

## Annotated Bibliography

**\*Allsburg, C. V. (1985). *The Polar Express*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. (Caldecott Medal for Illustrations, 1986)**

“The Polar Express,” written and illustrated by Chris Van Allsburg, is a modern fantasy book about a young boy who wishes to listen to the sound of Santa’s sleigh bell after being told by his friend that it does not exist. The night of Christmas Eve is when all the magic happens. As the boy is sleeping, he hears a train's engine and looks out the window to see that it is right in front of his house. When he goes outside, the conductor invites him to board the Polar Express. When the boy boards the train, he sees other children that are also on board and headed to the North Pole while they are all being served some hot cocoa. They all travel past forests, towns, mountains and encounter wild creatures along the way. When they arrive at the magical city at the North Pole named Great Polar Ice Cap, they are told that Santa and his elves have united in gifting someone the first Christmas gift. The boy finds out he has been chosen, and out of everything that he could have asked for, he chose a silver bell from Santa’s sleigh. The boy is so happy, and he puts it inside the pocket of his bathrobe as the clock strikes midnight, and they all watch Santa take off with his reindeer. Finally, they all return to the train, but then the boy realizes that his pocket had a hole and that his bell must have slipped out. He was so heartbroken as he went back inside his home. On Christmas morning, the boy's little sister finds a small box with his name on it under the Christmas tree. He opens it and finds his silver sleigh bell! They both hear the beautiful sound, but his parents cannot. After that, the boy grew up and was still able to listen to the sound of the bell even as an adult.

This novel gracefully captures the wonder and magic of childhood. It is filled with vibrant color pastel illustrations that produce realistic-looking scenes and characters. The artwork is the center of attention on every page covering the entire space, and only a small area to the side is left with the writing. This story definitely allows children to submerge their minds into the story and join in on the journey. It is an excellent book to read-aloud to children in kindergarten through the third grade. “The Polar Express” does an excellent job in blending the real world with dreams and magic. This teaches kids to have an open mind and to always stick with what they believe in. Another activity idea is for the teacher to encourage their students to think about and discuss the ways in which Allsburg uses the five senses to describe the boy's journey. For example, the sound of the train's engine or the bells, the taste and smell of hot cocoa, the view of reindeers prancing, and the movement of the train going up and down through the mountains.

**\*Bemelmans, L. (1939). *Madeline*. New York, NY: The Viking Press. (Caldecott Honor Book, 1940)**

“Madeline” is a realistic fiction book written and illustrated by Ludwig Bemelmans, winning a Caldecott Medal in 1940. This book tells the story of a young schoolgirl named Madeline who attends a Catholic Boarding School in Paris and the youngest out of all twelve girls. She is the most courageous and adventurous out of all the children, for example, when she draws attention to "the tiger in the zoo" and causing Miss Clavel a headache as she goes around

the city spreading her intelligence. Then one day, Miss Clavel wakes up sensing something is wrong and contacts Doctor Cohn. Madeline is taken to the hospital for a ruptured appendix, and after a few hours from surgery, she wakes up with her classmates and Miss Clavel, who brought her a dollhouse from her dad, hoping it will make her feel better. All the other girls were jealous of Madeline's attention and gifts that some even wished their appendices were removed as well. However, Miss Clavel teaches everyone the lesson to be grateful that they are all healthy. The illustrations are the main focus on every page, while the dialogue is in small font and to the sides and corners. They are colorful illustrations that help the reader visualize the world Madeline lives in. We see Paris, the zoo, the two straight lines the girls all follow, and the bed when Madeline wakes up in the hospital.

This is also a great story where children can practice articulating and rhyming as it contains a lot of rhyming words. "Madeline" would be a great book for a read-aloud activity, and also for students between kindergarten and second grade to read with a partner and discuss. Jealousy is very common at a young age, especially because every student wants to feel special and get attention from people they love. This is a great topic to discuss with students and encouraging them to explore their individuality.

