS:**

Why does the family decide to change Obayda into a bacha posh?  
What are some of the freedoms Obayd now enjoys as a boy?  
How is Obayd's school experience different as a boy?  
What happened to Rahim?  
How does Obayda's feelings change about becoming a bacha posh?  
How does Obayda change school for the other girls?  
Was the waterfall actually good luck for Obayda's family?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

Traditions that are important in my family include.....  
Learning about cultures different than ours is essential because.....

**ACTIVITIES:**

Watch the documentary: "She is My Son: Afghanistan's Bach Posh, When Girls Become Boys"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1E9uWm9nJc>  
Learn more about Malala Yousafzai and her fight for women's education:  
<https://www.malala.org/>

**INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-8**

**BOOK TRAILER:**

**Jill Bennin:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOtHGoj16D0>

## **BOOKTALK:**

How do you bring good luck to your family? Is it through magic talismans? Is it a lucky horseshoe? For Obayda and her family living in Afghanistan, good luck is brought by Obayda dressing and living the life of a boy-becoming a *bacha posh*. Obayda enjoys living as a boy but realizes that it will take more to bring her family the good luck they deserve. Join Obayda on her journey to bring her family good fortune and make them whole again.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Ellis, Deborah. *The Breadwinner*. Groundwind Books, 2000  
Hashimi, Nadia. *The Sky At Our Feet*. 2018  
Kazerooni, Abbas. *On Two Feet and Wings*. Skyscape, 2014  
Najaf, Mazari. *The Honey Thief*. Viking, 2013  
Nordberg, Jenny. *The Underground Girls of Kabul*. Crown, 2014  
Reedy, Trent. *Words in the Dust*. Arthur H. Levine, 2011

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Nadia Hashimi's Website:** <http://www.nadiahashimi.com/>

**Nadia Hashimi: 2016 National Book Festival:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVReae6muUw>

**Bacha Posh:** <http://bachaposh.com/>

**National Geographic:**

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/proof/2018/march/bacha-posh-gender-afghanistan/>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (September 1, 2016)

*Kirkus* (July 15, 2016)

*School Library Journal* (September 1, 2016)

**Jacobson, Jennifer Richard. *Paper Things*. Candlewick, 2015**

**SUMMARY:**

Ari and Gage lost their mom 4 years ago. Their mother asked them to stay together no matter what and make sure Ari goes to Carter, a school for gifted students. Sister and brother live with one of her mother's friends, Janna, until things get too stressful. When Gage turns nineteen, he decides it is time for Ari and him to move out and start life on their own. The problem is, they have nowhere to go. Gage and Ari are homeless. They sometimes stay with friends or at a juvenile shelter. Ari finds it difficult to get her homework done, stay clean, keep up her friendships and the possibility of getting into Carter, the school for gifted students, seems to be slipping away. For months Gage tries to get a job and rent a place to stay but it is almost impossible. Will Ari choose to go back to live with Janna? If she does, would she be breaking her promise to her mother? Ari and Gage find themselves in a difficult situation as they navigate life without a guardian or place to stay. This book offers a glimpse into the challenges and circumstances of people who find themselves homeless.

**QUESTIONS:**

Do you think Gage was right to take Ari away from their guardian? Why would Gage do that when he knew they had no place to stay?

What was the cause of all the tension between Gage and Jana? What do you think they might have done to make things better?

Do you think Ari and Sasha have a good friendship? Do you think they will stay friends? Why or why not?

What are some of the school traditions at Ari's school? Why is it important to Ari that the traditions are continued?

Why doesn't Ari tell her friends and others about being homeless?

When Ari is at a shelter, some girls take her paper things and damage them. How did that make Ari feel? Why did she feel so strongly about her collection of paper things?

Ari is under a lot of pressure to get into Carter Middle School. How does this add to the tension in her life? Do you think being under pressure is a positive or negative thing?

Daniel and Ari bond over his bucket list and her feelings about school traditions. Did Ari change because of her relationship with Daniel? What are some examples from the book which support your opinion?

How did Ari's character change as she dealt with all of the changes in her life during the course of the book? Do you think what happened to her at the end of the book was believable?

**JOURNAL STARTER:**

This is what I think it would be like to be homeless...

## **ACTIVITIES:**

Cut out characters, buildings, etc. from catalogs and magazines to make a paper world of your own.

Write a short story about the paper world you have created.

Make a paper circuit with copper tape, LED light and coin battery.

