

A BIG BUNCH of BOOKS Kids BEG to Read (2008)

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Note: This page is intentionally written in fragmented, choppy style. Forgive me!

Young learners are motivated to read when they get EXCITED about the contents of books presented to them. Those listed below are recent publications of high interest to today's students.

SOCIAL STUDIES: During this past election year, Simon and Schuster (S&S) was ready with a book about each of the three major presidential contenders: **Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope** (Nikki Grimes); **My Dad, John McCain** (Meghan McCain); **Hillary Rodham Clinton: Dreams Taking Flight** (Kathleen Krull). More by S&S: **President Pennybaker** (Kate Feiffer)—a part-whimsical, part-serious story about a BOY who ran for president because he didn't want to do his chores, go to school, etc. This story is completely plausible and surprising, and it opens students' eyes to the "real" thing. **Independent Dames** (Laurie Halse Anderson)—an unusual book about the contribution of WOMEN in American history. Interestingly presented with an altered visual format. A MUST for all social studies classes: ****A Taste of Colored Water**** (Matt Faulkner)—a tender children's story about two cousins in the 60s who didn't understand the term "colored." **The Book of Time Outs** (Deb Lucke)—a mostly true history of the world's biggest troublemakers. Kids LOVE it! **Naming Liberty** (Jane Yolen, Penguin)—weaves two stories at once: the story of a young girl who emigrates from Russia to America wondering what new name she will choose for herself when she arrives, and the story of young artist Frederic Auguste Bartholdi dreaming of a monument he wants to build to honor freedom.

LANGUAGE ARTS: [3 Alphabet books from Sleeping Bear Press] **A Isn't for Fox—An Isn't Alphabet** (Wendy Ulmer), **W Is for Woof—A Dog Alphabet** (Ruth Strother), **A Is for Zeus—A Greek Mythology Alphabet** (Helen Wilbur). [Vocabulary] **A Crossing of Zebras—Animal Packs in Poetry** (Marjorie Maddox, Boyds Mills Press). Each page identifies a specific animal and has a poem with a title that includes the "group" word for that animal (such as "A Pounce of Alley Cats"). Great for vocabulary. **Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears** (Emily Gravett, S&S)—a highly creative book for all ages that offers a new phobia on each page, with illustrations that include torn pages, fold-outs, etc. [Creative Writing] **The Best Story** (Eileen Spinelli, Dial)—how one girl struggles to write a story. [Oral Language] Two Storycard Theater packs (from Leaf Moon Arts) to help all ages with speaking skills: **The Cat with No Name—A Russian Folktale**, and **The Moon Princess**.

OTHER SUBJECT AREAS: [Art] **Willow** (Denise Brennan-Nelson, Sleeping Bear Press)—how a little girl transforms the school's art teacher. [Music] **I, Vivaldi** (Janice Shefelman, Eerdmans)—the story of a famous musician. [Ecology/Environment] **The Wolves Are Back** (Jean Craighead George, Dutton)—inspirational story about an endangered species. [Other Cultures] **The Stone Cutter and the Navajo Maiden** (Vee Browne, Salina)—a compelling story about the Navajo culture, written in both languages.

FOR READING TEACHERS/LIBRARIANS/EDUCATORS: **Running Shoes** (Frederick Lipp, Charlesbridge)—a poor Cambodian girl finally gets her wish that changes her life forever. **That Book Woman** (Heather Henson, Atheneum)—a touching story about the "Pack Horse Librarians" who transformed untold numbers of children into lifetime readers—especially Cal, an Appalachian mountain kid. **Lily and the Mixed-Up Letters** (Deborah Hodge, Tundra). **Taming Horrible Harry** (Lili Chartrand, Tundra)—a monster becomes a reader.

SELF-ESTEEM AND STUFF: **Violet the Pilot** (Steve Breen, Dial). **The Sweetest Kiss** (Maranke Rinck, Boyds Mills Press). **The Hinky-Pink** (Megan McDonald, Atheneum). **You Can Do It!** (Tony Dungy, S&S).

THIS YEAR'S FABULOUS FIND: A "must-have" for all: **Martina the Beautiful Cockroach** (Carmen Deedy, Peachtree).

ONE "FAR OUT" TITLE: Yes, this is a "strange" one: **Fartiste** (Kathleen Krull, S&S)—an explosively funny, mostly true story about a man who perfected the "art of the fart" and actually gave live concerts.

ONE FINAL FAVORITE: **Never Take a Shark to the Dentist** (Judi Barrett, Atheneum). Format has one-liner pages (such as "Never go shopping for shoes with a centipede"), each following by a one-page illustration. Students of all ages could "continue" this writing/illustrating.