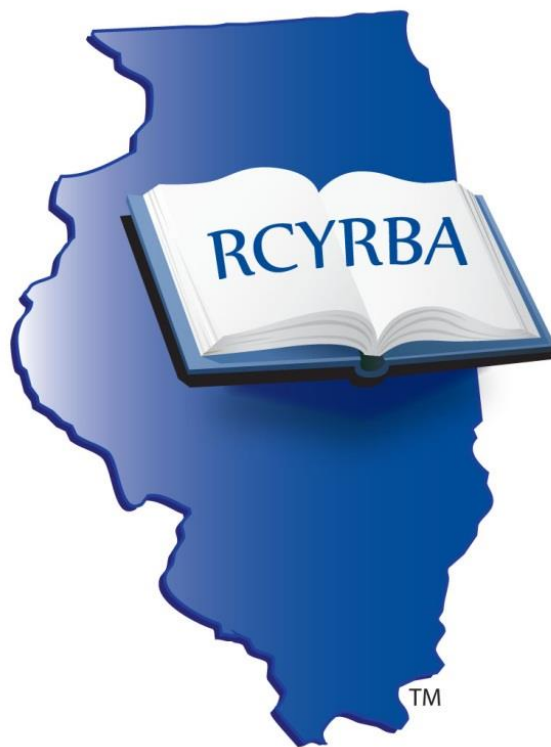


LET'S TALK ABOUT BOOKS

Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award List 2015

Suggestions for Use



Edited by Ellen Popit

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Introduction

The Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award (RCYRBA) is now celebrating its twenty-eighth 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 2015. 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 2015 RCYRBA Master List were developed by a group of librarians and teachers. Information is provided in nine 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 whether or not a particular title will be of interest to a group of students or to a particular 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 as a way 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 30, 2014 and were active at that time. If links to .pdf files take a long time to load, it is often easier to copy and paste 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!

Applegate, Katherine, *The One and Only Ivan*. HarperCollins, 2011.

SUMMARY:

Ivan is a silver-backed gorilla who is forced from his home with a family, to a zoo attraction at mall. It's no life for Ivan, nor is it a life for his other companions, Bob the Dog and Stella the Elephant. Things get interesting when Ivan's ability to draw is recognized and he becomes a real attraction. Ivan's challenge is to fulfill a promise he made to Stella to care for Ruby, a young elephant introduced to their community. That promise brings change and growth to them all.

QUESTIONS:

In your opinion who has the better life - Bob the Dog or Ivan? Why?

Describe the relationship between Stella and Ruby.

How is Julia a friend to Ivan?

What are some things Mack could have done to take better care of Ivan, Stella and Ruby?

What does Ivan mean when he says, "I am Ivan. I am a gorilla. It's not as easy as it looks."

The One and Only Ivan is written in 1st person point of view. Explain how the emotional impact of the story might be different if the story were told in the 3rd person?

Which character shows the most courage in life - Ivan, Stella, Ruby, Bob, or Julia?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

If I could keep a wild animal in my home, it would be a _____, because _____.

ACTIVITIES:

Use a Venn diagram to demonstrate how Ivan the Gorilla and Bob the Dog are similar and how are they different.

The Walt Disney Corporation is considering making *The One and Only Ivan* into a movie. In pairs or small groups, thinking about the many scenes in the book, write a script for a scene you feel is so important that it absolutely must be in the movie.

Perform this scene for your class or create a video to show to your class.

Create a two-part side by side diorama that depicts Ivan's Big Top Mall enclosure next to your vision of the perfect gorilla habitat.

The narrator of the book is Ivan, but what if the story were told from another character's point of view? Choose any character - and re-tell Ivan's story from their perspective.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 4-6

BOOKTRAILER:

The Official Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtPdqv2crQ0>

BOOKTALK:

Ivan is a silverback gorilla who used to live with a human family. But then the inevitable happened... he grew too big to live in a human home. Now his home is a glass and metal enclosure at the Big Top Mall and Video Arcade, a circus-themed shopping center. He's the mall's star attraction. People come from all around to see "The One and Only Ivan - Mighty Silverback." Ivan is not alone in the world, though. He has Stella, an elderly elephant and Bob, a stray dog, to keep him company. He has paper and finger paints to create the pictures Mack will sell at the mall. He has a TV to watch and tire swing to play on, but is his life complete? Is he truly happy and comfortable in his glass world on display as an amusement for humans? Does he have the power to keep a promise to Stella to keep a new baby elephant escape?

READ-ALIKES:

Appelt, Kathi. *The Underneath*. Atheneum, 2008.
Korman, Gordon. *Zoobreak*. Scholastic, 2009.
Martin, Ann M. *A Dog's Life*. Scholastic, 2005.
Rorby, Ginny. *Hurt Go Happy*. Starscape, 2006.

RELATED WEB SITES:

The One and Only Ivan: <http://theoneandonlyivan.com>

HarperCollins Discussion Guide:

http://files.harpercollins.com/HCCChildrens/OMM/Media/OneAndOnlyIvan_DG_4.pdf

Texas Blue Bonnet Awards: <http://texasbluebonnetaward2014.wordpress.com/ivan-related-activities>

One and Only Ivan on Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/glenvargrammy/the-one-only-ivan-lesson-plans>

Zoo Atlanta: Celebrating Ivan: <http://www.zooatlanta.org/ivan#ag4E>

REVIEWS:

Booklist: 108(February 15, 2012): 58
School Library Journal: 57(January 1, 2012): 105
Publishers Weekly: 258(November 14, 2011)
Kirkus Reviews, (October 15, 2011)

Barrow, Randi. *Saving Zasha*. Scholastic, 2011.

SUMMARY:

World War II has just ended and the Tarkov family is waiting for their father to return to their home in the Soviet Union. 13-year-old Mikhail finds a friend in Zasha, a beautiful German Shepherd. Giving Zasha a home puts his family in danger because the government officials are trying to rid their country of all things German - including Zasha.

QUESTIONS:

It is often said that a dog is man's best friend. How did Zasha prove this? How did Mikhail prove his friendship to Zasha?

If you were Mikhail's friend, would you keep his secret? Why or why not?

What clue on Mikhail's clothing helped Dimitri figure out his secret?

What made Mikhail finally decide to trust Katia and Dimitri? How might the story have turned out differently had he not trusted them? What might have happened if they had gained his trust earlier in the story?

Mrs. Tarkov said, "People sometimes do heroic things in a war, but everyone does terrible things. No one is only good, or only bad." What does she mean by this statement? Can you apply this to your own life?

How might the story have changed if Mikhail's dad had returned home right after the war?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

If I were in Mikhail's shoes, I would ...

ACTIVITIES:

Research Russian/German conflicts in WWII. Why do you think the Russians hated the Germans so much?

Research German Shepherds. What role have they played in wars? What other jobs do they do well?

Research the Black Russian Terrier.

Have a local police officer and his/her canine partner visit your class. Have students write to overseas military personnel.

Have a class collection of needed items to be sent to U.S. military overseas.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-8

BOOKTRAILERS:

Scholastic Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOftAHd5F50>

Gower Middle School Book Trailers: <http://vimeo.com/93659144>

BOOKTALK:

Do you love dogs? How about German Shepherds? Can you imagine a world where you would be risking your life and your family's future by keeping a dog in your home? The long, hard war is officially over, but the danger and uncertainty has not ended for Mikhail's family. Their dad has not come home yet. While they worry where he might be, a wonderful German Shepard comes into their lives. Unfortunately, the Germans are still considered the enemy and German Shepherds happen to share their name. Therefore, they are the enemy too. Russian soldiers are rounding up as many as they can find and shooting them. Not only is Zasha, the brave and beautiful dog, in danger but also Mikhail's whole family is living dangerously as they hide their new illegal pet.

READ-ALIKES:

Dennis, Brian, Kirby Larson, and Mary Nethery. *Nubs: the true story of a mutt, a marine, and a miracle*. Little, Brown and Company, 2009.

DiCamillo, Kate. *Because of Winn Dixie*. Candlewick Press, 2000.