Get involved! Find out if there are homeless shelters or Head Start programs in your community and volunteer.

What traditions does your school have? Investigate traditions from other schools.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4-8

## **BOOK TRAILERS:**

**MCBookLady:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRI9LUfUOqQ>;

**Anna Frantz:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANw6CdDUpLs>

## **BOOKTALK:**

Did you ever think about what it would be like to be homeless? This is what happens to 11 year old Ari, an all-around regular girl and good student. When Ari was 7, her mom died. Their mom's dying wishes were that Ari and her brother Gage stay together always and that Ari would attend the competitive Carter Middle School for gifted students. Things are okay for four years until Gage is fed up living with their bossy guardian, Janna. Gage moves out of Janna's house and takes Ari with him. Read on to find out the challenges Ari and Gage face when they find themselves homeless!

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Connor, Leslie. *All Rise for the Honorable Perry T. Cook*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2016.

Gemeinhart, Dan. *Some Kind of Courage*. Scholastic Press, 2016.

Gephart, Donna. *Death by Toilet Paper*. Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2014.

Lord, Cynthia. *A Handful of Stars*. Scholastic, 2015.

O'Connor, Barbara. *Wish*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.

Pearsall, Shelley. *The Seventh Most Important Thing*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2015.

Yeh, Kat. *The Truth About Twinkie Pie*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2015.

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Jennifer Jacobson:** <https://www.jenniferjacobson.com>

**Interview with Jennifer Jacobson:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfwFVniyAfo>



**Discussion Guide:** [http://candlewick.com/book\\_files/0763663239.bdg.1.pdf](http://candlewick.com/book_files/0763663239.bdg.1.pdf)

**Paper Circuits:** <https://tinkering.exploratorium.edu/paper-circuits>

**Origami:** <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Origami>

**Volunteers of America:** <https://www.voa.org/homeless-people>

**Back to School Traditions from Around the World:**

<https://www.littlepassports.com/blog/educational/back-to-school-traditions-around-the-world/>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (January 29, 2015)

*Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* (March 24, 2015)

*The Horn Book Magazine* (December 4, 2014)

*Kirkus* (November 11, 2014)

*Publishers Weekly* (December 22, 2014)

*School Library Journal* (December 18, 2014)

**King, Amy Sarig. *Me and Marvin Gardens*. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2017**

**SUMMARY:**

Obe Devlin's family owned 175 acres of land for years until his great-grandfather mortgaged and sold most of it to pay for his drinking and gambling debts. Today, the family owns 20 acres, a farmhouse and Devlin Creek. The rest of the farmland has been taken over by developers. One day while at Devlin Creek, Obe finds an unusual animal that he names Marvin Gardens. Marvin looks like a combination of a dog and a pig. He is slimy and he eats plastic. Marvin might be a creature that would help clean up the environment. However, there is one thing that Marvin creates that is not good for the environment. Obe wants to keep Marvin a secret so he won't be taken away and become a science experiment.

**QUESTIONS:**

What happened 100 years ago in the Devlin family with great-grandfather and the land?  
Why did Obe go to the creek so much? What was his job?  
Other than Marvin's looks, what made him unique as an animal?  
How did Obe think up the name Marvin Gardens for this brand new species of animal?  
Why was it important for Obe to keep Marvin a secret?  
Why did Obe feel lonely? Who were his friends?  
Who found out about Marvin and what damage did this person do?  
Did Marvin have a family? What was his wife's name? Why were these names chosen?  
How did Obe's science teacher, Ms. G help him?  
What did Obe mean when he said that Marvin was a "slightly imperfect pollution solution."  
What did Obe mean when he said to Marvin, "You're so different and weird and some people might not like you? I guess we have a lot in common."  
How did Obe's great-grandmother help to save some of the Devlin land?  
What idea did Dr. Keri have that might solve Marvin's problem?  
Obe thought that Marvin Gardens was nomadic. What does nomadic mean?  
What does Obe's family want to do with the land they have left?  
What happened to Marvin Gardens and his family and who was going to look after him?  
Did Obe enter the science contest at his school? If so what was his project? What was the outcome of the contest?  
What did Obe want to be when he grew up and why?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

If I found an unusual animal like Marvin Gardens I would . . .  
To help save and protect the environment I could . . .

## **ACTIVITIES:**

Select an environmental issue such as air or water pollution or global warming. Address the importance of how people can take better care of the earth with regard to these challenges. Write or give a report on your findings.