**Freeman, D., & Davis, V. (1968). *Corduroy*. Viking Press.**

"Corduroy" is a modern fantasy book written and illustrated by Don Freeman. This is a heartwarming story about a small teddy bear named Corduroy who is waiting for someone to be his friend. His dream is for someone to choose him and take him home. One day a girl named Lisa passes by the store where Corduroy is and tells her mom she wants to get him, but her mom points out his missing button and refuses to buy him. Then, that night when the shopping mall closes, Corduroy begins his journey inside the mall, trying to find a button for himself. He goes up the escalator, which in his imagination was a mountain, and enters this big store he calls a palace. He gets up on a mattress, trying to pull a button but falls, knocking down a lamp. Later, the watchman goes to find out what caused the noise and, to his surprise, finds Corduroy. He then picks him up and takes him back to the store in the toy section. The next day, Lisa returns to the shop and introduces herself to Corduroy. She came prepared with the money from her piggy bank and took Corduroy home and sewed a new button to his overalls.

Lisa mentions that he is special just the way he is, but with this new button, he would be more comfortable. It was that moment when Corduroy knew he was home and had a friend. "Corduroy" is a great book to do a read-aloud for students in the first through second grade and can be independently read by those in the third through fourth grade. Another essential thing to note is that Corduroy was published at the end of the civil rights movement and was one of the first most popular children's books to have an African American as its protagonist. Teachers can engage in a discussion circle with their students on the topic of race and the civil rights movement. Students can do a critical thinking activity where they think about other books where minority characters are involved and compare and contrast with Corduroy. The theme of accepting oneself the way you are and transcending race in this story is a valuable thing to teach kids at a young age. The colorful illustrations also help catch the reader's eye and help them envision the world through Corduroy's perspective.

**Hopkins, H. J., & McElmurry, J. (2014). *The tree lady: the true story of how one tree-loving woman changed a city forever*. CNIB.**

“The Tree Lady: The True Story of How One Tree-Loving Woman Changed a City Forever” is a non-fiction biography written by H. Joseph Hopkins and illustrated by Jill McElmurry, of a woman named Katherine Olivia, whose love for plants and trees transformed the dry desert of San Diego city into a city known for beautiful parks and gardens filled with trees. This story starts with Kate as a young girl who grew up in the woods of Northern California in the 1800s. As she grew up, her love of science and nature grew as she would always get her hands dirty and make necklaces from flowers. She was a great student that loved learning about the environment and especially trees. She then went away from home to attend college at the University of California and was the first woman at the University to graduate with a degree in science. Kate then had to move to San Diego, known as the desert city, after being hired as a teacher. She never envisioned ending up in a desert with no trees in sight, after all her life being surrounded by trees and plants. This is where her journey in planting trees around her school began. After some time and Kate’s love and passion for the woods and nature caused her to leave teaching and become a gardener. She researched which trees fit perfectly in hot environments, went out of her way to hunt for trees, sent letters to gardeners all over the world, and bought many different seeds to plant. Eventually, everyone saw the amazing work Kate had done around schools, and the city leaders announced there would be a fair taking place at the city park, which is now the famous Balboa Park. When this news went out, Kate felt like the park needed more plants and trees that she would need an entire movement formed where many people could plant thousands of plants around the city. She had many people volunteering their time, and all together, they helped transform this desert into a stunning green garden. Until this day, she is known as Balboa Park’s mother, and her memory lives on through the city. The book’s beautiful and colorful illustrations match the writing and help the readers see what San Diego used to be and what it became.

The powerful message about following your dream and doing what you love is a great lesson for young children to learn at a young age. “The Tree Lady” is an ideal book for students in first through fifth grade. Teachers can either choose to read-aloud or have the students read independently and then have a class discussion. This would be a perfect book to discuss during Earth Day or in any lesson that teaches students how to take care of mother nature. It is vital that students learn the importance of trees and why they are needed in this world. The repetition of the phrase “But Kate did” in the story highlights that sometimes there are people who cannot do something or try to stop you from doing something, but when you are meant to do something, you can do it.

