Books as Gifts

Lots of things go away quickly. But stories and books have sticking power and can be shared time and time again. Try a new story, revisit an old favorite. How about a story of fact or perhaps a fantasy? Stories can be read alone, together, aloud or quietly. Pick up a book for yourself and your favorite child this season. And Happy Holidays from Reading Rockets!

Books for children 0-4 years old

**Baby Parade**
by Rebecca O'Connell
Chubby-cheeked toddlers come in colorful carriers with their families to stand, crawl and more in a parade of babies! Sweet, diverse children celebrate the day and its activities in simple words and soft, appealing illustration.

**Diggers Go**
by Steve Light
What sound does an excavator or a forklift make? Each makes its own noise, presented here in bold, dramatic typefaces dynamically shown on sturdy horizontal pages. The sounds and choices of equipment are likely to delight construction aficionados.

**Fox Forgets**
by Suzanne Bloom
Goose asks Fox to tell Bear that she’ll be right back, but Fox forgets. Fox focuses on his games when Bear arrives. The loyal Bear misses his friend until Fox at last recalls the message. Textured illustrations present the warmth of the friends’ reunion and embrace.

**Good Night, Sleep Tight**
by Mem Fox
Skinny Doug is Bonnie and Ben’s favorite babysitter. When he shares a familiar bedtime rhyme, their chant encourages him to share even more ditties until everyone is finally tucked in. Traditional verses appear in the rhythmic, imaginatively illustrated rhyming text.

**I See Kitty**
by Yasmine Surovec
Chloe is charming child in a red and white polka dot dress who sees kittens everywhere, even dreaming about them. When she awakens, her dream becomes reality and she gets her own kitten. Clean lines and simple language present a satisfying, recognizable story.

**I’d Know You Anywhere, My Love**
by Nancy Tillman
No matter the disguise, mothers know their children anywhere! Whether pretending to be a red fox or a bear cub, mothers recognize each specific characteristic of their much loved children. Realistic illustrations of a variety of animals accompany the sweet text.

**Little Mouse**
by Alison Murray
When the young narrator feels quiet and cuddly, she doesn’t mind being her mom’s Little Mouse. Other times, she is as strong as an ox or brave and scary like a lion. A child’s daily changing moods are reflected in the open illustrations and simple text.

**Lots of Lambs**
by Laura Numeroff
Feel the lamb’s wool, then lift the umbrella to find lambs. There are lambs of all types and in many moods doing lots of things. Staccato, rhyming, catchy text is accompanied by expressive images of lively lambs that encourage active engagement with each page.

**Marc Brown’s Playtime Rhymes: A Treasury for Families to Learn and Play Together**
by Marc Brown
Twenty familiar and some lesser-known rhymes are just right for sharing. Actions are shown in small pictograms that accompany each line. One fingerplay appears on each double page with gentle, idealized illustration for a collection perfect for sharing.

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**My Turn to Learn Colors**  
by Natalie Marshall  
A small white rabbit, apparently a gardener, presents its colorful bounty. Tabs with fruits and vegetables, each representing a color, distinguish this sturdy board book. Similarly, a bear introduces numbers from 1 to 5 (and on to 10) in a companion board book entitled *My Turn to Learn Numbers*.

**Night Light**  
by Nicholas Blechman  
On black pages, a die-cut reveals from 1 to 10 lights. With a turn of the page, a vehicle is revealed in full color, highly stylized illustrations. A clue encourages guessing before the big reveal. The final one light is the night light in a child’s room.

**Rock-a-Bye Room**  
by Susan Meyers  
A quiet, country life is evoked as a mother sings a lullaby to her daughter before placing the toddler in a cozy outdoor cradle. There, mother plays the guitar, singing to the sleeping child. Visual allusions to nursery rhymes (and even Elvis Presley) extend the lullaby and its rural setting.

**Time-Out for Sophie**  
by Rosemary Wells  
Exasperated Mama and Daddy put Sophie in time-out when she dumps her dinner and tosses the clean laundry. But when Granny puts herself in time-out during their book-sharing, Sophie straightens up. Text and illustration capture a toddler’s behavior and tenacity as well as her adults’ reactions.

**Tiptoe Joe**  
by Ginger Foglesong  
A big brown bear in red sneakers tiptoes fast to invite his friends to “…come with me/I know something you should see.” Each animal clops, thuds or swishes to see Joe’s surprise: two sleeping cubs with their mother. Told with lively language and humorous illustrations.