Research the impact that smog has had in history and in modern life.

Compile a list of all the places in your area that recycle and what kinds of materials can and cannot be recycled. Invite someone from a recycling center to your classroom or library to talk to the class about the importance of recycling.

Choose one of the environmental quotes that Ms. G put on the announcements every day in April. For example, "It takes a plastic bottle five hundred years to decompose. Americans throw away 2.5 million of these bottles per hour." Research this problem and present suggestions on how this issue might be solved. Write a report about it.

Draw your own version of Marvin Gardens.

Research and present a report about Lake Karachay in Russia.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4-7

## **BOOK TRAILER:**

**Texas Bluebonnet Award:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0HzlVoR-vI>

## **BOOKTALK:**

What if you found an unusual animal in your backyard that eats only plastic? Would you tell anyone? Would you try to protect it? What would you name this animal? Read *Me and Marvin Gardens* and find out what eleven-year-old Obe Devlin does when he finds a unique creature by Devlin Creek that he names Marvin Gardens.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Carmichael, Clay. *Wild Things*. Front Street, 2009

Cooper, Susan. *The Boggart*. M. McElderry, 1993

Hiaasen, Carl. *Hoot*. Knopf, 2002

Hiaasen, Carl. *Flush*. Knopf, 2005

Hiaasen, Carl. *Scat*. Knopf, 2009

Pennypacker, Sara. *Pax*. Balzer + Bray, 2016

St. John, Lauren. *The White Giraffe*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2007

Tyre, Lisa Lewis. *Last in a Long Line of Rebels*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2015

## **RELATED WEBSITES:**

**A.S. King:** [www.as-king.com](http://www.as-king.com)

**The Problem of Over Development:** <https://durantjournalism.com/1056/newspaper/the-problem-of-over-development/>

**How to Teach Kids About Pollution:** <https://scienceexplorers.com/teach-kids-pollution/>

**Lake Karachay:** <https://www.thevintagenews.com/2016/10/14/lake-karachay-in-russia-is-so-polluted-that-spending-an-hour-there-would-kill-you/>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (November 1, 2016)

*Kirkus* (October 1, 2016)

*Publishers Weekly* (October 24, 2016)

**Lamana, Julie T. *Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere*. Chronicle Books, 2015**

**SUMMARY:**

Armani Curtis lives in New Orleans in the Ninth Ward. She is focused on her upcoming 10th birthday and the party her family will have. Hurricane Katrina begins to form, and the family must choose to stay or go. They choose to stay, but then must brave the storm. While they are stuck in their house, their grandmother, Memaw, dies. Then the dog that Armani has received as gift jumps in the water. When her brother jumps in to save the dog, Armani's father jumps in to save her brother. Armani, her siblings, and her mother are rescued from the house, but get separated. Armani and siblings eventually get to a shelter where an older man pretends to be their father to keep the family together. With the help of Miss Priscilla, from Child Protective Services, Armani finds her mother. They eventually return home and find her brother and cousin but discover that a final tragedy has touched their family.

**QUESTIONS:**

What gifts did Armani get for her birthday?

What does Armani name the puppy?

How does the death of Memaw impact the whole family?

Analyze the choice Armani's dad made to jump into the water? Do you think this was a good decision? Why or why not?

Who is Danisha?

How does Armani get separated from her mother?

What is the name of the man from the shelter who pretended to be Armani's father?

When Armani returned home, who did she discover was there?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

When the water started rising in the house...

When the bus pulled up to the shelter.

**ACTIVITIES:**

Draw an alternative cover for the book. What images do you think are symbolic of the book and should be represented on the cover?

Research the path and formation of Hurricane Katrina. Create a timeline that shows its formation and path.

Create an acrostic poem using the name "Armani" and come up with descriptions of her for each line.

Research the damage Hurricane Katrina created and the clean-up process. What steps were done to clean up the city? What is the ninth ward like now?

The book starts with Armani's birthday. Create a list of 5 gifts you think she would like to get.

**INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 4-6**

## BOOK TRAILER:

**Skye Norwood:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dju9UPg6d\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dju9UPg6d_U)

## BOOKTALK:

It's late August in 2005 in New Orleans. The temperature is soaring, and people are trying to stay cool. Weather forecasters are tracking a tropical depression that might turn into a hurricane. The storm is swirling around the Gulf of Mexico on its way to the Gulf of Mexico. All anyone can talk about is the storm, but all Armani Curtis can think about is her 10th birthday. It's all planned out and her friends have been invited. What will happen to her birthday celebration if people start evacuating the Ninth Ward? Armani quickly must put aside thoughts of her birthday and start being brave to survive this disaster.