**Lobel, A. (1970). *Frog and toad are friends*. Harper and Row. (Caldecott Honor, 1970)**

“Frog and Toad are Friends” is a realistic-fiction Caldecott Honor book written and illustrated by Arnold Lobel. First, Frog goes to Toad’s house to wake him up from his deep sleep at the beginning of the novel. Toad struggles to get up, but Frog persuades him by saying that

spring had arrived and it was time to go exploring. Then, Frog and Toad go for a trip, and Toad ends up losing his coat. Both of them spend the whole day looking for the button, but Toad soon discovers it has fallen off at his home. The following chapter describes Frog and Toad going swimming on a hot summer day. Toad is self-conscious about his swimsuit, so he begs Frog not to stare at him as he reaches the river. Frog and Toad are enjoying a wonderful time in the water, so when it's time to go, Toad asks Frog and the other animals not to stare at him. When Toad appears, none of the animal's consent and they all laugh at him. Toad then becomes upset, so he returns home. The Frog's letter to Toad is the focus of the final chapter. Toad said he never received mail, so he sent him a note. Frog mentions that Toad is a great friend inside the message, and he expresses gratitude towards him.

Overall, this novel is perfect for those in grades first through fifth. The visual drawings are very detailed, making it easier for the young students to use their imaginations and follow along with the dialogue. Some in class activities can be students getting in pairs to discuss the activities Frog and Toad do and compare it to what they do with their friends and family.

**\*McCloskey, R. (1933). *Make way for ducklings*. Viking Penguin. (Caldecott Medal, 1942)**

“Make Way for Ducklings” is a realistic fiction book written and illustrated by Robert McCloskey, which includes ducks' personification. This picture book won a Caldecott Medal and is excellent for students between kindergarten and first grade. The story begins with two ducks, Mr. and Mrs. Mallard, flying all over different locations to find the perfect spot to start a family. Every time Mr. Mallard finds a location, Mrs. Mallard finds something wrong with it. Then they arrive at a Public Garden Lagoon and spend the night there after a long search. The next day Mrs. Mallard almost gets run over by a cyclist, and they head out to continue their search over Boston, but then they finally decide to remain on an island at the Charles River. They encounter a police officer that feeds them peanuts every day, and shortly her eight eggs hatch and give them rhyming names! Mr. Mallard then leaves to fly over the river to explore the rest; both parents agree to meet back in one week at the Public Garden. The illustrations show in great detail the ducks' perspective of the world that surrounds them and highlights how dangerous certain areas can be.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Mallard teaches her ducklings how to be good ducks and has them follow her in a straight line to visit the police officer. Little did they know that they would have so much trouble crossing the highway, but the police officer helps them by stopping the traffic and letting them cross. In the end, the ducklings Michael, the police officer, then call for backup to help him stop traffic and is always present to help whenever the ducklings need help crossing the road. Finally, they decide to remain there and have it be their new home. This is a great book, although some things can be raised for discussion. For example, in the story, there are five white men who assist the ducklings. The idea that only men have work and women stay home and with the children can be a possible issue for those students that experience a different lifestyle. For that exact reason, this book would be great for an interactive read-aloud where the teacher can clarify the roles of men and women and make sure to let them know that it's not only men who have jobs, but women too.

**Potter, B., & McPhail, D. (1902). *The tale of Peter Rabbit*. Frederick Warne & Co.**

“The Tale of Peter Rabbit” is a great traditional folktale book written and illustrated by Beatrix Potter. This is the tale of a rabbit's adventures after escaping home and coming back to his mother. Before Peter Rabbit heads off on this wild adventure, his mom warns him and his three sisters to stay home and not go into Mr. McGregor's garden because that is where their father was killed with a tragic end. However, Peter disobeys his mom's orders and makes his way to Mr. McGregor's garden, where he eats so much of his vegetables and gets sick. As he's trying to look for parsley to help with his stomachache, Mr. McGregor spots him. While being chased, he loses his clothes, and Mr. McGregor takes them for a scarecrow he made. Luckily, Peter manages to escape and returns home very exhausted and sick to his stomach. Mrs. Rabbit then makes him some hot chamomile tea while his sisters make supper.

This book is filled with bright illustrations demonstrating the action in accordance with the dialogue. It is excellent for those in grades kindergarten through the second grade. It is a great book to engage students in an interactive read-aloud and ask them questions throughout Peter Rabbits' adventure. The moral of the story is to obey your elders, and in this case, your parents. It can also be a great book to read independently and self-reflect on times where someone has disobeyed and dealt with consequences.