Kadohata, Cynthia. *Cracker! The Best Dog in Vietnam*. Atheneum Books, 2007.

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw. *Dogs on Duty: Soldiers' Best Friends on the Battlefield and Beyond*. Walker Books, 2012.

Sherlock, Patti. *Letters from Wolfie*. Viking Press, 2004.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Randi Barrow: <http://randibarrow.com/>

Author Interview:

<http://fourthmusketeer.blogspot.com/2011/03/author-interview-randi-barrow-author-of.html>

Chapter by Chapter Comprehension Questions:

<http://books4426graders.blogspot.com/2011/04/saving-zasha-by-randi-barrow.html>

The Children's War: http://thechildrenswar.blogspot.com/2013_01_01_archive.html

REVIEWS:

Kirkus Reviews (December 15, 2010)

Publishers Weekly 257(November 8, 2010)

School Library Journal: 57(April 1, 2011): 167

Bauer, Joan. *Almost Home*. Viking, 2012.

SUMMARY:

Sugar Mae Cole's life is spinning out of control. After her grandfather's death and without the help of her absent father, she and her mother, Reba, lose their home. With nothing for them in Missouri, they travel to Chicago in search of a job for Reba that never materializes. That is the last straw for Reba, who breaks down and needs attention in a mental health facility. Sugar is placed with a foster family that provides her with much needed support. A few things keep Sugar going: her fierce love for her mother, her connection to her teacher, Mr. B., her writing and a dog named Shush. The combination of all these elements bring Sugar "Almost Home."

QUESTIONS:

What kind of stories does the mail tell?

Mrs. Pittman has two favorite songs: "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "Happy Days are Here Again." How do they tie into the story?

What significance was the name "Shush"?

What is Reba's particular eating habit?

What role does writing play in Sugar's life?

What does Sugar realize about herself while Reba is in the hospital?

What are Reba's strengths?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

I can tell you this about the people I trust.....

_____ has been my most memorable teacher because.....

ACTIVITIES:

Track the sayings of King Cole that are included in this book:

Write a thank-you note to someone.

Explore the resources in your community that are available for someone in Sugar's situation.

Invite someone from a local animal shelter to speak about their services.

Try Mr. B.'s language arts activity: Take a look at six books and decide why the authors wrote them.

Do some research about famous people who have been homeless sometime in their lives.

Collect needed supplies for a homeless shelter.

Draw "Sweet Street."

Find pictures of Millennium Park

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-8

BOOK TRAILER:

Book Trailers for Teens: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=th3M2TIJemE>

BOOKTALK:

“I feel I’ve got a sign across my forehead that everyone sees: *HOMELESS GIRL*.”
Sugar Mae is so much more---she’s a granddaughter and a daughter. She’s a friend and a student. She’s a writer and a caregiver. She’s a young girl in search of a stable life. It’s a hard road---her father is absent and her mother has had one tough break too many. She learns what it is like to be homeless and to experience living in a shelter and as part of a foster family. But, she’s got a dog, she’s got her writing and she’s smart enough to trust the people who truly care about her. She’s “Almost Home” and they’ll be no stopping her!

READ-ALIKES:

Appelt, Kathi. *Keeper*. Atheneum, 2010.

Balliett, Blue. *Hold Fast*. Scholastic, 2013.

Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Pictures of Hollis Woods*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2002.

Lord, Cynthia. *Touch Blue*. Scholastic, 2010.

Pennypacker, Sara. *Summer of the Gypsy Moths*, 2012.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Joan Bauer: <http://www.joanbauer.com>

South Carolina Activity Guide:

<http://www.scasl.net/assets/cba%20activity%20guide.pdf>

Almost Home Flash Cards: <http://quizlet.com/24792319/almost-home-flash-cards>

Almost Home Prezi: http://prezi.com/unv29y9_oze6/almost-home-by-joan-bauer/

REVIEWS:

Booklist: 108(August 1, 2012): 74

Publishers Weekly: 259(August 6, 2012)

School Library Journal: 58(October 1, 2012): 123

Close, Chuck. *Chuck Close: Face Book*. Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2012.

SUMMARY:

Chuck Close answers questions about his life and his uniquely-created, larger-than-life artwork. Not only did Chuck face adversity as a child due to learning disabilities, he suffered a collapsed spinal artery which led to paralyzation as an adult. Through it all, he has become a well-known and revered artist. Intermixed with biographical information are photos from his life and images of his artwork. An especially cool aspect of the book is the interactive portion which allows readers to flip between different versions of similar self-portraits.

QUESTIONS:

What are some obstacles that Chuck Close overcame early in life? How did art help him overcome these obstacles?
What other career did Chuck consider pursuing? Do you think he would have been good at it?
Why does Chuck focus on painting faces?
What types of materials does Chuck use to paint his portraits?
Why doesn't Chuck have his subjects smile for their portraits?
Do you think it would be harder or easier to paint a picture of someone you know very well as opposed to a stranger? Would you want him to paint your portrait?
How did "the Event," change the way Chuck painted? How did it change other aspects of his life?
How do you think artists like Jackson Pollock, Andy Warhol, and the mosaic painters have influenced Chuck's style?
Why do you think so many people like Chuck's artwork?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

If I could only paint one person's portrait, it would be...
The hardest thing I have ever had to overcome is...
If I were an artist, I would create...

ACTIVITIES:

Try painting your self-portrait, or a portrait of someone you know, using Chuck's grid system.
Write a letter to Chuck, asking him a question you wish he covered in the book.
Choose an image of one of the artists mentioned in the book (Pollock, Warhol, Byzantine mosaic creator) and compare and contrast it to one of Chuck's works.
Contact the Art Institute to find out if any of his works are currently on display—visit the museum to view it/them. Write your reactions to seeing one of these works up close.
Watch a video clip of Chuck Close (like this one <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-p5M0vhZI>). What else did you learn about him or his art?

INTEREST LEVEL: Grades 4-8

BOOKTALK:

[Show the image on page 13—ask how the image was made—reveal that it was actually painted!] Chuck Close is an amazing artist who is well known for creating giant portraits of people. What’s not as well-known is how many obstacles Chuck has overcome in his life—from being diagnosed with dyslexia and a condition known as “face blindness,” as a child to becoming paralyzed from the chest down later in life, Chuck has had a lot to contend with. In *Face Book*, Chuck answers questions about the creative processes that go into making his spectacular works of art, and explains how “Art really saved [his] life.” As an added bonus, many of his works are owned and frequently on display at The Art Institute of Chicago!

READ-ALIKES:

Greenberg, Jan. *Christo & Jeanne-Claude: Through the Gates and Beyond*, Roaring Book Press, 2008.

Greenberg, Jan. *The Mad Potter: George E. Ohr, Eccentric Genius*, Roaring Book Press, 2013.

Montgomery, Sy. *Temple Grandin: How the Girl Who Loved Cows Embraced Autism and Changed the World*, Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 2012.

National Gallery of Art. *An Eye for Art: Focusing on Great Artists and Their Work*, Chicago Review Press, 2013.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Wham! The Art & Life of Roy Lichtenstein*, Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2008.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Arts Connected: Tools for Teaching the Arts:

<http://www.artsconnected.org/artsnetmn/identity/close.html>

Works that the Art Institute of Chicago owns:

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/artist/Close,+Chuck>

There is also an extensive list of resources in the back of the book on page 52.

REVIEWS:

<i>Kirkus</i>	March 1, 2012
<i>Library Journal</i>	58(June 1, 2012): 141
<i>Publisher’s Weekly</i>	259(February 20, 2012)

Fitzmaurice, Kathryn. *A Diamond in the Desert*. Viking, 2012.

SUMMARY:

Tetsu is a Japanese-American boy who, with his mother and sister, is relocated to a detention center in Gila River, Arizona. His father has been sent to jail in North Dakota for questioning by the FBI. Tetsu's family had been a farming one and nothing had prepared them for life in the desert barracks. While Tetsu's sister, Kimi, is preoccupied with animals, it is baseball that provides comfort for Tetsu. That all changes when Kimi contracts Valley Fever and Tetsu believes that he is at fault.