## READ-ALIKES:

Rhodes, Jewell Parker. *Ninth Ward*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2010  
Brown, Don. *Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans*. HMH Books, 2015  
Philbrick, Rodman. *Zane and the Hurricane*. Blue Sky Press, 2014  
Smith, Tamara Ellis. *Another Kind of Hurricane*. Schwartz & Wade, 2015  
Patrick, Denise Lewis. *Finding Someplace*. Henry Holt and Co., 2015  
Herlong, M.H. *Buddy*. Viking Books for Young Readers, 2012  
Volponi, Paul. *Hurricane Song*. Viking Juvenile, 2008

## RELATED WEB SITES:

**Julie Lamana:** <http://www.adamsliterary.com/julie-t-lamana/>

**Discussion Guide:** [https://www.state.lib.la.us/files/LYRC/Upside-Down-in-the-Middle-of-Nowhere\\_teachers-guide.pdf](https://www.state.lib.la.us/files/LYRC/Upside-Down-in-the-Middle-of-Nowhere_teachers-guide.pdf)

**History.com on Hurricane Katrina:** <http://www.history.com/topics/hurricane-katrina?scrllybrkr=1a6f830f#>

**NPR Katrina Survivor Stories:**

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5704652>

**Scholastic Kid Reporting - Katrina 5 Years Later**

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/videos/teaching-content/new-orleans-five-years-after-hurricane-katrina-kid-reporter-abi-lista/>

## REVIEWS:

*Booklist* (April 1, 2014 (Vol. 110, No. 15))

*School Library Journal* (March 1, 2014)

*Kirkus Reviews* (February 1, 2014)

## **Lewis, John. *March: Book One*. Top Shelf Productions, 2013**

### **SUMMARY:**

In *March Book One*, , Congressman John Lewis provides a first-hand account of his lifelong civil rights struggle. *Book One* begins at his rural home in Alabama, his meeting with Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior, and through the birth of the student movement that included lunch counter protests. This is part of a trilogy that is a significant piece of graphic non-fiction.

### **QUESTIONS:**

Who is John Lewis?

Has John Lewis continued his commitment to non-violent protest? Cite examples.

When was John Lewis most recently in the news?

Why didn't John's parents want him to sue the state of Alabama for college admittance?

Who were the Civil Rights leaders that had an impact on the life of John Lewis?

What movements are in the news currently that involve civil rights?

What is the impact of telling this story in a graphic fashion?

### **JOURNAL STARTERS:**

An area of social justice that is important to me is:...

Representative Lewis can be considered an American hero, because....

### **ACTIVITIES:**

Make a graphic representation of Representative Lewis's growing up in the south and what he experienced when he took the trip north with his Uncle.

Create a list of John Lewis's achievements and honors throughout his life.

Choose a leader in the non-violent movement. It can be an historical person or someone living today. Describe this person to your group and how they came to a commitment to non-violence.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 7-8

### **BOOK TRAILER:**

**Cole Cox:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnbaJIRioLY>

## BOOKTALK:

What must it be like to be the only one left who witnessed great moments in the history of the United States. Representative John Lewis is one of those people and happily, he has shared his memories with us in the *March* trilogy. He tells his story in the context of Barack Obama's first inauguration, explaining his past to constituents who come to visit his office. But his story goes back to his childhood in rural Alabama and his awakening to Civil Rights issues in the mid-twentieth century. If you don't know the story of Emmet Till or Rosa Parks, John Lewis will fill you in! Did you know that African Americans were not allowed to sit at lunch counters in the south? Representative Lewis will tell you about that, as well. John Lewis is rooted in the non-violence movement and this graphic work will indeed show readers exactly what that commitment involves.