**\* Brown, P. (2010). *Children Make Terrible Pets*. New York, NY: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. (E.B. White Read-Aloud Award Winner, 2011).**

Children always want pets in their household, but don't want to be the one to take care of it. But what happens when a bear takes home a little boy as her pet? *Children Make Terrible Pets* is a fiction picture book about a young bear, Lucy, who takes home a boy she found in the woods as her pet. Her mom explains to her that “children make terrible pets,” but Lucy wants to keep him so she promises to take care of him. But she shortly realizes that children really do make terrible pets. This story is perfect for a read aloud for kindergarteners. The children may find it humorous and it also has some fun dialogue included that requires different voices for the characters. The teacher could ask children some guiding questions or ask them to predict what will happen next.

**Carle, E. (1969). *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. New York, NY: World Publishing Company. (Top Ten Best Illustrated Books of the Year, 1969).**

This very popular children's fiction, picture book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, was written and illustrated by Eric Carle and won the New York Times Top Ten Best Illustrated Books of the Year in 1969. It has become very well known around the world, and a staple in young children's classrooms. This book helps children learn many different things, as there is counting, days of the week, and also, part of the butterfly cycle included within the story. A very hungry caterpillar “eats” his way through the book, until he cannot eat anymore. At the end of the book, he turns into a pupa, then into a beautiful caterpillar. This book is perfect for read aloud in small groups for kindergarteners. The teacher would be able to read this book to the children, but they can ask them to help read the book to practice their reading skills and solidify their understanding of

numbers and days of the week. One could also keep this book in their first and second grade classrooms as independent reading. The children will already be familiar with this book, so it may intrigue for them since they already know the story and they could feel more confident when trying to read by themselves.

**Johnson, C. (1955). *Harold and the Purple Crayon*. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers.** In 1955, the modern fantasy, creative children's book, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, was published. This is a story about a young boy named Harold who creates his own little world by drawing with his purple crayon. He draws his path to walk on, the scenery he wants to see, and his own bed and house to sleep in. This book explores the idea of imagination and much can be done with this book in the classroom. Because of the length of this book, it would be good as guided reading for kindergarten or first grade. The vocabulary included in this book is perfect for these grade levels, but it would be good for the students to get a close look at the spelling of the different words they may not be as familiar with. The teacher could also incorporate drawing activities to explore their imagination throughout the book.

**Numeroff, L., Bond, F. (Illustrator). (1985). *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.**

Ever wondered what happens when you give a mouse a cookie? You may never want to after reading this circular tale written by Laura Numeroff. *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* is a classic book many students read in elementary school. It is an easy read for young readers, but it can also be used to help students start to write. Teachers could read this book to the students and explain how if you give a mouse this, he will ask for that, and then he will want this, and so on, and so on. They could have students create their own circular tale about their own lives. This will help give them a very structured template of what they should write, but it also gives them freedom to write about something that they can closely relate to.

**Colandro, L., & Lee, J. D. (2015). *There was an old lady who swallowed a fly!* New York, NY: Cartwheel Books, an imprint of Scholastic.**

"There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a fly!" is a modern fantasy fiction book that makes the readers follow this old lady and ask why she swallowed so many different animals. The reader finds out most of why she swallowed so many animals, but still questioning the fly. At the end, the old lady coughs up everything that she swallowed and makes a bunch of new friends. This book really deals with the cause and effect and answering the question why. This book should be focused on kindergarten-1st grade. Also, the best way to introduce this story would be with an interactive read aloud and asking students why before the teacher turns the page.

**Brennan-Nelson, D., & Wu, D. (Illustrator). (2011). *J is for jack-o-lantern: A Halloween Alphabet*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press.**

“J is for Jack-O’-Lantern: A Halloween Alphabet” is a children’s fiction book written by Denise Brennan-Nelson and uses rhyming and Halloween themes to go through the alphabet. The book starts with a and uses words like autumn, Boo, costume, Donuts on a string, Eyeballs, and so on until the letter z is reached. Also, for each word, some descriptions or stories go along with it; for example, for donuts on a string, there is a description on the side that shows you how to make the game. This book is very engaging and accurately reflects what Halloween is all about. “J is for Jack O’-Lantern” was created for ages seven through eleven and can be used as a reading lesson during the Halloween or autumn season. This book would be best read aloud because students can learn more about rhyming by reading this book and can work together on a reading worksheet to identify key rhyming words. As a bonus art activity, students can draw their best jack-o-lantern and discuss the book's Halloween images.