QUESTIONS:

Why was Tetsu's father sent to prison?
Who was Mel Ott?
Why didn't Tetsu write to his father?
What was Kimi's hobby while at the detention center?
Why is baseball referred to as America's national pastime?
Why did Tetsu stop playing baseball?
What was Horse's secret?

JOURNAL STARTER:

If I could only pack one bag, it would contain...

ACTIVITIES:

Find images of the Gila River Internment Camp.
Discover how dust storms work.
Taste pomegranates.
Make paper cranes.
Research Valley Fever and what causes it.
There were several "happy endings" in this book. Make a list and discuss them.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-7

BOOKTRAILER:

A Diamond in the Desert: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtvIPXwX0ZY>
Viking Press: <https://www.google.com/#q=a+diamond+in+the+desert+book+trailer>

BOOKTALK:

Tetsu has left everything behind in California; his home, his friends and his dog, Lefty. There's nothing at the detention center in Gila, Arizona. His father is being held for questioning by the FBI in North Dakota, so Tetsu and his mother and sister are alone at Gila River. His sister finds and nurtures animals and Tetsu becomes involved with a fledgling baseball team that started out without even a field or a ball---just rocks. When his sister Kimi contracts Valley Fever, Tetsu feels responsible and stops playing ball. However a happy set of circumstances gets him back on the field and the family gets ready to begin again. Based on newspaper articles and interviews with players from the detention center, you'll learn about some real heroes of American history!

READ-ALIKES:

Kadohata, Cynthia. *Weedflower*. Atheneum, 2006.
Lieurance, Suzanne. *The Lucky Baseball: My story in a Japanese-American Internment Camp*. Enslow Publishers, 2009.
Lisle, Janet Taylor. *The Art of Keeping Cool*. Atheneum, 2000.
Mochizuki, Ken. *Baseball Saved Us*. Lee & Low, 1993.
Patneau, David. *Thin Wood Walls*. Houghton Mifflin, 2004.
Salisbury, Graham. *Under the Blood-Red Son*. Delacorte, 1994.
Wolf, Virginia Euwer. *Bat 6*. Scholastic, 1998.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Katherine Fitzmaurice: <http://kathrynfitzmaurice.com/discussion-questions>
Penguin Press: www.penguin.com/static/images/yr/pdf/DiamondintheDesertDG.pdf
Valley Fever: <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/valley-fever-topic-overview>
National Archives: <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/japanese-relocation>
Baseball at Gila River:
<http://archive.azcentral.com/travel/articles/2011/04/08/20110408ken-zenimura-baseball-japanese-internment-camp.html>

REVIEWS:

Booklist: 108(March 15, 2012): 62
Publishers Weekly: 258(December 12, 2011)
School Library Journal: 57(February 1, 2012): 118

George, Jessica Day. *Tuesdays at the Castle*. Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2011.

SUMMARY:

Celie, Deliah and Rolf live in Glower Castle with their parents who are the King and Queen of the Kingdom of Sleyne. The castle is unique in that it is magical and can add and delete rooms and corridors when it wants to.

When their older brother, Bran, graduates from the College of Wizardry, their parents leave for two weeks to attend his graduation ceremony. However, on the way home all three are kidnapped and presumably killed. Celie, Deliah and Rolf are left to defend Glower Castle and the Kingdom from being taken over by other aristocrats who want to become the new King and rule the Kingdom of Sleyne.

QUESTIONS:

What would Castle Glower do when it became bored and why was it always on a Tuesday?

What is Celie's most favorite thing to do and how does this knowledge help Celie to protect her family, the castle and the kingdom?

Sergeant Avery went to where the King, Queen and Bran were kidnapped to find clues as to what happened to them. He found something important. What was it and what was the significance and value of what he found?

What gave the children hope that their mother, father and brother were still alive?

What was special about the Spy Glass Tower?

Celie asked the castle for help and how did the castle respond to her requests?

How did the castle let Celie know that it liked her?

What did Celie find and how did she use this special item?

Why can't Rolf travel with his parents to his brother's graduation? Is this reason true today for important political figures?

Who was Rufus and how was he important to the story?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

I would like to live in a magic castle like Glower Castle because

ACTIVITIES:

How was life in medieval times different from the life we live today?

Compare the political system from Celie's time to the American political system.

Research castles in Ireland, Scotland and England and compare their similarities and differences.

Research the history of one particular castle such as the Blarney Castle in Ireland and write a story or report about the castle.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 4 – 8

BOOK TRAILER:

Book Trailers for Readers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhhdjrwmIEo>

BOOKTALK:

How would you like to live in a magic castle that is more of a person than a building? Glower Castle is unique because it can add and delete rooms, corridors, turrets and can make rooms bigger or smaller. Read about Celie, her older brother Rolf and her older sister Deliah and find out how they take care of the castle and the castle takes care of them, especially in times of trouble.

READ-ALIKES:

Fagan, Deva. *Fortune's Folly*. Henry Holt, 2009.
George, Jessica Day. *Wednesdays in the Tower*. Bloomsburg, 2013.
George, Jessica Day. *Dragon Slippers*. Bloomsburg, 2007.
Hale, Shannon. *Princess Academy*. Bloomsbury, 2005.
Levin, Gail Carson. *Ella Enchanted*. HarperCollins, 1997.
Nielsen, Jennifer. *The False Prince*. Scholastic, 2012.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Jessica Day George: www.JessicaDayGeorge.com

Quizlet: <http://quizlet.com/22943347/tuesdays-at-the-castle-flash-cards>

Mother Daughter Books, Jr. <http://motherdaughterbooksjr.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/get-talking-tuesdays-at-castle.html>

Castles of the World: <http://www.castles.org>

REVIEWS

Kirkus: September 15, 2011

School Library Journal: 57(November 1, 2011): 120

Green, Tim. *Unstoppable*. Harper Collins, 2012.

SUMMARY:

Life has been difficult for foster child, Harrison. When he is placed in a loving home with “Coach” Kelly and his lawyer wife, Harrison believes that his luck has finally changed. He begins to make friends and realizes his dream to play football on his school’s team. As a star running back he is unstoppable. But, his change of luck does not last. Diagnosed with cancer after a football injury, Harrison faces his greatest trial of all.

QUESTIONS:

Would is your definition of a hero? Would you consider Harrison a hero, why or why not? The Kelly’s change Harrison’s life by offering him a home. Would it be difficult to share your home with a foster child?

Tim Green is considered a sports writer. Would you describe *Unstoppable* as a sports novel?

Reflect on the ending of *Unstoppable*. Explain how you felt about the ending, was it expected? What would you want for Harrison?

What do you think about Coach’s decision to allow Harrison to play with pads at the first practice?

Why was Harrison’s football injury considered a blessing?

What is meant by phantom pain?

What impact did Major Bauer have on Harrison’s recovery?

Why do you think Harrison didn’t want to have any contact with Justin or Becky after the amputation?

JOURNAL STARTER:

Harrison is *Unstoppable* because....

ACTIVITIES:

Invite a professional to speak to your group about bullying and anger management.

Ask a coach to present an overview of junior high football.

Do some research on Jeff Keith or other athletes who have face the challenges of amputation?

Find an opportunity to observe Koi Fish.

Watch some events that a part of the Para Olympics.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-8

BOOK TRAILER:

Unstoppable: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjMPBFkTiBc&noredirect=1>

BOOKTALK:

Harrison Jackson has had seriously bad breaks---no family and awful foster family experiences. But, the Kellys are different. Mrs. Kelly is an attorney and “Coach” Kelly works with junior high football teams. Harrison is hesitant to believe a family relationship can form, but it does.

Harrison also begins to play football and once he learns to harness his emotions and let them out of the field, he is *Unstoppable*. It’s one thing to have that strength and endurance on the football team, but what does that look like when a person is faced with a life-threatening disease that changes everything? Harrison learns that lesson and many more in Tim Green’s *Unstoppable*.