## RELATED WEBSITES:

**Representative John Lewis:** <https://johnlewis.house.gov/john-lewis/biography>

**Andrew Aydin:** <http://www.andrewaydin.com>

**Nate Powell:** <http://www.seemybrotherdance.org/>

**Interview at Miami Book Festival:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmPiLP7rZYk>

**University of Michigan Discussion Guide:** [https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/marchingforward/wp-content/uploads/sites/500/2017/06/MARCH\\_ReadingGuide.pdf](https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/marchingforward/wp-content/uploads/sites/500/2017/06/MARCH_ReadingGuide.pdf)

**Lit Lovers:** <http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/non-fiction/9660-march-lewis>

**Montgomery Bus Boycott:** <https://tinyurl.com/y8zf87lu>

**The Greensboro Sit-In:** <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/the-greensboro-sit-in>

**5 Peaceful Protests that Changed the World:** <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/peace-protests-dallas-response/>

## READ-ALIKES:

Freedman, Russell. *Because They Marched: The People's Campaign for Voting Rights that Changed America*. Holiday House, 2014.

Freedman, Russell. *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott*. Holiday House, 2006.

Lewis, John. *March: Book Two*. Top Shelf Productions, 2015

Lewis, John. *March: Book Three*. Top Shelf Productions, 2016

Lowery, Lynda Blackmon. *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom*. Dial Books, 2015

Partridge, Elizabeth. *Marching for Freedom*. Viking, 2009.

Terp, Gail. *Nonviolent Resistance in the Civil Rights Movement*. Core Library, 2015.

## REVIEWS:

*Library Journal* (July 1, 2013)

*Publishers Weekly* (July 15, 2013)

*School Library Journal* (September 1, 2013)



**Reynolds, Jason. *Ghost (Track #1)*. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2016.**

**SUMMARY:**

Castle Crenshaw, also known as Ghost, has been running his whole life. For most of his life, he's been running from something or someone. Always the troublemaker, he decides to prove that he is better and faster than the track team he sees at the park one day. When he shows how fast he is, he is welcomed onto the team, coached by an Olympic medalist. He and the rest of the runners on the team must work hard and prove that they belong there as much as anyone else. Will everything fall apart for Ghost because of his past or will he make the right decisions to change his life for the better?

**QUESTIONS:**

How do you think Ghost (Castle) felt when he was running from his dad? What would you do if you were in the same situation?

When Ghost stole the shoes, how did you feel about that decision? What do you think you would have done in the same situation?

Have you ever made a decision that you regretted immediately? If you could go back in time, how would you change it?

Would you be able to do what Ghost did when he started running to prove how fast he was?

What were your first impressions of the other members on the track team? Did your opinions change throughout the book?

Do you think you could beat Ghost in a race? Why or why not?

What do you think will happen in Patina, Sunny, and Lu's books?

How is the ending of Ghost significant?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

The reason I might start running is...

When I meet new people, I try to fit in by...

**ACTIVITIES:**

Research the Olympic gold medalists in track in the past 3 summer Olympics. How have the fastest runner's times changed? Have they improved a lot? What is the average change?

How much would shoes like the ones Ghost stole cost? What kind of a job would you be able to do and how much would you have to work at that job to be able to pay for those shoes?

Write a letter to an adult that has made a positive impact in your life, make sure to include specific events that have meant the most to you.

Attend a few sporting events for your school. After observing the athletes, make up some nicknames that they could go by on their team.

Pick out your favorite character from the novel *Ghost* (outside of Ghost) and write an introduction to their story.

Which actors and actresses would you pick to play the characters from *Ghost* in a movie?

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4-8

**BOOK TRAILER:**

**Texas Lone Star Reading List:** <https://youtu.be/ahY5VcB81rc>

**BOOKTALK:**

Imagine hiding in a storage room after your dad just tried to shoot you and your mom. Imagine waking up in the middle of the night when you were 3 years old being told to run, from your dad. Castle, aka Ghost, had to do just that. Now, he is running into trouble, which is not pleasing his mom. Can his attempt at joining the track team with a group of other runners with backgrounds like his set him on the right path or will it send him running in the wrong direction?

**READ-ALIKES:**

Reynolds, Jason. *Patina (Track #2)*. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2017.

Reynolds, Jason. *Sunny (Track #3)*. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2018.

Alexander, Kwame. *The Crossover*. Houghton Mifflin, 2014.

Garza, Xavier. *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*. Cinco Puntos Press, 2011.

Neri, G. *Ghetto Cowboy*. Candlewick Press, 2011.

O'Connor. *All Rise for the Honorable Perry T. Cook*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2016

Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie*. Scholastic books, 2006.