**Shannon, D. (2004). *A Bad Case of Stripes*. New York: Scholastic.**

“A Bad Case Of Stripes” is a children’s fantasy book written by David Shannon and the book is about a girl named Camilla who gets “a bad case of the stripes” on the first day of school after she admits to not liking lima beans because none of her friends do and she wants to fit in. The doctor clears her to go to school, and when she gets to school, she is teased by the other kids, and what every pattern they called out, her stripes would change to that specific pattern. Many doctors saw her, and with each treatment they gave her, she would change to that particular treatment. For example, she was given pills, and she changed into a pill, and eventually, an older woman came to Camilla and told her the cure was to eat a lima bean, and Camilla ate the lima bean and finally admitted to liking them. This book has the opportunity to teach kids the importance of being yourself and not bully others. This book is appropriate for kids between the ages of 4-8, grades kindergarten through third grade, and can be introduced to kids during the first week of school as a read-aloud and can be used to talk about the differences that make us unique and the importance of respecting their classmates. I would also pair this book with an activity where students create their own case of stripes and decorate it based on their likes.

**Ziefert, H., & Jones, M. (Illustrator). (2014). *Snow Party: A story of the winter solstice*. Maplewood, NJ: Blue Apple Books.**

“Snow Party” is a children’s fantasy picture book by Harriet Ziefert. This book is about the winter's first snowfall, and snowmen, women, and children gather to have a party. At the party, the snow families dance, eat, and sing songs together. The snow families then packed up their belongings, and it was almost as if their get-together never happened. This book is perfect for ages 4-8, which is kindergarten through third grade. “Snow Party” opens the imaginations of readers and is an entertaining read for all students. This book is a good read-aloud book and can be read during the start of the winter or near Christmas. This book could also lead to students talking about their favorite part of the winter season and an art project where they create, draw or paint their own snowman winter party.

**\*Kostecki-Shaw, J.S., & Kostecki-Shaw, J.S. (Illustrator). (2011). *Same, Same But Different*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.**

“Same, Same But Different,” is a realistic fiction children’s book. “Same, Same But Different” depicts a penpal friendship between Elliot (who lives in America) and Kailash (who lives in India). Through their letters and photos, Elliot and Kailash learn about each other's lives. Elliot and Kailash discover that even though their lives might look different, they both have families, friends, and hobbies that make them happy. These penpals soon realize that they are not so different after all! This book would work well for kindergarten through 4th graders. “Same, Same But Different” can lead into several different explorative activities and would be great for small group reading. The children could discover the importance of making connections and celebrating differences by writing penpal letters to one of their classmates. Another activity that could stem from this book would be to show the students a globe and have them point out different countries to see how far each letter between Elliot and Kailash would have to travel. “Same, Same But Different” is a fun and informative book that celebrates similarities and differences.

**Green, J., & Gordon, M. (Illustrator). (2002). *Why Should I Recycle?*. New York: B.E.S. Publishing.**

“Why Should I Recycle?” is an informational fiction story that highlights the importance of recycling and taking care of our planet. The story follows Mr. Jones, a teacher who sets a good example of recycling for his students. Mr. Jones takes his class to a recycling plant in order to show the children the benefits of recycling. This book is a part of the “Why Should I?” children’s book series. This series is explanatory and teaches young readers about significant topics. “Why Should I Recycle?” is constructive for children in 1st-4th grade. The topic of this book could lead to several different group activities, and should be read aloud in a literature circle. “Why Should I Recycle?” will help facilitate meaningful discussions between the teacher and students.

**Beer, S. (2021). *Love makes a family*. Caterpillar Books.**

“Love makes a Family” is a fiction picture book that highlights a diverse range of families spending time together. The families depicted include caretakers, dual heritage, same-sex parents, diversity in race, and nationality. This story deconstructs the societal norm of what a stereotypical family looks like. It is inclusive of all family situations and explains that love is what makes a family. This helps students celebrate each student’s unique family structure. Because the book is minimally worded and is vibrantly illustrated it would be best suited for children from kindergarten through third grade and as a read-aloud. While reading the story the teacher can help engage the students by asking questions like what they notice about the illustrations. After reading the story, the teacher can have the students draw a picture of their own family to then share with the class in pairs or a group.