**Yoo-Hoo, Lady Bug!**  
by Mem Fox  
A small ladybug loves to hide – and she does it well in each familiar scene. “Yoo-hoo, Ladybug? Where are you?” She’s hiding behind the teddy bear, tucked in a box, and other places in this brightly illustrated, rhyming hide-and-seek book for younger children.

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**Audio books to share with kids of all ages**

**George’s Marvelous Medicine**  
by Roald Dahl, narrated by Richard Grant  
When young George concocts a medicine in an attempt to alter his old grandmother’s nasty disposition, he quickly loses control of the situation for a laugh-out-loud listen. Appropriately narrated in a British accent, this is vintage Dahl (with a hint of sardonic humor)

**Hooray for Anna Hibiscus!**  
by Atinuke, narrated by Mutiyat Ade-Salu  
Anna Hibiscus lives in amazing Africa with her family. Her everyday adventures in a contemporary West African city come alive through the smooth, accented narration.

**True Blue Scouts of Sugarland Swamp**  
by Kathie Appelt, narrated by Lyle  
With verve and a twang, the critters and humans of Sugarland Swamp come alive through lively narration. Raccoon brothers help a human boy save the swamp and solve a mystery with help from a host of eccentric characters, including the enigmatic Swamp Man.

**A Tangle of Knots**  
by Lisa Graff, narrated by Katie Honaker  
Tasty recipes made by a young orphan named Cady with a special Talent are at the center of the mystery that involves old suitcases and an old peanut recipe — with just a touch of magic. The well-paced plot with its memorable characters unfolds through crisp narration. (Tasty recipes included!)
Books for children 4-5 years old

Again!
by Emily Gravett
The small green dragon’s evening ritual includes a bedtime story which he demands AGAIN until the parent finally is tuck- ered out. Red with fury, the small dragon’s final AGAIN burns through the back of the book (a die-cut). Parents and children are sure to recognize the humor and see familiar behavior in this funny tale.

Ah Ha!
by Jeff Mack
The meaning of the frog’s relaxed “AAHH!” changes when almost captured by a boy and his dog. As the frog escapes the boy and various predators the same letters are used with differ- ent meaning until the frog returns to his relaxed “AAHH!” Four letters in different order change meaning to create a rollicking and ultimately satisfying story: “AAHH!”

Bully
by Laura Vaccaro Seeger
A small bull is told to go away by a bigger bull. In turn, the little bull feels bigger when he calls smaller farm animals names (“chicken!” he shouts to chicken). The young bull deflates (literally) when called a bully. The gentle ending satisfies with forgiveness and friendship. Readers will appreciate the humor created by double meanings of the words.

The Cat with Seven Names
by Tony Johnston
He is known by different names by each of the people who feed him, but Regis winds up bringing isolated individuals together to make a real neighborhood. Soft wash illustrations and recognizable characters (including Regis, the well-fed cat) comes together in a gratifying conclusion.

Cinderelephant
by Emma Dodd
Cinderelephant lives wither cousins, the Warty Sisters, who are real pigs (actually, warthogs). The familiar storyline takes on new dimensions with a huge heroine whose prince matches her size. Comic illustrations add enormously to the outrageous, funny parody.

Daisy Gets Lost
by Chris Raschka
The small, slightly frumpy but charming dog named Daisy is separated from her mistress when she chases her blue ball (acquired in A Ball for Daisy). Few words are needed to commu- nicate their concern as they search for one another clearly seen in the expressive wash illustrations.

The Deep, Deep Puddle
by Mary Jessie Parker
One shaggy dog sniffs at the edge of a rain puddle, and then “glub, glub, glub,” he sinks out of sight.” The same fate happens to 2 cats, 3 squirrels and on to 12; then everyone reappears in reverse order until all’s again well … for the time being, that is. Silliness abounds in whimsical language and jaunty illustrations with lots to see and count.

Deep in the Sahara
by Kelly Cunnane
Lalla wants a malafa, but gets it only when she discovers what it means. Set “deep in the Sahara,” the culture is evoked by handsome illustrations including the beautiful, textured malafas worn by the women in Lalla’s family. The author’s note reveals that the setting is Mauritania in West Africa which also details malafa use in Mauritanian culture.

Don’t Push the Button
by Bill Cotter
What happens if you push the red button? The monster changes color! Curious young readers will enjoy the results of pushing the forbidden buttons of the benign looking purple monster. Even a two-dimensional button will generate silly play in this simple tale.