**RELATED WEBSITES:**

**Jason Reynolds:** <http://www.jasonwritesbooks.com/>

**Simon and Schuster Book Discussion Guide:** <https://tinyurl.com/y865detx>

**Young Hoosier Book Award:** <https://tinyurl.com/ydxqtk5u>

**REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (September 1, 2016)

*Kirkus* (July 20, 2016)

*Publishers Weekly* (August 8, 2016)

**Sheinkin, Steve. *Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team*. Roaring Brook, 2017.**

**SUMMARY:**

*Undefeated*, like a football game, is divided into two-halves. The book's "First Half" identifies the discriminatory societal and political factors (including the Indian Removal Act) that "shaped the world Jim Thorpe and the other Carlisle School students would grow up in" and follows Thorpe's and Warner's separate trajectories until 1907, when the teenage Thorpe (who was Sac and Fox) tries out for the Carlisle football team, coached by Warner. The "Second Half" takes a deep, season-by-season (and often play-by-play) dive into Carlisle's remarkable football history and the sport's evolution from a barely controlled brawl to its more nuanced modern-day structure—thanks in large part to Warner, Thorpe, and the other Carlisle teams' innovative play. Brief, action-packed chapters evince Sheinkin's typical, multilayered approach, as he connects multiple subplots (including Thorpe's domination of the 1912 Olympics and subsequent scandal), includes noteworthy cameos (Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, and Geronimo make appearances), and uses genuine cliffhangers for a propulsive reading experience. In direct address, Sheinkin encourages readers to challenge their assumptions regarding key figures and consider important contemporary questions regarding sports imagery.

**QUESTIONS:**

Was Jim Thorpe one of the greatest American athletes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Why or why not? Considering Warner's problematic treatment of Thorpe and the Carlisle team, can he truly be considered a "great" coach? What do you think Warner, Thorpe, and the other members of the Carlisle team would think about the game of football today? What are significant differences between football in Thorpe's day and college football today? As Sheinkin himself asks, "in the twenty-first century, should any team, at any level or in any sport, continue to call itself the Indians?"

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School football team made the game of football what it is today by...

**ACTIVITIES:**

Research the history of Indian schools  
Think creatively: devise additional trick plays similar to the infamous "hidden-ball play."

Debate: Was Thorpe the greatest American athlete of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 6-8

**BOOK TRAILER:**

**BPLibrary Kids:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGGVvqGkLdI>

**BOOKTALK:**

Anyone know the story of Jim Thorpe? His is a very different path to sports than the ones you've heard about today's football players. He was a Native American sent by his parents to a boarding school for native Americans to get an education. The transition was hard and Thorpe missed his life in Oklahoma. But when a fledgling football program began, Thorpe found his niche and his entry into a bigger world, even making it to the 1912 Olympics. He faced amazing challenges and unexpected heartbreaks throughout his life, but his story is a crucial one in the history of American sports. Read *Undeclared* and find out what you've missed!

**READ-ALIKES:**

Bruchac, Jim. *Jim Thorpe: Original All-American*. Dial Books, 2006

Long, Barbara. *Jim Thorpe: Legendary Athlete*. Enslow Publishers, 1997

Bryant, Howard. *Legends: The Best Players, Games, and Teams in Football*. Philomel, 2015.

**RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Steve Sheinkin:** <http://stevesheinkin.com/>

**Discussion Guide:** <https://www.teachingbooks.net/media/pdf/macmillan/Undeclared-TG.pdf>

**Jim Thorpe:** <https://www.biography.com/people/jim-thorpe-9507017>

**Pop Warner:** <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Pop-Warner>

**Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center:** <http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/>

**Photos: Carlisle Football:** <https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/photos-carlisle-football>

**American Football:** [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Football\\_\(American\)](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Football_(American))

**REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (December 1, 2016)

*Horn Book* (March/April, 2017)

*Kirkus* (November 15, 2016)

*School Library Journal* (February 1, 2017)

**Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Falling Over Sideways*. Scholastic Press. 2016.**

**SUMMARY:**

Claire is having a rough start to 8th grade. Her friends are in the advanced ballet class and she is stuck with the younger girls, she needs braces, a boy at school is super cruel to her, and her science teacher is crazy! Her parents just don't get it and life is hard enough without your perfect brother being all perfect! Then Claire has the worst thing of all happen to her. While eating breakfast with her dad one morning he starts rambling funny words and slumps over at the table. He has had a stroke. Claire is able to save him by calling 911, but that is just the start of all the families problems as her dad works at becoming the man he was and Claire tries to deal with this new reality.