**Matt De la Peña, & Robinson, C. (2017). *Last stop on Market Street*. Puffin Books. (Winner of the 2016 Newbery Medal, 2016 Caldecott Honor Book, 2016 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book, and many more)**

“Last Stop on Market Street”, a realistic fiction picture book, is written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson. Every Sunday after church CJ and his grandmother ride the



bus across town. CJ, a curious young boy begins to ask about his classmate's privilege and notices that his routine is different from others. His grandmother then responds with an encouraging answer helping CJ to see the beauty in their city and routine. This story highlights the diversity and demonstrates the proper way of embracing and evaluating differences. "Last Stop on Market Street" is appropriate for students in kindergarten to third grade. In the earlier grades, this would be more meaningful as a read-aloud story as there are words younger students may not be able to recognize themselves. Because this book addresses more complicated topics such as appreciating diversity, inequality, and happiness when the teacher is reading aloud, they can pause to ask students to predict what will happen and lead discussions to help students better understand the book.

**Willems, M. (2018). *Don't let the pigeon drive the bus!* Walker Books. (School Library Journal Best Book of the Year, Booklist Best Book of the Year, Child Magazine Best Book of the Year, Caldecott Honor Book, ALA Notable Book)**

"Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus", a comedy fiction picture book by Mo Willems is a story about a bus driver who asks the reader to not let the pigeon drive the bus. While the bus driver takes his break, the pigeon proves to be very persuasive as it gives many reasons, he is qualified. The pigeon wants to drive the bus and continuously asks the reader to allow it to drive. Finally, when the bus driver gets back from his break, he thanks the reader for protecting his bus. The simple text and illustrations make the story best fit for children two to six years old. The story puts the responsibility of the bus onto the reader and has the reader interact directly with the pigeon thus making it perfect as a read-aloud story. To introduce the students to the comprehension strategies of making connections to the text, teachers can guide a discussion on how the students can relate to the pigeon who wants something but can't have it or the bus driver who has responsibilities.

**O'Dell, Scott. (1960). *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc. (John Newbery Medal, 1961)**

*Island of the Blue Dolphins* is a historical fiction novel based on the life of a native Indian girl. Karana and her tribe live a self-sufficient life, until foreigners come to her village. Unfortunately, as the foreigners leave with her village people to travel away East, Karana is left behind. Alone on San Nicolas Island off the coast of California, Karana spends 18 years looking after herself, surrounded by the vast ocean and blue dolphins. Karana learns how to be immensely independent, while waiting each day for another ship to arrive and take her to her people. Based on a true story of a Nicoleño girl, *Island of the Blue Dolphins* is a lesson on independence, selflessness, and learning how to persevere through incredible odds. Since this is a historical fiction novel, its themes and plot line are ideas for fifth grade children. Being based around a native Indian woman, this text is a thoughtful approach to learning about native histories. The first-person approach to the novel makes it simple enough for the students to follow Karana's story, yet the vocabulary is challenging enough to keep them engaged. The historical background of *Island of the Blue Dolphins* also moves past the book as a source of literature, to influence history lessons. By incorporating the book into lessons of native Indian and American culture,

teachers can foster a foundation for each what history was, and how it is interpreted for a modern audience. When introducing this book into the classroom, teachers can begin to read aloud the first chapter of the novel to their students. After discussing the setting and context of the story, the students are then able to freely read on their own, so that they can create their own understanding of the story. Though this novel can be a challenge to some readers, working through the themes and vocabulary of the text makes it valuable in the classroom setting.