READ-ALIKES:

Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Curveball, the Year I Lost my Grip*. Scholastic 2012.

Berg, Ann. *All the Broken Pieces*. Scholastic Press, 2009.

Bingham, Kelly. *Shark Girl*. Candlewick, 2007.

Van Draanen, Wendelin. *The Running Dream*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2011.

Author Read-Alikes: Matt Christopher, Carl Dueker

RELATED WEB SITES:

Tim Green: <http://timgreenbooks.com>

HarperCollins Class Acts: <http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/feature/class-acts/fall-2012/Tim-Green-Yearbook.pdf>

***Unstoppable*:** <http://westport.dailyvoice.com/sports/westports-jeff-keith-inspires-authors-new-novel>

Pop Warner Football: <http://www.popwarner.com>

Osteosarcoma: http://kidshealth.org/parent/medical/cancer/cancer_osteosarcoma.html

REVIEWS:

Booklist 109(Oct. 01, 2012)

Kirkus: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/tim-green/unstoppable/>

School Library Journal 58(August 2012): 104

**Greenwald, Tommy. *Charlie Joe Jackson's Guide to Not Reading*.
Roaring Brook Press, 2011.**

SUMMARY:

Charlie Joe Jackson hates to read. He says so all the time. But, he has to get through Billy's Bargain and his past practice reading the front and back covers and then having a buddy fill in the middle, won't work for him this time. His quest to find methods of getting around his required reading turns his middle school and his family upside down.

QUESTIONS:

As an individual, how do you begin the process of reading a book?
Is reading a text or instructions to a video game the same as reading a book?
What do you think the expression 'read it and weep' means?
Has a particular book that you've read ever helped you deal with a situation in your life?
What are your earliest memories of reading or being read to?
Charlie Joe inserts lists of tips throughout the book. Which was your favorite?
Who were Charlie Joe's real friends in this story?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

You'll never make me

ACTIVITIES:

Make a chart that details your group's most favorite and least favorite books.
Make a list of 25 good things about reading.
Talk about some of the cliques in your school
With a partner, try Charlie Joe's method of preparing book reports. Read a bit in the beginning and a bit at the end, then have your partner fill in the middle. Prepare a book report and see how you do.
Track all the ways in which you reading during a 24 hour period.
Talk about a book character with whom you've identified.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-8

BOOK TRAILERS:

Book Trailers for All: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bw6LFlaXUF4>
Tommy Greenwald's Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bw6LFlaXUF4>

BOOKTALK:

Read Page 1:

My name is Charlie Joe Jackson, and I hate reading. And if you're reading this book, you hate reading, too.

In fact, you do whatever you can to avoid reading, and the fact that you're holding a book in your hand right now is kind of shocking.

I know exactly how you feel; I'm one of you.

Just remember, you are not alone. We'll get through this together.

Start reading---you are not alone---Charlie is with you every step of the way!

READ-ALIKES:

Paulsen, Gary, ed.: *Shelf Life: Stories by the Book*. Simon & Schuster, 2003.

Scieszka, Jon, ed.: *Guys Write for Guys Read*. Viking, 2008.

Trelease, Jim, ed.: *Read All About It!* Penguin Books, 1993.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Tommy Greenwald: <http://tommygreenwald.com>

LYRC Study Guide: <http://www.state.lib.la.us/literacy-and-reading/louisiana-young-readers-choice/2014-lyrc-6-8th-grade-study-guides->

Pinterest: Tips for Raising Readers: <http://www.pinterest.com/bplonline/tips-for-raising-readers>

Quizlet: <http://quizlet.com/13727947/charlie-joe-jacksons-guide-to-not-reading-flash-cards>

REVIEWS:

Booklist 107(May 1, 2011): 81

Kirkus (June, 2011)

Publishers Weekly 258 (May 30, 2011)

School Library Journal 57(August, 1, 2011): 102

Hobbs, Will. *Never Say Die*. Harper Collins, 2013.

SUMMARY:

Living in the Northwest Yukon Territory of Canada, Nick Thrasher lives with his Inuit family and is counted on to provide for his family and be the man of the house. He is an accomplished hunter at fifteen. But what happens next, will change Nick forever. While Nick brings in a caribou from his latest hunt, a bear comes up on him and takes the meat away. What was strange about this bear is that it wasn't just a grizzly bear. Or a polar bear. It was a mix of them both, a "Grolar Bear". When Nick's long lost step brother, Ryan Powers, contacts him about going on an adventure in the wilderness, he agrees to go, but the trip turns into more than an adventure, it turns into a fight for survival.

QUESTIONS:

What happened when Nick was headed home with his caribou?
Who is Ryan Powers? How does Nick feel about him contacting him now after all these years?
What does Nick bring with him as protection from the bears?
How do the brothers handle being separated?
How does the relationship between Nick and Ryan change?
How was Ryan going to find the large caribou herd?
What does Jonah, Nick's grandpa, mean when he says the wolf and the bear are at the edge of town?

JOURNAL STARTER:

If my family and friends might never hear from me again, I would want to tell them _____ and like them to remember _____ about me.

ACTIVITIES:

Write a journal of Ryan and Nick's trip. Choose one of the characters and write a journal at the end of each day of travel.

Create a scrapbook of Ryan and Nick's adventures. Put together a presentation, poster board or electronic, using pictures and single words or phrases to depict the journey that was taken.

Create video reports as if the students were out in the wilderness filming them and sharing their stories.

Conduct research on the different animals in the Canadian wilderness, including grolar bears, caribou, hawks, grizzly bears, etc., the terrain or the mountainous area and the weather patterns, the villages and their traditions, etc.

Have a debate over whether we should be able to kill animals, such as a grolar bear, that are rare or if we should just leave it all to the scientists. Is it too dangerous?

Write advertisements/safety pamphlets for dealing with bears and wildlife, camping in the backcountry, rafting, how to deal with weather, or what to do in certain situations when no one is close to you while camping.

BOOK TRAILER:

School Podcast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55napcpiC50>

BOOK TALK:

Have you ever wanted to take an adventure through majestic mountains, raging rivers, and remote locations? What if you were there and bears, caribou, and other animals were all around you, and you had to fight for your survival? Take a journey with Nick Thrasher and Ryan Powers as they journey through the unknown strengthening not just their skills for survival, but learning about one another as the brother they have never known.

READ ALIKES:

George, Jean Craighead. *Julie of the Wolves*. Harper & Row, 1972.
O'Dell, Scott. *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2010.
Paulson, Gary. *Hatchet*. Simon and Schuster Books, 2006.
Speare, Elizabeth George. *The Sign of the Beaver*. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2011.

RELATED WEBSITES:

Will Hobbs: http://www.willhobbsauthor.com/books/bk_never.html

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55napcpiC50>

HarperCollins Study Guide:

<http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/harperchildrensImages/Printable/neversaydie.pdf>

Majestic Grolar Bear: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyX7HH0omIU>

National Geographic: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com>

Artic Climate Change:

http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/arctic/what_we_do/climate

REVIEWS:

Booklist: 109(February 15,2013): 71

School Library Journal: 59(March 1, 2013): 161

Kirkus Reviews (December 15, 2012)

Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *One for the Murphys*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2012.

SUMMARY:

One for the Murphys is the story of Carley Connors who is put into foster care when her mother is hospitalized. Carley is angry, scared, and refuses to be happy while in the Murphy's home. Eventually Carley warms up to Murphys with the help of Julie the mother, Jack, the father and her three foster brothers. Even with the help of the Murphys Carley has conflicting feelings not only about her foster family but about her mother as well. As her mother recovers in the hospital and gets the help she needs, she is prepared to take care of Carley again. Being reunited with her mother creates some uneasy feelings after the security of the Murphy's home. In the end, Carley realizes she will be safe with her mother and Julie, promises that Carley will "have a happy life someday"

QUESTIONS:

When Carley goes to the Murphys home she hopes she doesn't like her foster mother. Why do you think she doesn't want to like her foster mother?
Carley makes it hard for the Murphys to like her, why does she do this?
How do labels affect how people are seen? Carley is all of the sudden a "foster kid" how does this change her?
How is Carley's shopping trip with Mrs. Murphy different than with her mother?
Explain Carley's behavior in the restaurant? Why is this unexpected?
Toni and Carley both feel like they don't fit in, why? Are there times you don't feel like you fit in?
How does Carley feel about going home to her mother?
What does Carley learn from being with the Murphys?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

The hero in my life is...

