

Resource Links Excerpts
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Picture Books

DENOMMÉ, Margot
Mommy, Am I Pretty?

Illustrated by Madison and Brooke Denommé-Warren. Self-Published, 2014. Unp. Illus. Gr. K-3. 978-0-9920340-0-9. Hdbk. \$18.95

Rating: E

What is the meaning of the word “pretty” as it applies to the question asked by many little girls? Through the thoughtful dialogue between a mother and her young daughter and the beautiful, brightly coloured illustrations, the answer to this timeless question, “Mommy, Am I Pretty?” is answered in a spiritual sense rather than a physical one. The text is a glorious reminder that good citizenship and social character are paramount to personal beauty. The behavioural examples shared between mother and daughter are easy for young children to understand and are socially appropriate actions for both boys and girls, even though the intended audience is female.

This picture book provides an excellent segue into discussion of positive social interactions and role modelling, as well as providing opportunities to demonstrate empathy, self concept and self confidence. An excellent selection for reading circles and group or full class discussions, as well as independent or guided reading. Reflective writing, drawing and/or story telling activities would provide opportunities for meaningful, personal student engagement.

Thematic Links: Beauty; Behaviour

Sharon Armstrong

Fiction Grades 3-6

PAGE, Gwyneth Jane
The Travel Adventures of PJ Mouse - In Canada

Illustrated by Megan Elizabeth Paige. Self-Published, 2014. 72p. illus. Gr. 1-4. 978-1-4602-3754-0. Pbk. \$13.00

Rating: E

A very well written book about a little mouse stuffed toy named PJ who is lost and alone. A little girl named Emily and her mother find him and bring him to their home. The very next day, the family of 3 girls and one boy along with their parents leave on a holiday to tour all of Canada travelling in a pulled trailer. Emily the youngest of the 4 children becomes PJ’s best friend while the other children are a bit older and can help Emily and PJ understand more of what they are seeing.

They leave Victoria BC and travel north to a glacier, through the Rocky Mountains, the Prairies, Niagara Falls, Quebec City, New Brunswick, PEI, Nova Scotia and finally back to Nova Scotia. There are numerous funny adventures for PJ all written with simple words that enlist the imagination of small children.

This book is an exciting book for children as they can imagine all the trials and tribulations of PJ all the while letting them see and understand some of Canada’s most beautiful sights and sounds. The illustrations are very well done and depict PJ in all his adventures. Very well done.

The teacher can use this as an exploration book to show children the sights and sounds of what Canada has to offer. Children will be able to relate to a family on a vacation and how each family member can relate to one another, how they see things differently from one another and how they can help one another. It can show children how to

appreciate the beauty in all things and to try out things that at first might seem scary or not too interesting.

Thematic Links: Canada - Travel; Canada - Geography

Carmen Poulin

Fiction Grades 7- 12

KUIPERS, Alice

The Death of Us

HarperCollinsCanada, 2014. 220p. Gr. 8-11. 978-1-44342-410-3. Pbk. \$14.99

Rating: E

The Death of Us is an ultimately tragic tale of teenaged love, a triangle of affection, which takes a reckless and deadly turn. Callie expects that her summer is going to be filled with changing her brother's diapers, working to impress the editor of her school newspaper, trying to find a job, and maybe - just maybe - having a little fun, even though most of her friends have left her behind to brave the small-town summer on her own. Then Ivy returns. Ivy is a "blast from the past" and Callie's life becomes infinitely more complicated.

Ivy is beautiful. She targets Kurt, Callie's editor, as her love interest for the summer. She encourages Callie to drink, sneak out of the house, lie to her parents, and no end of other vices. Callie can't seem to say no, though the reader doesn't initially understand her reluctance - much of it has to do with a past that is slowly revealed as the novel progresses.

Kuipers exquisitely crafts how this story is told - sometimes retrospectively and sometimes in the present. This carefully controlled measure balances the elements that intricately connect to bring the novel to its heart-wrenching conclusion. Teens will gravitate towards this novel because Callie, Ivy and Kurt, are characters that are easy to relate to - as is the story of love-gone wrong and confronting ghosts from one's past. ***The Death of Us*** is one of the most engaging books for teens I have read recently.