**Matsumoto, L., & Furuya, M. (Illustrator). (2000). *The Adventures of Gary & Harry: A Tale of Two Turtles*. Honolulu, HI: B-52 Entertainment LLC.**

*The Adventures of Gary & Harry: A Tale of Two Turtles* is a children's fictional adventure about the joys and struggles of marine life. Two turtles named Gary and Harry love to explore their ocean home, and all the creatures that share their habitat. Gary, who is a green sea turtle, and Harry, who is a hawksbill turtle, spend their days going on adventures to the deep underwater caverns, or searching the remains of old, sunken ships. When they are not traversing through these mysterious sites, Gary and Harry spend time with their ocean friends: Olivia the Octopus, Lori the lobster, and Harold the harlequin shrimp are just a few of the many animals that the two turtles befriend. However, trouble arises when Gary and Harry want to eat lunch. While Gary wants to eat seaweed, Harry would rather eat some jellyfish. When trying to eat some jellyfish that float by, Harry accidentally consumes a plastic bag. Once Gary helps Harry remove the plastic bag, they both decide that seaweed will be a better meal for the day. This book's commentary on how human waste is affecting our oceans, serves as a gateway into teaching environmentalism in the classroom. The picture-book format – with colorful drawings and creative text – makes this book excellent for kindergarten readers. Teachers can incorporate *The Adventures of Gary & Harry* as a marine life lesson, among “traditional” read aloud texts. Once the book is read as a class, teachers can use the animals mentioned in the book to talk about the various components of ocean life, which hedges into the territory of combining literature and science lessons together. The book also contains a glossary in the back pages, describing short, real facts about the ocean animals of the story. Additionally, because the conflict of the story is based around human waste, teachers can use this theme to teach their audience of kindergarten readers the importance of cleaning up after themselves. Learning about Gary and Harry's struggle with ocean trash helps teachers show students that sometimes, humans need to put in more care over their own items for the benefit of other animals. This book is a useful resource to subtly bring up the concept of environmental awareness, while describing the vast and wonderful creatures of the sea.

**White, E., & Williams, G. (Illustrator). (1952). *Charlotte's Web*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.**

*Charlotte's Web*, a John Newbery Medal winner, is a fictional book about friendship. Charlotte, the spider, Fern, the farmer's daughter, and Wilbur, the pig, form an unlikely friendship. The story focuses on how friendship is a powerful tool and can save lives. *Charlotte's Web* is a wonderfully written book that is an essential work in children's literature and a fantastic read

aloud in the classroom. The bonds of friendship are important for every young student to understand. Throughout the book, there are many tier two vocab words that can enhance a student's vocabulary, and the story is enjoyable to young readers. Students in first grade should read *Charlotte's Web* aloud, or students in third grade should read it independently and talk about the story in literature circles. It is preferable as a read aloud because the story of *Charlotte's Web* is a fantastic story that all students will enjoy.

**Yolen, J., & Masse, J. (Illustrator). (2017). *Thunder Underground*. New York, NY: Wordsong.**

*Thunder Underground* is an informational poetry book that takes readers on an adventure to discover the world underground. The mixed-media images follow the journey of a young girl, boy, and several animals as they explore magma and tectonic plates, subways and drain pipes, lost cities and pirate treasures, and everything in between. Featuring a wide range of topics, teachers could introduce the set of twenty-one poems in content areas such as science, architecture, and animal and insect life. *Thunder Underground* not only provides students with knowledge through an engaging storyline and exposes them to poetry, but it also provides a broader sense of self through exploring the underground. The poems could be read in various formats, but a shared partner reading for third through fifth grade would be very engaging: students could pair up with a partner, and each individual could select one poem of interest to share. After, as a reflection activity, students can complete a succinct write-up detailing what they learned about both topics. As a challenge assignment, teachers can encourage students to write their own poem.

**Brallier, J. M., & Parker, R. A (Illustrator). (2018). *Who was Albert Einstein?* New York: Scholastic.**

*Who Was Albert Einstein* is a children's biography written by Jess Brallier and illustrated by Robert Andrew Parker, which chronicles the life and accomplishment of physicist Albert Einstein. The book covers Einstein's personal and professional life and goes over his eventful career's many ups and downs. The story is told in a fun way that keeps students engaged and excited to learn more. The writing style and grammar is simple, and the black and white illustrations help readers follow the information. This is also a great book to introduce students to non-fiction biographies. This book would be great for 3rd-grade students to read individually and then transition into a literature circle to discuss student's favorite information from the book. A teacher could also have students stand up in front of the class and give a brief presentation of what they learned in the reading.