ACTIVITIES:

Pretend you are Carley once she has grown up. Write a letter to Mrs. Murphy telling her about how happy life is now.
Hold a discussion about what you think being a foster kid would be like. What would the challenges be about living in a home without your parents? What would you do if you found out one of your friends were a foster child?

When children are put into foster care they don't have clothes or personal items. Find an organization that takes donations and have students donate old clothes and toiletries to foster children.

READING RECOMMENDATIONS: Grades 5-8

BOOK TRAILER:

Lynda Hunt Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBFUPBw7KLI>

Kristen Keller Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Qsr4osAk-k>

BOOKTALK:

Carley Conners is a smart and sassy 12 year old who is thrown into foster care after her mother ends up in the hospital. She goes to live with the Murphys who try to make her feel like one of them but Carley has strong walls built around her to protect herself from feeling. This is a story of not fitting in, finding your hero and learning how to be happy. Will Carley stay with the Murphys or will she go home with her mother? Read Lynda Mullaly Hunt's *One for the Murphys* to find out what happens to Carley.

READ-ALIKES:

Bauer, Joan, *Almost Home*. New York: Viking 2012.

Dowell, Frances O'Roark, *Where I'd Like to Be*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2003.

Grimes, Nikki, *The Road to Paris*. New York: Putnam 2006.

Pennypacker, Sara, *The Summer of the Gypsy Moths*. New York: Balzer + Bray, 2012.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Lynda Mullaly Hunt <http://www.lyndamullalyhunt.com>

Penguin Books: <http://www.penguin.com/meet/publishers/nancypaulsenbooks/>

Children's Rights (Foster Care Facts)

<http://www.childrensrights.org/issues-resources/foster-care/facts-about-foster-care/>

REVIEWS:

Booklist: 108(May 15, 2012): 56

Library Journal: 58(June 1, 2012): 124

Publishers Weekly: 259(March 12, 2012)

Kirby, Matthew J. *The Clockwork Three*. Scholastic Press, 2010.

SUMMARY:

The Clockwork Three by Matthew J. Kirby is the story of three children, brought together by a mystery. Giuseppe is an orphan brought to America by an evil man who uses his musical skill to collect money. Frederick, also an orphan, is apprenticed to a clockmaker and determined to be the youngest person ever to officially become a member of the clockmakers guild. Hannah is forced to grow up quickly when her father falls ill. She supports her mother, father, and sisters as a maid in a hotel. Hidden treasures and secrets in clockwork bring these three together to solve a mystery that could change all their lives.

QUESTIONS:

Why don't Giuseppe and the other boys run away from Stephano?

Why doesn't Frederick trust Master Branch? What keeps him from asking for help with the clockwork man?

What did you think of the character of Madame Pomeroy? Why did she want Hannah to be her personal assistant? Why did Hannah steal her necklace? Was that her only choice?

The three main characters are all forced to grow up much sooner than they should, how do you think their life circumstances affected them as people?

Giuseppe, Hannah, and Frederick all have jobs, although their working lives are very different. Compare their positions to each other. How are adults portrayed in this story? Do they help or hurt the three children? What do the children think of the adults in their lives?

Who was your favorite character in the story? Why?

How did you feel about what was done with the treasure? Do you think it should have been used differently?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

If I found a hidden treasure I would...

ACTIVITIES:

Build your own automaton: <http://www.flying-pig.co.uk>

Research automatons, their uses, and different examples of them.

Research child labor laws, how they started, and what life was like for working children before them.

Watch a scene from *La Traviata* (the opera Madame Pomeroy takes Hannah and Frederick to see). Do you see what Hannah liked about it or what Frederick doesn't like?

Research Albertus Magnus, an inventor from the 13th century.

READING RECOMMENDATION: Grades 5-8

BOOK TRAILER:

Scholastic Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOe13IaA7Ws>

BOOKTALK:

Giuseppe is an orphan, earning money playing the violin on the streets and living under the thumb of his evil padrone, Stephano. Frederick is an apprentice clockmaker who dreams of becoming a journeyman and solving his own family mystery. Hannah is a maid working in a hotel to support her family. All three children are brought together by the mystery of a hidden treasure and the secrets hidden in a clockwork man. If they can trust each other they might just be able to change all their lives forever.

READ-ALIKES:

Benz, Derek. *The Brimstone Key*. Little, Brown, 2010.

Funke, Cornelia. *The Thief Lord*. Scholastic, 2002.

Oppel, Kenneth. *Airborn*. Eos, 2004.

Sleznick, Brian. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret: A Novel in Words and Pictures*. Scholastic, 2007.

Stewart, Trenton Lee. *The Mysterious Benedict Society*. Little, Brown, 2007.

Westerfeld, Scott. *Leviathan*. Simon Pulse, 2009.

Freedman, Russell. *Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade against Child Labor*. Clarion Books, 1994.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Kirbside: The Blog of Author Matthew J. Kirby: <http://matthewjkirby.com/kirbside>

Scholastic Discussion Guide:

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/sites/default/files/asset/file/clockworkthreediscussionguide.pdf>

More information about Albertus Magnus:

<http://www.renaissanceastrology.com/albertusmagnus.html>

Getty Museum's Automaton Exhibit:

<http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/devices/flash/>

REVIEWS:

Booklist: 107(October 15, 2010): 63

Publishers Weekly: 257(September 20, 2010)

School Library Journal: 56(November 1, 2010): 119

Korman, Gordon. *Ungifted*. Balzer + Brey, 2012.

SUMMARY:

Donovan Curtis is a prankster! When he attempt to poke a statue of Atlas at his school causes Atlas' globe to topple and crash through the school gymnasium, Donovan is in BIG trouble. However, through a fluke, his is sent to the Academy of Scholastic Development---a school for gifted students in the district that proves a great place to hide out. He's loves the robotics and his skill with a joystick humanizes the program. However, he doesn't fit into any other aspect of the school and his classmates don't know what to make of him. However, over the course of time Donovan and the Academy students become a unit and accomplish some amazing and surprising things!

QUESTIONS:

What resources does your school provide for gifted students?
What is a hypothesis?
Have you used YouTube at school? If so, how?
What impact did Donovan have on his gifted classmates? In turn, what impact did they have on Donovan?
How did Donovan's sister, Katie, help the students at the Academy? Did her involvement with the students have any effect on her?
Who was your favorite student at the Academy? Why?
How did the Academy students feel about Donovan being retested? Why?
What part do "The Daniels" play in this story?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

Hypothesis:

ACTIVITIES:

Arrange for a demonstration of ancestry.com.
Plan a robotics competition.
Discuss some of the challenges faced by gifted students.
Choose one of the hypotheses in the group and try to either prove or disprove it.
Draw The Tin Man.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-8

BOOK TRAILERS:

Fork Shoals Library: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uN5UGtLlrmc>

Scholastic Book Fair Preview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5v1dFNJEQwE>

BOOKTALK:

What if you'd just made one of the biggest mistakes of your life? You know that the consequences will be huge! However, instead of getting into big trouble at school, you are transferred to a program for gifted and talented students. Quite a promotion. Only, you don't belong there, BUT it's safer that being at your old school, where your guilt could be discovered. That's exactly where Donovan Curtis finds himself, an "Ungifted" student amidst significantly gifted classmates. But, here's a question---who are the really gifted characters in the story? Read *Ungifted* and decide for yourself!

READ-ALIKES:

Clements, Andrew. *The Report Card*. Simon & Schuster, 2004.

Elish, Dan. *The School for the Insanely Gifted*. Harper, 2011.