Eat Like a Bear
by April Pulley Sayer
To eat like a bear, you’ll have to find food throughout the seasons. An informal text invites readers to follow a large grizzly bear as it tracks food from his April awakening to hibernation the following fall. Textured, realistic collages and additional text make an inviting early informational book.

The Favorite Daughter
by Allen Say
When a new teacher mispronounced Yuriko’s name and kids laugh at the picture Yuriko shared in her kimono, Yuriko wants to change her name. Her father handles her unhappiness calmly and wisely. The story is autobiographical, incorporating a photograph of the real Yuriko as a young child and as a lovely young adult in a kimono.

Just Like My Papa
by Toni Buzzeo
Kito wants to be just like his papa, the king and protector of the African plain in this richly colored and dramatically illustrated story. Young Kito imitates his father’s every action in the pride of lions, including an unsuccessful hunt. The warmth and mutual affection between father and son is easily recognized.

Let’s Make Faces
by Hanoch Piven
There are faces all around. They can be seen in everyday things, like a chair. And they can be made from fruits and vegetables, tools and what is found in the garden. When imaginations are let loose, there are all kinds of faces to see and to make! Cheer- ful collages made from different materials are sure to inspire creativity and making faces.

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More books for children 4-5 years old

Lion vs. Rabbit
by Alex Latimer
Who among the animals can take on Lion and his nasty behavior? Though other, much larger animals try, it is a clever but small rabbit that deflates Lion’s large ego. Rabbit has a secret revealed only at his departure. Echoes of familiar tales are evident but updated in simple, witty and amusing illustration and language.

Lullaby (for a Black Mother)
by Langston Hughes
A single poem from Langston Hughes’ collection, The Dream Keeper and Other Poems has been reinterpreted in stunning, stylized illustrations that correspond to lines from the poem. The poem is presented in its entirety at the end along with a brief overview of Hughes’ life and inspiration for the poem.

Maria Had a Little Llama/Maria tenia una llamita
by Angela Dominguez
Cheerful, childlike depictions of Maria and her much loved llama set the familiar rhyme “Mary Had a Little Lamb” in a Peruvian village. The little white llama follows Maria to school and makes the children laugh, but with a distinctive and unique setting and characters.

Marisol McDonald and the Clash Bash/Marisol McDonald y la fiesta sin igual
by Monica Brown
Marisol is truly a nonconformist. She doesn’t like things that match, doesn’t want just one theme for her birthday, and the only gift Marisol really wants is a visit from her abuelita. The surprise at her “Clash Bash” party is a virtual visit from her grandmother. Joyful illustrations accompany this second fun-filled, bilingual Marisol story.

Mr. Tiger Goes Wild
by Peter Brown
Mr. Tiger nattily sports his top hat and bow tie but becomes bored with the confines of the proper, polite and prim world. As Mr. Tiger’s wild idea takes shape, his behavior changes. The results are freeing for all of the animals and fun for the reader. Understated humor and flat illustrations create a comedy that validates individuality.

Mr. Wuffles!
by David Wiesner
A handsome feline named Mr. Wuffles is quite fussy about his toys. But he certainly enjoys a small roundish object he comes across unexpectedly. Surprises abound when readers see what that object holds and how — and from whom — the aliens contained in it find help. The three-time Caldecott medalist presents another fresh, nearly wordless tale.

1 2 3 versus A B C
by Mike Boldt
The number 1 and the letter A welcome readers to a book about numbers, or is it a book about letters? They discover that it’s really both, as things from A to Z in quantities of 1 to 26, parade through the pages. Cartoon illustrations and humor multiply as the competition and the concepts playfully unfold in increasingly busy illustrations.

Snowflakes Fall
by Patricia MacLachlan
Illustrations of snowy landscapes filled with children and dogs playing accompany a lyrical text suggesting that change is inevitable. Beginning, “…Snowflakes fall/…No two the same—/All beautiful.” But when flowers again bloom, children will remember snowflakes “And we remember the children—/No two the same—/All beautiful.” The moving book is dedicated to the Connecticut community who lost precious lives in 2012.

A Special Gift for Granny
by Jean Craighead George
Hunter gathers a collection of stones for his grandmother’s porch, confident that she’ll know what to do with them. Many uses are found for the stones, including a “grandmother necklace” and even one to skip on a lake. Soft illustrations in warm tones and an engaging narration capture the special bond between boy and grandmother.