Thematic Links: Alcoholism; Revenge; Friendship; Romantic Relationships; Questioning one's Sexuality

Angela Thompson

Non-Fiction Grades K-6

CREASEY, Eleanor

On Remembrance Day

Dundurn Press, 2014. 36p. Illus. Gr. 3-6. 978-1-4597-2166-1. Hdbk. \$19.99

Rating: E

Dedicated to her Uncle Private James Gordon Hill, who died in World War I, and her father Gordon MCKenzie Hill, who served in World War II, Eleanor Creasey brings us a beautiful book about why we remember on November 11. Each year in Canada Remembrance Day is highlighted as one of our major holidays and is recognized in all sectors of society especially in schools across the country many of which hold special assemblies to commemorate the holiday. In this book Creasey attempts to provide answers to many of the questions children ask about why we celebrate November 11 each year. In language which elementary children can understand, Creasey talks about why we remember and why November 11 is important. She highlights Flanders Fields, Canada's War Memorials, The National War Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Songs and Recitations, Laying Wreath, Parades and Vigils, the 'Silence', and the wars in which Canada has been involved. There are also pages

devoted to who our veterans are, how we show our pride and Canada's Peace Tower. Beautiful coloured photographs accompany all topics and add greatly to the text.

This would be a wonderful book to share with elementary school children leading up to November 11 to give them an understanding of the importance of remembering the veterans - those who died fighting and those who returned - who sacrificed to make our country the wonderful free place it is to live in today.

Thematic Links: Remembrance Day; World War I; World War II; War

Victoria Pennell

Non-Fiction Grades 7-12

SETTINGINGTON, Ken

Branded by the Pink Triangle

Second Story Press, 2013. 155p. Gr. 7 up. 978-1-926920-96-2. Pbk. \$15.95

Rating: E

With accuracy and alacrity, Ken Settingington details the Nazi persecution of homosexuals. After explaining the freedom enjoyed in Germany by many gay men and lesbian women during the 1920s, ***Branded by the Pink Triangle*** describes the rise of Nazi power - the how, where, and why of it. With photographs and well-researched documentation, we follow the stories of 5 homosexual men who not only survived this persecution but also decided to share their stories.

This book is both an historical documentary and a call to end further persecution. Told at a level accessible to young teens, this is a powerful book. Beyond being useful for research purposes, it serves to begin those sensitive and controversial discussions that are our right and freedom to embrace in a democratic nation as well as our obligation and duty to continue so that we can maintain our reputation as a tolerant nation.

Thematic Links: Human Rights; Homosexuality; World War II Atrocities; Nazi Persecution; Concentration Camps

Christy den Haan-Veltman

Professional Materials

JAMISON ROG, Lori

Struggling Readers - Why Band-Aids Don't Stick and Worksheets Don't Work

Pembroke Publishers. 2014. 159p. 978-1-55138-292-0. Pbk. \$24.99

Rating: E

Struggling Readers is a valuable literacy resource and is organized around the instructional needs of readers. It is about teaching and learning, focusing on the explicit instruction, modeling, and demonstration of the habits of effective readers, and the routines for guided practice and independent application by students that we encounter in our classrooms on a daily basis. It provides a range of teaching ideas and strategies to choose from to support the individual needs of these students. The reading instruction strategies were chosen to be effective with students in Grades 3-9.

Struggling Readers provides a collection of practical and proven teaching ideas for readers who need that extra support to help the reader become a confident, independent and strategic reader. Each lesson is focused around a specific learning goal and includes a 'must do' which is a learning activity for the student to independently practice. There are a range of ideas to choose as you plan your instruction. Activities were designed for small groups but can be adapted for whole class or individual instruction.

Lori Jamison Rog is an experienced educational consultant from Canada and author of a previous book entitled *Guiding Readers: Making the Most of the 18-Minute Guided Reading Lesson*.

This book would be a great addition to an elementary or junior high professional library as an excellent literacy resource for teachers.

Thematic Links: Guided reading; Language Arts; Reading; Writing

Cynthia Smyth

Audio-Visual Materials

Seven the Series: WALTERS, Eric. *Between Heaven and Earth* (978-1-4598-0880-5); MCCLINTOCK, Norah. *Close to the Heel* (978-1-4598-0884-3); BROUWER, Sigmund. *Devil's Pass* (978-1-4598-0885-0); SCRIMGER, Richard. *Ink Me* (978-1-4598-0883-6); STAUNTON, Ted. *Jump Cut* (978-1-4598-0882-9); PEACOCK, Shane. *Last Message* (978-1-4598-0886-7); WILSON, John. *Lost Cause* (978-1-4598-0881-2) Orca Book Publishers, 2014. CDs. Gr. 7-12. \$29.95 ea., \$199.95 set.