Hermes, Patricia. *I Hate Being Gifted*. G.P. Putnam, 1990.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Gordon Korman: <http://gordonkorman.com>

Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award:

<http://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/cbec/DCFBookReviews%26Questions13-14.pdf>

HarperCollins Study Guide: <http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/feature/class-acts/fall-2012/Gordon-Korman-Yearbook.pdf>

Rhode Island Rooster Games:

<http://riroostergames.wikispaces.com/file/view/Ungifted+Discussion+Questions.pdf>

FIRST Robotics Team: <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc>

REVIEWS:

Booklist: 108(July 1, 2012): 66

Publishers Weekly: 259(August 13, 2012)

School Library Journal: 58(October 1, 2012): 140

Lu, Marie. *Legend*. Putnam Books, 2011.

SUMMARY:

Day is a slum child who is on the run, a criminal hunted throughout the Republic. That Republic is a nation that has been formed from part of what used to be the United States of America. June is a highly placed member of the Republic and the only person ever to score perfectly on The Trial. When June's brother, Mathias, is killed by Day, June is called into active duty in order to track down her brother's killer. While on her mission, June becomes involved in a Skiz fight and Day saves her life. As she is nursed back to health, June gets a glimpse of this street fighter. But when she figures her savior is Day, she identifies him and turns him in. Through twists and turns, Day and June determine how the Republic is run and where true good and evil exist.

QUESTIONS:

What is the Trial? What really happens to those who fail?
What is the relationship between Day and Tess?
What are the differences between Mathias and Thomas?
Day uses the term cousin when referring to Tess and again when referring to June. What does cousin mean in this context?
What was the relationship Day and June had with their brothers?
How did people in the Republic contract the plague?
What is the significance of Day's name?

JOURNAL STARTER:

The survival skills that I believe are the most important include....

ACTIVITIES:

The Republic doesn't know what Day looks like. Draw a picture of Day.
Research the plague throughout human history.
Make a list of all the strategies Day and Tess used to survive on the street.
Discuss the character strengths and weaknesses of Day and June.
Compare Day to Robin Hood.
Play some word games that involve unscrambling letters.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 7-8

BOOK TRAILERS:

Penguin Teen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6adyUHwUjw>

BOOK TALK:

“My mother thinks I’m dead.” Day’s mother might think that he is dead, but he is a wanted criminal within the Republic. He’s on the run, trying to strike a delicate balance between watching out for his mother and brothers and protecting his identity. However, when June Iparis, the Republic’s prodigy who is the only person recognized as scoring perfectly on The Trial, tracks him down and turns him in to avenge her brother’s death, he is brought to court and his execution is planned. However, the question to be answered is: Are Day and June enemies or two young people who have been pitted against each other? Only reading through to the end of the novel will give you a real answer.

READ-ALIKES:

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games* Trilogy. Scholastic Press
Lu, Marie. *Prodigy*. Putnam Juvenile, 2013.
Lu, Marie. *Champion*. Putnam Juvenile, 2013.
Mulligan, Andy. *Trash*. Oxford Press, 2010.
Roth, Veronica. *The Divergent Series*. Katherine Tegen Books

RELATED WEB SITES:

Marie Lu: <http://marielubooks.tumblr.com>

One Theme, One School:

<http://whs.d214.org/assets/4/Documents/Legend%20study.pdf>

Penguin Press Discussion Guide:

http://www.penguin.com/static/images/yr/pdf/Legend_DiscussionGuide.pdf

REVIEWS:

Booklist 108(October 15, 2011): 58

Publishers Weekly 248(October 10, 2011)

School Library Journal 57(October 1, 2011): 140

Nielsen, Jennifer A. *The False Prince*. Scholastic, 2012.

SUMMARY:

A runaway prince living in an orphanage, could it be true? A nobleman, Conner, attempts to save his beloved country through education of four orphans he selects to be trained and hopefully be selected to be the King of Carthya and wear the royal crown. No one realizes that Sage, one of the orphans, could be the key to saving the kingdom of Carthya from certain Civil War. Devious plans are concocted by Conner and implemented by his vigils at the expense of the orphans.

QUESTIONS:

What is the significance of the title of this novel?
How does Conner come to know the orphan Sage?
How does Mrs. Turbeldy use Sage for her own thievery?
Describe the orphans that are attempting to gain the right to be Prince Jaron.
How are Mott and Cregan, the vigils, employed by Conner?
Considering the theme of TRUTH, what are truths that cause Conner to act as he does?
Sage? Lattamer? Tobias? Imogene?
When Mott learns the truth about Sage, does that effect the decisions he chooses to make?
In your opinion, was Mott a person that Sage should trust as he continues his quest?
Do you believe that Imogene was a strong female character? Would you have changed her character traits in any way?
What is deceit, by definition? Which characters are the most deceitful and why?

JOURNAL STARTER:

Sage is a likeable character because.....

ACTIVITIES:

Design a costume for one of the characters in the book.
Design the sword that you think was used by Prince Jaron according to the descriptions from the novel.
Write a new ending to the book.
Make a cartoon with 8-16 panels of one of the scenes from the novel.
Create a simple newspaper-type-of-writing that represented the Middle Ages and might have been posted on a village Kiosk.
Pretend that you are a television celebrity host and you are interviewing characters from the novel. Write 10 questions that you would ask the characters.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-8.

BOOK TRAILER:

The False Prince: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wh6wEmn0FP8>

BOOK TALK:

Sage is plucked out of Mrs. Turbeldy's orphanage to serve the nobleman Conner and three other boys are taken with him. Does Conner want them as servants? That was the initial thought until it was revealed that Conner has a more devious plan. These boys are to be educated and trained and eventually, one will be picked to be presented as the lost (and presumed dead) Prince Jaron. Follow the boys through the adventure and try to determine who is destined to fill that role!

READ-ALIKES:

Nielsen, Jennifer. *The Runaway King*. Scholastic, 2013.
Nielsen, Jennifer. *The Shadow Throne*. Scholastic, 2014.
Langrish, Katherine. *The Shadow Hunt*. Harper, 2010.
Turner, Megan Whalen. *The Thief*. Greenwillow, 1996.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Jennifer Nielsen: <http://www.jennielsen.com>

Scholastic Teaching Guide: <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/false-prince-storia-teaching-guide>

California Young Reader Medal:

<http://www.californiayoungreadermedal.org/books/the-false-prince>

Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award:

<http://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/cbec/DCFBookReviews%26Questions13-14.pdf>

REVIEWS:

Kirkus Reviews (February 15, 2012)

Publishers Weekly 259(February 13, 2012)

School Library Journal 58(April 1, 2012): 172

Park, Linda Sue. *A Long Walk to Water*. Clarion Books, 2010.

SUMMARY:

A Long Walk to Water is actually two narratives that eventually weave together. The first part of each chapter is the story of Nya, a girl growing up in Southern Sudan in 2008. Nya must walk 8 hours each day to get water for her family during the rainy season. The second part of each chapter tells the story of Salva Dut, one of the Lost Boys of South Sudan. Salva is forced to run away from the civil war that is taking over his country. He spends years traveling and settling in various refugee camps. In the process, he sees his uncle killed, is chased into a crocodile-infested river, and becomes the leader of over 1000 young boys looking for safe refuge. Salva eventually emigrates to the United States and is adopted. He learns that his father is still alive, but seriously ill from drinking dirty water. Salva returns to Africa to find him and makes it his mission to bring clean water to the people of southern Sudan, one of whom is Nya.

QUESTIONS:

How does Nya transport the water to and from her home?
Who were the people who made a difference in Salva's life? Who was the biggest influence?
Why does Nya's sister become ill?
How do you think Slava was able to survive?

JOURNAL STARTER:

I believe the most serious issue facing us is _____, because _____.

ACTIVITIES:

Create a timeline for this story. Make a list of all the challenges Salva faced.
Create a web-quest for the story. Students can independently learn more about: South Sudan, Dinka Tribe, Nuer Tribe, the Lost Boys, lions, crocodiles
Visit [this website](#) from Brandeis University) and invite students to describe a painting.
Track your daily use of water.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-8

BOOK TRAILER:

Houghton-Mifflin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkxkisRUmMM>

BOOKTALK:

Life can be more difficult than we ever could imagine. In the Sudan, Nya must walk eight hours every day to obtain water for her family---think of the water we use so effortlessly and how much each of us wastes! Salva Dot experiences more loss and cruelty than we can comprehend---think of how much we have and the homes and families we too often take for granted!