Tap the Magic Tree
by Christie Matheson
Is the magic in the book or with the reader as they are asked to tap the brown tree? A green leaf appears and then when rubbed, pink blossoms emerge. A rhythmic text encourages participation to see seasonal changes in the sturdy tree from winter’s end to spring birds nesting.

Things that Float and Things that Don’t
by David Adler
Discover why boats — even filled with people — can float, but a small pebble sinks in water. Easy experiments and lucid explanations are presented with cartoon-like illustrations to bring concepts like density and displacement into focus for readers of all ages.
Books for children 6-7 years old (to read on their own)

**Comic Fairy Tales: Classic Tales Told by Extraordinary Cartoonists**
Aficionados of comic books will appreciate these fresh interpretations of fairy tales. Seventeen tales, some well-known others less so, have been reworked by different comic book artists are sure to delight sophisticated young readers.

**Everything Goes by Sea**
by Brian Briggs
A vacationing family sees many different types of boats and ships as well as what they carry. Young readers will find lots to explore as they travel over the waters in this large, highly pictorial journey.

**The First Drawing**
by Mordicai Gerstein
An illustration of a contemporary boy with pencil in hand stands in front of a blank piece of paper, invites readers to “Imagine…you were born before the invention of drawing…” And so starts Gerstein’s exploration of the boy who created the first drawing, created with a charred stick on a cave wall.

**Fly Guy Presents Space**
by Tedd Arnold
Buzz and his pet fly, Fly Guy, visit a space museum for a brief introduction to stars, planets and related concepts. Photographs and funny illustrations combine with easy-to-read language for a quick, accessible, informative trip shared by old friends.

**FraidyZoo**
by Thyra Heder
Little T is afraid to go to the zoo. To convince her that it’ll be just fine, both parents and older sister try to identify the cause of the fear. Mimicking an animal that starts with an “A” begins their creative afternoon. A very funny and satisfying ending is revealed only in the delightful illustration.

**Hide-and-Seek Science: Animal Camouflage**
by Emma Stevenson
From swamps to coral reefs, animals use camouflage. Lush, realistic, double page illustrations ask readers to find a particular number of animals in each habitat. With the turn of the page, the habitat is described and all animals are identified.

**Ling and Ting Share a Birthday**
by Grace Lin
Ling and Ting, (first introduced in Ling and Ting, Not Exactly the Same; 0316024538), share many things including their birthday. After all, they’re twins! Their special day — from gifts to wishes — is celebrated in six short chapters in which they help each other in many ways.

**Penny and her Marble**
by Kevin Henkes
Penny wonders if the beautiful marble she found in Mrs. Goodwin’s yard really belongs to her. She worries about it until she talks to her neighbor and officially becomes the marble’s owner. Expressive line and wash illustration convey Penny’s conflict and delight.

**My New Teacher and Me!**
by Al Yankovic
Billy is thrilled that it’s the first day of school. Mr. Booth, a no-nonsense teacher, however, doesn’t buy why Billy is covered in dirt. Billy’s outlandish stories delight the other kids but not the teacher! The rhyming text and cartoon-like illustrations speed to a very satisfying conclusion.

**Nino Wrestles the World**
by Yuyi Morales
Nino, the Boy, clad in underwear, dons the traditional mask of luchadores to cleverly beat opponents from Mexican lore. Spanish words are included in the bold, colorful design of this appealing book with its surprise ending. End pages provide pronunciation and information on the Spanish language.

**Odd Duck**
by Cecil Castellucci & Sara Varon
Theodora and Chad are both odd ducks though neither of them considers themselves offbeat. Can they get along living as neighbors? Sly wisdom is couched in the humor of this easier-to-read comic book with its highly expressive cartoon illustration.

**That Is NOT a Good Idea!**
by Mo Willems
For whom is the walk NOT a good idea, an increasingly agitated plump yellow chick warns? The babushka-wearing goose or the hat-wearing fox? The chick intrudes on the old-fashioned movie format to share his admonition in this comic tale with a surprise ending.

**What Am I? Where Am I?**
by Ted Lewin
A partial image of an animal is accompanied by the question, “What am I?” With a turn of the page, a larger look at the animal is shown, accompanied by “Where am I?” Another turn reveals the habitat. Handsome, highly realistic watercolors in a predictable format introduce animals, ending with a portrait of a boy “on the beautiful Earth.”
**Al and Teddy**
by Neil Waldman

Al's little brother Teddy wants to join his big brother on his imaginative jaunts. Though Al tells Teddy he's too young, Teddy discovers he can accompany Al on a memorable, dream trip through Al's art. Handsome art moves the tale to its swirling, satisfying conclusion.