**QUESTIONS:**

Why do you think Claire is avoiding her dad once he comes home?  
What was Matthew's reaction to his father's stroke?  
Why do you think Ryder teases Claire so much?  
Why do you think Mrs. Selinsky acted the way that she did?  
Do you know the warning signs of a stroke? Explain the saying: "Time is brain"

**JOURNAL STARTER:**

I thought I was having a hard day when...

**ACTIVITIES:**

Create a trading card about each family member and list information about them.  
Create a journal entry from each family member's perspective about how life has changed.  
Invite a medical professional to speak to the group about stroke and rehabilitation..  
Write 3-5 diary entries from the perspectives of one of the major characters. .  
Be a TV or radio reporter and give a play by play report of an important incident in the novel. Have your script prepared along with any pictures that will help enhance your broadcast.  
Story Bag: Put together a bag that contains at least 10 items that would be useful to or significant to a character in your novel. Include a description of each item and its relevance to the story.  
Select a character from the book. Select 10 quotations from the text that reveals the character's personality. You must explain what each quotation/sentence tells you about the character.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 6-8

## **BOOK TRAILER:**

**BPL Library Kids:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXUL2mJLOHc>

## **BOOKTALK:**

Imagine the worst day you could ever have. You got up late for school. You forgot your lunch. You missed the bus. You left your homework, which you actually did, on the kitchen table, but your teacher doesn't believe you. You spill cafeteria lunch on you. One of your friends won't talk to you, but you have no idea why and your other friends won't tell you. You trip in front of that other person you have a crush on. Bad days happen to everyone. And Claire is having many bad days going into 8th grade. She has a crazy science teacher, this boy Ryder makes her life miserable, and her friends are advancing in ballet and leaving her behind. Her parents just don't get it and they just make jokes about everything. Clare's life sucks. and she thought that she was having the worst days ever in her entire life. Until the worst day truly happens. Until the day that Claire is having breakfast with her father and he slumps over. She knows something is wrong, so she calls 911. Clare's day has had a stroke.. This is just the start of many bad days.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Alexander, Kwame. *The Crossover*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.  
Bauer, Joan. *Soar*. Penguin Random House, 2016.  
Holt, K.A. *House Arrest*. Chronicle Books, 2015.  
Knowles, Jo. *See You at Harry's*. Candlewick, 2012.  
Lord, Cynthia. *Rules*. Scholastic, 2006.  
Reynolds, Jason. *As Brave As You*. Atheneum, 2016.  
Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie*. Scholastic, 2005.

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Jordan Sonnenblick:** <https://www.jordansonnenblick.com/>

**Discussion Questions:** <https://tinyurl.com/ybgetzro>

**American Stroke Association:** <http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/>

**National Stroke Association:** <http://www.stroke.org/about-us>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (June 1, 2016)

*Horn Book* (September 1, 2016)

*School Library Journal* (July 1, 2016)

**Stelson, Caren. *Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story*. Carolrhoda Books, 2016.**

### **SUMMARY:**

*Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story* explains the events surrounding the bombing of Japan in 1945. Told through the eyes of a young survivor, Sachiko, who was six years old at the time of the bombing, the reader experiences her resilience and strength over the next 56 years as she becomes a voice for peace.

### **QUESTIONS:**

What prompted the author to write this book?

What roles did racism and propaganda play in World War II?

Where did Sachiko's family sleep during air raids?

What were the names of the planes that bombed Nagasaki and Hiroshima? How did they get those names?

How did radiation sickness impact the members of Sachiko's family?

Ichiro's last words to Sachiko were: "Take care of everyone." How did that play out through Sachiko's life?

Did Sachiko learn to forgive? If so, how?

Knowing what we know now, do you think the decision to drop the bomb was justified?

Do you believe the United States and their Allies should have done more to assist the victims of the bombings in Japan?

### **JOURNAL STARTER:**

Answer Sachiko's questions:

- What is peace?.....
- What kind of person should I be?....

### **ACTIVITIES:**

Research what work is currently being done to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

Choose a person who currently works for peace. Create a brief video trailer of the work they are doing.

Pick one of the world leaders that inspires Sachiko and choose three quotes from each person that exemplifies their philosophies.

Pair Sachiko with the *Green Glass Sea* by Ellen Klages (fiction) and discuss the two different experiences.