Can anything good come of this? After years of wandering and suffering as a Lost Boy of the Sudan, Salva Dot finds a way to begin bringing some solutions. It is, indeed, *A Long Walk to Water*.

READ-ALIKES:

Applegate, Katherine. *Home of the Brave*. Feiwel & Friends, 2007.

Perkins, Mitali. *Bamboo People*. Charlesbridge, 2010.

Senzai, N.H. *Shooting Kabul*. Balzer + Brey, 2011.

Sheth, Kasmira. *Boys Without Names*. Simon & Schuster, 2010.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Linda Sue Park: <http://www.lindasuepark.com>

University of Queensland:

<http://www.uqp.uq.edu.au/skins/uqp/uploads/TeachersNotes/A%20Long%20Walk%20to%20Water.pdf>

Rocky Mountain Readers: <http://rgvnetwork.com/nie/teachersguide.pdf>

<http://www.waterforsouthsudan.org>

Mackin Resources:

http://www.mackin.com/cms/uploads/eMackin/eMackin_LindaSueParkResources.pdf

From Sudan to the United States:

<http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/movies/from-sudan-ggtu>

Sudan: The Lost Boy:

http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/news/sudan_thelostboy

The Giraffe Heroes Project:

http://www.giraffe.org/option.com_sobi2/sobi2Task,sobi2Details/sobi2Id,436/Itemid,91/

H2O for Life: <http://www.h2oforliveschools.org>

REVIEWS:

Booklist: 107(September 1, 2010): 97

Publishers Weekly: 257(October 18, 2010)

School Library Journal: 56(November 1, 2010): 123

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw. *Dogs on Duty: Soldiers' Best Friends on the Battlefield and Beyond*. Walker & Company, 2012.

SUMMARY:

This non-fiction piece details the role that dogs have played in U.S. Military History, starting with World War I. Also extensively outlined is the training process for the dogs and their handlers.

QUESTIONS:

What about dogs makes them useful for military service?
When were dogs first officially recognized by the United States Military?
What was the problem that arose for military dogs and their handlers at the end of the Vietnam War?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

These dogs are heroes because....

ACTIVITIES:

Do a small fundraiser for Soldier's Best Friend or a similar organization.
Find someone to speak to your organization about military dogs. Another speaker could also address the topic of service dogs.
Research the breeds of dogs that particularly lend themselves to military service.
Arrange for a demonstration by a dog trainer.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 4-5

BOOK TRAILER:

Dogs on Duty: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjRPaG-ojos>

BOOKTALK:

We all know that dogs are “man’s best friend.” But, did you know that dogs can be a trusty ally for a member of the military? They train hard, they’re loved and cared for and they truly are a member of the team. Dogs like Nemo, who after participating in an

attack during the Vietnam War, laid on her severely injured handler until help arrived. Pick up *Dogs on Duty* and read about how these dogs are chosen, trained and cared for as they become real military heroes.

READ-ALIKES:

Barrow, Randi. *Saving Zasha*. Scholastic, 2011.
Barrow, Randi, *Finding Zasha*. Scholastic, 2013.
Kadahota, Cynthia. *Cracker: The Best Dog in Vietnam*. Atheneum, 2007.
Keenan, Sheila. *Dogs of War*. Graphix, 2013.
Larson, Kirby. *Duke*. Scholastic, 2013.
Morpurgo, Michael. *War Horse*. Scholastic, 2007.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Dorothy Hinshaw Patent: <http://www.dorothyhinshawpatent.com>

North Carolina Children's Book Award:

<http://www.cmlibrary.org/bookhive/nccba/NCCBABooklet2014.pdf>

Soldier's Best Friend: <http://soldiersbestfriend.org/?gclid=CPGsj-qC0MACFQqQaQodDEcAPQ>

United States War Dog Association: <http://www.uswardogs.org>

The Dogs of War: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2014/06/war-dogs/paterniti-text>

REVIEWS:

Kirkus Reviews (July, 2012)

Publishers Weekly (August 6, 2012)

School Library Journal (September, 2012)

Potter, Ellen. *Slob*. Penguin, 2009.

SUMMARY:

Owen Birnbaum is twelve years old and the fattest kid in school. He's also a genius. A genius who is bullied not only by other students, but also by a teacher. A genius who's Oreos are stolen from his lunch every single day.

Owen and his sister Caitlin live with Zelda, who adopted them after their parents were shot in the deli they ran. Owen and Caitlin were in the deli basement when it happened and it was Owen who made the call to 911. Owen has spent the two years since the death of his parents eating and Caitlin is now a GWAB (Girls Who Are Boys) and calls herself Jeremy.

Owen has two goals. The first is to discover who is stealing his Oreos. The second is to find the person who killed his parents. To find, the killer, Owen has built a satellite device that he hopes will go back in time and show him footage from the store.

QUESTIONS:

What role does bullying play in this story?

What does Owen learn from Nima's Buddhist tradition?

What is the GWAB and why is it attractive to Caitlin?

What are Owen's plans for Nemesis?

Owen thinks he's a coward---is that accurate?

Why do you think Nima prays for the person who killed Owen's parents?

Why was Owen binging on food?

Is Mason Ragg anything like The Fonz?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

I would like to invent a/an _____ because _____.

ACTIVITIES:

Discuss some strategies to combat bullying.

Make drawings of some of Owen's inventions.

Gather some junk around the house or classroom and create an invention.

Invite a nutritionist to speak to your group about weight issues for children and teens.

Arrange for someone to make momos for your group.

Treat the group to an Oreo tasting.

Watch a few of the Retro TV shows mentioned in the book

Find some pictures of Arthur Fonzarelli---The Fonz!

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-8

BOOK TRAILER:

Monique German: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZgO5T3IU9Y>

BOOKTALK:

Owen Birnbaum is a twelve year old who is hurting. Two years ago, his parents were killed in a store shooting while he and his sister were in the basement. Now he's the fattest kid in the school who is consistently bullied. But, Owen is a genius and he plans to find his parents' killers. How? By building a satellite that will go back in time and identify the killers on store cameras. But his sister poses the question---if he finds the killers, what difference will that make? Find out by reading SLOB.
One more thing---who is stealing Owen's Oreos?

READ-ALIKES:

Holt, Kimberly Willis. *When Zachary Beaver Came to Town*. Henry Holt, 1999.
Koja, Kathe. *Buddha Boy*. Frances Foster Books, 2003.
Naidoo, Beverly. *The Other Side of Truth*. HarperCollins, 2001.
Stead, Rebecca. *Liar & Spy*. Wendy Lamb, 2012.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Ellen Potter: <http://www.ellenpotter.com>

Scholastic Reading Group Guide:

http://teacher.scholastic.com/clubs/pdfs/guides/reading_guide_1111_slob.pdf

Young Hoosier Book Award: <http://www.ilfonline.org/?1213middlegrdresourc>

REVIEWS:

Kirkus: (April 15, 2009)

School Library Journal: 55(July 1, 2009): 90

Rocklin, Joanne. *The Five Lives of Our Cat Zook*. Harry N. Abrams, 2012.

SUMMARY: Oona and Freddy's pet is a cat named Zook. Zook has held them together in the two years since the death of their father and now Zook is sick. Well trained by their father in Whopper-Telling and Rebus Creating, Oona uses some creative strategies that help her cope with the developments of her life. However, some of her tactics get her into hot water, whether it is dancing for money on the street in order to raise money for pet charities or attempting to kidnap Zook from the veterinarian's office. It is her mother's friend Dylan (The Villain) who comes to the rescue and enables some good days for Zook and his extended family. At the end, it is a celebration of many lives and an optimistic look forward.

QUESTIONS:

What were Oona's four jobs?