**Berenstain, S., & Berenstain, J. (1981). *The berenstain bears visit the dentist*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.**

"The Berenstain Bears Visit the Dentist", a fictional, animal fantasy picture book from the well-known series "The Berenstain Bears", is the story of how one young cub overcame her fear of

the dentist with the support of her family. When Sister Bear wakes up to discover that she has a loose tooth on the same day that Brother Bear has a dentist appointment, she is nervous that she will have to get her tooth pulled by the dentist if she does not get it out herself in time for the appointment. Mama Bear comforts Sister, assuring her that the dentist is kind and gentle, and they all head over to the dentist's office for Brother's appointment. Through observing Brother's bravery as he gets his cavity filled and through the dentist's efforts to distract Sister by teaching her about all of his dental tools, Sister gains the courage to let the dentist take a look at her loose tooth, and she doesn't even notice when he pulls it out. This relatable, realistic book is inspiring for children who want to overcome a fear, showing them that although a situation might seem scary at first, with support from the ones you love, everything will be okay in the end. "The Berenstain Bears Visit the Dentist" is appropriate for children in grades preschool-second grade, where the book is read aloud to children in grades preschool and kindergarten, but where they read the book independently in first and second Grade. This book is a good read-aloud option in the home and school settings, as it teaches children about overcoming fears and about specific functions of dental tools. As such, this book could be read in a literature circle in which students share times they have overcome a fear or learned something new, it could be used to introduce a new science lesson, or it could be used to allow students to experience literature as a multimodal text by showing students the episode-version of the television show "The Berenstain Bears," encouraging students to look for differences between the two forms.

**Bottner, B., & Emberley, M. (2010). *Miss brooks loves books! (and i don't)*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf. (Bank Street CBC Best Children's Book of the Year, 2011)**

"Miss Brooks Loves Books! (And I Don't)" by Barbara Bottner and illustrated by Michael Emberley is realistic fiction story of how a young girl who is hesitant to read finally finds a book she loves. Convinced she will never love books as much as her librarian, Miss Brooks, young Missy feels discouraged when her class is asked to choose their favorite story to share with everyone for Book Week. After finding something wrong with each book her classmates choose, Missy's mother tells her that she is being as "stubborn as a wart." Finally, something sparks: Missy decides she wants to read a book about warts. Her mother reads her "Shrek," and she is hooked: Missy is finally as excited about a book as Miss Brooks. The enthusiasm that this uplifting and relatable story has for books and reading will show students, especially more reluctant readers, that there is a book out there for everyone, even if it might not seem like it at first. Because getting students excited about reading from a young age is especially important, "Miss Brooks Loves Books! (And I Don't)" is a wonderful book for kindergarteners through second graders. It makes a great read aloud, especially when students can sense their own teacher's enthusiasm for the book as they bring the book to life. This book can also help prepare students for a library visit, specifically encouraging them to keep their eyes out for some of the well-known book titles mentioned in "Miss Brooks Loves Books! (And I Don't)."

**Parr, T. (2001). *It's okay to be different*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.**

“It’s Okay to be Different” by Todd Parr is a realistic fiction book that shows readers that differences are not a bad thing, and that each person should be exactly who they are. Using bright colors and silly yet relatable illustrations, Parr takes the reader through real-life scenarios in which they might encounter difference. Encouraging messages of accepting and embracing each other’s differences are sent to the reader as they read about people who come from different places, have different home-lives, abilities, feelings, and physical features, among others. The bright and colorful friendly faces of each character in the book are warm and inviting and enhance Parr’s empowering push for individuality, self-confidence, and above all, accepting others for who they are. This book would be a perfect for children from preschool through second grade, emphasizing to them from a young age to practice kindness and acceptance toward themselves and others. A read-aloud would work best for preschool and kindergarten-aged children, and independent reading would be more appropriate for first and second graders. Children would greatly benefit from having an adult present to support them, answer or pose questions, or provide explanations for any content in the book the child may be confused about. The content of this book would pair well with a social studies lesson about different cultures, or even with a writing assignment or a project requiring students to research their own realities and backgrounds compared to that of someone else. Because children around these ages are learning to be independent and figure out the world around them, having a read-aloud followed by a whole-class discussion would be an effective way to encourage students to engage with one another and find out what differences and similarities they share.