Compare and contrast the N.Y. Times headlines ( <https://tinyurl.com/y8e4sasn>) to the chapters in the book describing the bomb being dropped.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-8

**BOOK TRAILER:**

**Moorseville Public Library:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oruuy3DBcM>

**TWU SLIS:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUHVmNtDy7Q>

**BOOKTALK:**

After the United States had been involved in WWII for five long years and there was no Japanese surrender in sight; the decision was made to drop two atomic bombs on Japan. *Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story*, tells the story of Sachiko, who was six years old at the time of the bombing. Her parents and uncle strive fearlessly to save Sachiko and her four siblings, but the effects of radiation sickness were tragic for the family. Sachiko survives and makes a life for herself. There are not many books that share the perspective of the Japanese people who lived through that horrific experience; Sachiko will take you through her journey from a child in war ravaged Japan to an articulate adult who serves as a voice for peace.

**READ-ALIKES:**

Gonzales, Doreen. *The Manhattan Project and the Atomic Bomb*. Enslow Publishers, 2000.

Klages, Ellen. *Green Glass Sea*. Viking, 2006

Manuki, Toshi. *Hiroshima No Pika*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1980

Sheinkin, Steve. *Bomb*. Henry Holt & Company, 2012

Yep, Laurence. *Hiroshima*. Scholastic, 1995.

**RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Caren Stelson:** <https://www.carenstelson.com/>

**Discussion Guide:**

[https://www.carenstelson.com/images/pdfs/Sachiko\\_Discussion\\_and\\_Activity\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.carenstelson.com/images/pdfs/Sachiko_Discussion_and_Activity_Guide.pdf)

**Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki:** <https://tinyurl.com/ybaph2h5>

**Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki:** <https://www.atomicheritage.org/history/bombings-hiroshima-and-nagasaki-1945>

**After the Bomb: Survivors tell their stories:** <http://time.com/after-the-bomb>

**REVIEWS:**

*Horn Book Magazine* (January 21, 2017)

*Publishers Weekly* (August 29, 2016)

*School Library Journal* (September 1, 2016)



**Thompson, Lisa. *The Goldfish Boy*. Scholastic Press, 2017.**

**SUMMARY:**

Matthew never leaves his room because of his OCD and his fear of germs. While Matthew is in his room all he does is look outside the window and observe the neighborhood and what everyone is doing on a daily basis. When the neighbor's grandson goes missing, he is the key to solving the mystery.

**QUESTIONS:**

How do you think Matthew feels about having the box of gloves in his bedroom and having to hide them from his dad?

Which parent do you think understands Matthew the best? Why do you think this?

What things does Matthew observe about his neighbors that most people would not?

Why is the significance of the wallpaper lion?

How does Casey help Matthew with his OCD?

Why do you think this book is called *The Goldfish Boy*?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

One thing people don't know about me is .....

The place I feel the most comfortable and myself is \_\_\_\_\_ because....

**ACTIVITIES:**

Draw a picture of what Matthew's neighborhood looks like and include who lives in each house.

Study what OCD is and different types of OCD there are.

Make a character map about Matthew

Write a page that you would write in Matthew's notebook.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4-7

**BOOK TRAILER:**

**Scholastic:** <https://youtu.be/qzSQRG1yDGw>

## **BOOKTALK:**

Matthew Corbin cannot stop cleaning his room or leave his room due to his OCD about germs. He's afraid to even leave his house, go to school, or play with any of his schoolmates or neighbor kids. Instead every day he sits by his window and observes what is going on in the neighborhood. He knows everyone's daily routine by keeping notes. When a neighbor is watching his grandkids and one of them goes missing, Matthew is the key to solving the mystery. Will he get up enough courage to face his fears and leave his room and house? Will he be able to help solve the mystery?

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Baskin, Nora. *Anything but Typical*. Simon and Schuster, 2009.  
Bowling, Dusti. *Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus*. Sterling Publishing, 2017.  
Foster, Stewart. *Bubble*. Simon & Schuster, 2017.  
Harrington, Kim. *Framed and Dangerous*. Scholastic, 2012.  
Hunt, Lynda. *Fish in a Tree*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2015.  
Martin, Ann. *Rain Reign*. Feiwel & Friends, 2014.  
Sloan, Holly. *Short*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2017.

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Lisa Thompson:** <http://www.lisathompsonauthor.com/>  
**Goldfish Boy Resources:** <http://bookunitsteacher.com/wp/?p=4396->  
**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:** <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/ocd.html>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist* (December 1, 2016)  
*Publishers Weekly* (December 12, 2016)  
*School Library Journal* (December 1, 2016)