Do cats have nine lives? Can you think of some examples from your own experience?

How has "life gotten in the way" in your own life?

What is a "multi-cultie"? Is there a benefit to being one?

Why does Oona refer to Dylan as "The Villain?"

Why did Oona tell the nurse at the veterinary clinic a whopper?

What was Dylan able to do for Zook?

How were arguments settled in Oona's family?

Was Zook "Meant.To.Be" a part of Oona's family?

What were Oona's three discoveries about True Love?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

Let me tell you a whopper.....

ACTIVITIES:

Invite someone from a veterinary practice to speak to your group about care for seriously ill animals.

Create a sandwich board to advertise an event at your school or in your community.

Create several examples of rebuses.

Try making taffy or at the very least, sample it. Test the seven second meltdown theory.

Discuss Oona's Wishing Theory.

Compare dogs and cats as pets.

There are great stories about the five lives of Zook. Write and tell one of your own.

Draw and illustrate a timeline of Zook's life.

Discuss the theory of storytelling developed by Oona and the Great Rebus-Maker Whopper Teller.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 4-6

BOOKTALK:

Pets are pretty special family members. The first people to agree with that statement would be Oona, her brother Freddy and their mom. Their cat Zook (named after the family's favorite friend zucchini) has been the glue holding them together since the death of their father. But Zook is sick. Oona helps Freddy by telling him the story of Zook's lives, but Oona struggles to cope---she's had enough change. Maybe a few whoppers would help? Maybe busting Zook out of the veterinarian's office would help? Through plenty of adventures, Oona is able to piece the puzzle of Zook's life together into a very happy ending that celebrates the lives of many!

READ-ALIKES:

Creech, Sharon. *Hate That Cat*. HarperCollins, 2008.

Creech, Sharon. *Love That Dog*. HarperCollins, 2001.

Schwartz, Alvin. *Whoppers: Tall Tales and Other Lies*, Lippincott, 1975.

Viorst, Judith. *The Tenth Good Thing about Barney*. Atheneum, 1987.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Joann Rocklin: <http://www.joannerocklin.com/index.htm>

Teaching Guide: http://www.abramsbooks.com/academic/images/Zook_Guide.pdf

Activity Kit: http://www.joannerocklin.com/files/Zook_activity_kit.pdf.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award:

<http://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/cbec/DCFBookReviews%26Questions13-14.pdf>

Cat Care: <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/cat-care>

REVIEWS:

Booklist: 108(March 15, 2012): 56

Kirkus Reviews, March 15, 2012

School Library Journal: 58(April 1, 2012): 174

Sheinken, Steve. *Bomb: The Race to Build---and Steal---The World's Most Dangerous Weapon*. Flash Point, 2012.

SUMMARY:

The race began in Germany in 1938 and was dramatically revealed at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The race continues even to this day. With photos and primary source materials, Sheinken tells the international story of those throughout the world who worked on the science of the construction of the bomb and the politics and intrigue of disseminating the information available.

QUESTIONS:

How did Robert Oppenheimer's boyhood and young adult experiences impact his later life?

What arguments could be used to defend the double life of Harry Gold?

Was the United States right to hide atomic secrets from the Soviet Union?

What contrasts did the author use in telling the story of the bombing of Hiroshima?

What were the components of the three way race to build the bomb?

JOURNAL STARTER:

For me, living in a world that has weapons capable of extreme destruction, means that....

ACTIVITIES:

Do some research on the current status of the global arms race.

Encourage several groups to make up codes, then switch and practice decoding.

Describe life for the people who lived at Los Alamos.

Invite a physicist or other scientist to talk with your group about atomic science.

Find information on the Enola Gay.

Of what value is the end matter of this book?

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 6-8

BOOK TRAILERS:

Barnard School: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5_NsuinMPM

Mermerlibrarian: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HliTb55PdIA>

Pick of the Week: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EeUJqVV2qH0>

BOOKTALK:

“I understand that Germany has actually stopped the sale of uranium from the Czechoslovakian mines which she has taken over. That she should have taken such early action might perhaps be understood on the ground that the son of the German Under Secretary of State, von Weizsacker, is attached to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin where some of the American work on uranium is being repeated.” This quiet observation, penned by Albert Einstein to President Franklin Roosevelt on the second of August in the year 1939, is widely seen as the cornerstone of the most crucial governmental project in American history. It was the race to devise and build the atomic bomb, a race that the free world could not afford to lose. *Bomb* by Steve Sheinken is the fascinating tale of how the greatest scientific minds of the 20th Century collaborated against a background of high stakes political intrigue to change the world forever.

READ-ALIKES

Aronson, Marc: *Master of Deceit: J. Edgar Hoover and America in the Age of Lies*. Candlewick, 2012
Cushman, Karen. *The Loud Silence of Francine Green*. Clarion, 2006.
Goldsmith, Connie. *Bombs Over Bikini*. 21st Century, 2014.
Klages, Ellen. *The Green Glass Sea*. Viking, 2006.
Levine, Ellen, *Catch a Tiger by the Toe*. Viking, 2005

RELATED WEB SITES

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

Teacher’s Guide: http://stevesheinkin.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/BombTeachersGuide_6.14.pdf

History of the Atomic Bomb:

http://inventors.about.com/od/astartinventions/a/atomic_bomb.htm

Paul Tibbets and the Enola Gay: http://acepilots.com/usaaf_tibbets.html

REVIEWS:

Publishers Weekly (August 13, 2012)
School Library Journal (October, 2012)
VOYA (October, 2012)

Vanderpool, Clare. *Navigating Early*. Delacorte, 2013.

SUMMARY:

Thirteen year old Jack moves to Maine and starts at a military school when his mother dies and his military father wants him to move closer. He becomes friends with a savant who knows a lot of math and other subjects. Together they journey the river in one of the school's crew boats, meeting many characters along the way. Jack matures and begins to understand his own life as he and Early navigate the wilderness. The story is set after WWII, so there are many references to history, the concept of Pi, and family relationships.

QUESTIONS:

Jack's life changed drastically after his mother's death and his move from Kansas to the East Coast. How do you think he changed and matured over the course of the story?

Have you ever been in a new place? A place that is much different from what you were used to? How did you adjust? What did you learn?

Jack and Early were old enough and had enough knowledge to survive their trip without adults. Do you think you could manage without an adult? What skills and knowledge do you have that would help you navigate?

Which character do you mostly connect to? Why?

Vanderpool weaves together many stories in this novel. How does she weave in the history while telling the stories of these two boys?

Where do you see numbers in your life?

Early Auden is a unique person. How might you include Early in your activities if he were a classmate of yours?

JOURNAL STARTERS:

The journey that stands out in my memory is.....

ACTIVITIES:

When people lose a loved one they often "talk" to the deceased. Find three places in the story where Jack might write to his mother and write her a letter from Jack's perspective. Trace the history of WWII as it pertained to this story.

Create a map of Early and Jack's adventures.

Participate in an inquiry project on pi.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 6-8

BOOKTALK:

If you are interested in exploring with two boys as they go on a trip to grizzly country, meet a variety of characters who are all connected to one another, solve problems, and learn how to cope with losses in their lives, read *Navigating Early*. If you are fascinated by numbers, join Early Auden as he tells the story of pi. His story goes beyond the never ending number sequence to show how pi is more than a number, and he even questions that it is never ending.

READ-ALIKES:

Cross, Gillian. *The Odyssey*. Candlewick, 2012.
Henkes, Kevin. *Bird-Lake Moon*. Greenwillow, 2008.
Mikaelsen, Ben. *Touching Spirit Bear*. HarperCollins, 2001.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Clare Vanderpool: <http://www.clarevanderpool.com>

Random House Educators Guide: https://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/NavigatingEarly_EG_WEB.pdf

Indiana Library Federation: <https://ilfonline.site-ym.com/?201415middlegrades>

REVIEWS:

Booklist 109(December 15, 2012): 43
Publishers Weekly 249(November 19, 2012)
School Library Journal 59(March 1, 2013): 176