A few years ago Eric Walters had an idea for a series of books to be written by seven different authors which would recount the adventures of David McLean's seven grandsons as he sends them on separate quests as part of their inheritance. In his will he outlines what he wants each grandson to do and provides the means (financial and otherwise) for them to carry out his request. Written by Walters and six other renowned Canadian authors, *Seven the Series* is the result of that idea and the books have proved to be very successful and popular among young adolescents. All books have received an excellent or good rating in Resource Links.

Now all these titles are available as audio books. The text of each book is narrated in full by a different narrator making them available to those who may have some difficulty with reading the text or those who just enjoy being able to listen to a book rather than reading it.

I am sure they will be a popular addition to school and public libraries and also to personal collections for those who prefer the audio medium.

Thematic Links: Adventure Stories; Mystery Stories

Victoria Pennell

Seven the Sequels: WILSON, John. *Broken Arrow* (978-1-4598-0849-2); STAUNTON, Ted. *Coda* (978-1-4598-0852-2); PEACOCK, Shane. *Double You* (978-1-4598-0847-8); MCCLINTOCK, Norah. *From the Dead* (978-1-4598-0848-5); WALTERS, Eric. *Sleeper* (978-1-4598-0851-5); SCRIMGER, Richard. *The Wolf and Me* (978-0-4598-0846-1); BROUWER, Sigmund. *Tin Soldier* (978-1-4598-0850-8) Orca Book Publishers, 2014. CDs. Gr. 7-12. \$29.95 ea., \$199.95 set.

After the success of *Seven the Series*, Orca Book Publishers published *Seven the Sequels* a follow-up series written by the same seven authors. In this series five of the seven of David McLean's grandsons are spending the week between Christmas and New Year's at their grandfathers cabin when they discover a World War II pistol, a hidden cache of fake identities and money in the wall of the cabin which raise new questions about their grandfather's past and his true identity. Was their grandfather a spy? What do his cryptic notes mean? This sends all seven grandsons on further adventures which will delight the readers of the first series.

As with the first series all of these books have also received an excellent or good rating in Resource Links.

These titles are also available as audio books, narrated in full by a different narrator making them available to those who may have some difficulty with reading the text or those who just enjoy being able to listen to a book rather than reading it.

This series will also be a popular addition to school and public libraries and to personal collections for those who prefer the audio medium.

Thematic Links: Adventure Stories; Mystery Stories

Victoria Pennell

French Resources

CANCIANI, Katia

L'evolée d'Antoine

Illustrated by Félix Girard. Éditions de l'Isatis, 2014. 28p. Illus. Gr. 3up. 978-2-924309-07-0. Hdbk. \$17.95

Rating: E

L'evolée d'Antoine follows a young boy weakened by illness, but has big dreams he wants to realize. The story begins with Antoine waking up in his hospital bed, excited and nervous because it is a special day. He is waiting for his mother to arrive, and when she arrives with breakfast he is not interested. In the car, Antoine is silent while his mother asks questions and makes comments. He can feel something has changed inside him. Finally they arrive at their destination: the flying club! The weather is perfect and Antoine meets Léon the pilot. Today is the day Antoine will realize his lifelong dream to fly! They climb into the glider plane, Antoine in the front seat and Léon in the back. Antoine listens to the pilot instructions, as he learns how a glider plane works. When they take off, Antoine is nervous. When they have reached a certain height in the sky, Léon instruct Antoine to pull the lever to detach from the guide plane. Antoine must learn to overcome his fear in order to fulfill his lifelong dream. Léon would like Antoine to detach them, but the younger pilot wants to go higher and higher in the sky. When the lead pilot signals to Antoine that they cannot go any higher and reassures him it will be a magnificent flight, Antoine repeats the words in his head, and pulls the lever.

Both a heartwarming and heartbreaking story about a terminally ill young boy realizing his lifelong dream offers young readers a lesson in compassion and empathy, as well as the power of optimism. Eliciting an emotional response from readers of all ages, it is well-written and appropriate for the target age group. The soft yet stark illustrations by Félix Girard that accompany the story help deliver a powerful message, and it has partnered with the *Children's Wish Foundation* to bring awareness to the plight thousands of children face every day. A wonderful resource to have to help children deal with difficult circumstances and initiate discussions. The message and heart to this story in addition to its practical applications make it an ideal addition to an elementary classroom or school library.

Thematic Links: Compassion; Empathy; Optimism; Terminal Illness

Veronique Lavoie