**The Bear's Song**
by Benjamin Chaud

Little Bear's thoughts of honey start his quest alone while Papa Bear hibernates. The chase begins when Papa Bear awakens with a start, and continues through myriad, highly detailed scenes on oversized pages. Lively language and lots to examine lead to the happy, honey-filled reunion of father and son.

**Don't Say a Word, Mama/No Digas Nada, Mama**
by Joe Hayes

Rosa lives with her family and Blanca lives by herself in homes near their much-loved mother. They share their abundant gardens with much-loved Mama until Mama has too much! Told in Spanish and English, the story of a close-knit, devoted family has the cadence and appearance of a traditional tale.

**Flying Solo: How Ruth Elder Soared into America's Heart**
by Julie Cummins

Ruth Elder was a beauty queen but in 1927 she showed her pluck when she and a copilot took off for Paris. Though she didn't make it that time, she continued to demonstrate that women were fine pilots and could fly solo. Ruth's early life and aviation is fascinatingly revealed through evocative narration and illustration.

**Forest Has a Song**
by Amy Vanderwater

Follow a girl as she discovers a forest and its treasures through the seasons. Crisp, realistic illustrations and the varied, evocative short poems invite young readers to "Remember/I am Forest/Remember/I am here."

**The Kite that Bridged Two Nations**
by Alexis O'Neill

Homan Walsh wanted to win the prize for flying his kite, Union, from one side the Niagara River to the other — the first step in building a bridge connecting Canada and the U.S. Stylized paintings and simple text tell a powerful story (based in fact) of persistence and hope.

**Knock Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me**
by Daniel Beaty

A boy’s game with his father begins each morning with, “KNOCK KNOCK.” Then one morning, the father is no longer there but he shares his dreams for his son through a letter. Based on the author’s separation from his father, sadness and hope radiate from the pages of this affecting story.

**101 Animal Babies**
by Melvin & Gilda Berger

All animal babies are appealing. It's hard to avoid an "awe" or two when dipping into this collection of factoids and photographs that present lots of babies of all types. The taste of information is sure to inspire readers to find out more about the furred, feathered and even cold-blooded babies.

**Parrots Over Puerto Rico**
by Susan Roth & Cindy Trumbore

How colorful parrots that have lived on the island of Puerto Rico for “millions of years” almost disappeared but can again be seen today makes for an exciting saga. Textured, richly colored collage cutouts illustrate the informative text, detailing the history of parrots and their island home. Additional information is provided at the end.

**The Tree Lady**
by H. Joseph Hopkins

Katherine Olivia Sessions grew up in Northern California’s woods where she did things that most other 19th century girls didn’t do: get dirty, study science and complete college. Kate grew up to become known as “Mother of [San Diego’s] Balboa Park.” Stylized illustrations and text present this unique woman and her scientific accomplishments.

**Whale Shines: An Artistic Tale**
by Fiona Robinson

Whale advertises a forthcoming art show curated by, Mr. Jackson Pollack, a fish. But Whale doesn't feel he is as talented as others until he notices a natural phenomenon that helps his creativity blossom but changes his diet forever. The horizontal shape supports the seascapes, its creatures and the appealing, gifted Whale.

**Young Frank Architect**
by Frank Viva

Young Frank lives with his dog and his grandpa, Old Frank. Only a trip to the museum convinces Old Frank that Young Frank is really a very creative architect who can make chairs, “twisted and wiggly” buildings and more. Each creation, of course, is from an architect’s design, presented with understated humor in text and illustration.
**Books for children 8-9 years old**
*(to read on their own)*

**Alvin Ho Allergic to Babies, Burglars and Other Bumps in the Night**
by Lenore Look
Alvin Ho, a fearful but appealing boy, has a new set of worries. His mom is going to have a baby — and Alvin has all of the symptoms! To add to his worries, his dad is away helping earthquake victims in Haiti. The happy resolution includes the arrival of Alvin's new baby sister and his dad is return home.

**Amelia Bedelia: Road Trip!**
by Herman Parish
When young Amelia's dad gets an extra week of vacation from work, they go on a special family vacation — roaming — all recorded in Amelia Bedelia's faithfully kept journal. Her literalist tendencies are humorous and portend the housekeeper she grows into in later books.

**Annie and Simon: The Sneeze and Other Stories**
by Catherine O’Neill
Annie, a preschooler, and her caring older brother Simon share everyday activities in four adventures in each of the brief chapters. Together Simon and Annie explore nature, Annie nurses Simon's sneeze, learn a bit about cats and dogs, and solve the mystery of the missing chestnuts. Line drawings depict the warm sibling relationship.

**Discover More Weather**
by Penelope Arlon
Questions, tidbits of information and full-color photographs all in an appealing format are perfect to dip and out of for information about the subjects in this series. Each title includes a table of contents, an index and even a glossary of words plus the potential to find out more online.

**The Flying Beaver Brothers and the Mud-Slinging Moles** and **The Flying Beaver Brothers: Birds vs. Bunnies**
by Maxwell Eaton III
In the latest installments, beaver brothers Ace and Bub confront moles who are attempting to bury the island in mud. In their next adventure, the dynamic duo returns peace to the island when issues arise between the bunnies and birds. The comic book format enhances the over-the-top but good-natured silliness and fun.

**Lulu and the Dog from the Sea**
by Hilary McKay
Lulu and her family, along with their dog Sam, rent a house by the sea for their family vacation. There they meet a stray mutt, the “dog from the sea” who becomes a hero to kite-flying Lulu and her cousin, Mellie. The stray finds friendship and a home.

**Melonhead and the We-Fix-It Company**
by Katy Kelly
Melonhead, now in 5th grade, and his best friend want to earn money. So when Melonhead has a BOB — short for Brainflash of Brilliance — the We-Fix-It Company is born, starting the adventure and fun. The latest Melonhead book stands alone and is sure to engage young readers.

**Mummy Mysteries: Tales from North America**
by Brenda Guiberson
Mummies and mumification in North America are introduced in short, readable text accompanied by illustration and photographs. Adapted from her longer book, the easy reader format makes a fascinating topic accessible to newly independent readers.

**100 Most Feared Creatures**
by Scholastic
The natural world is filled with frightening creatures that titilate, amaze and awe. Characteristics (size, “weapons” and skills) of 100 of them are presented in dramatic, full-color photographs and factoids. This installment of the series may inspire readers to find out more about the enthralling range of critters.

**Stat, Standing Tall and Talented: Home Court #1**
by Amar’e Stoudemire
Amar’e is a good athlete and a good kid. But a group of bullies want to keep Amar’e off their home court. How Amar’e resolves the problem (told in first person) creates a fast-paced basketball story to launch a new series by an NBA All-Star.

**Toilet: How it Works**
by David Macauley
Everyone knows what a toilet is, but have you ever wondered what happens when a toilet is flushed? A brief introduction explains why toilets are needed (the digestive system), followed by lucid text and clear illustrations, with humorous touches, that detail what happens. This glimpse is sure to engage and heighten appreciation for the toilet.

**What the Witch Left and No Such Thing as a Witch**
by Ruth Chew
Katy’s adventure begins on a rainy day with her friend, Louise, when Katy wonders why her Aunt Martha left things hidden — and locked — in Katy’s room. Modern classics, these gentle fantasies have been made available again to delight contemporary readers.

**Year of Billy Miller**
by Kevin Henkes
His father assures Billy that his second grade year will be a fine year in spite of a bumpy start. Readers will recognize themselves and everyday adventures as they share Billy’s familiar likes and concerns, friendships and family.
Books for children 8-9 years old
(made for sharing)

Ann and Nan Are Anagrams: A Mixed-Up Word Dilemma
by Mark Shulman & Adam McCauley
Word problems run in Robert’s family. When his grandma told him about anagrams, “different words (even phrases and sentences) that have exactly the same letters,” he just couldn’t get away from them! Playful illustrations and varied typeface add to the wordplay fun.

Anna Was Here
by Jane Kurtz
Nine-year old Anna is a worrywart. In fact, she is one of two in a Safety Club prepared for any kind of disaster. Disaster preparedness did not include leaving Colorado for Kansas with her minister father, experiencing a tornado and more. Anna’s voice is authentic as are her questions that include religious concerns and God’s will.

Flora and Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures
by Kate DiCamillo
The small squirrel rescued from a super vacuum cleaner by 10-year old Flora emerges hairless but with new superpowers. Newly named Ulysses, the squirrel cracks Flora’s protective cynicism as she copes with her parents’ separation. Humor and pathos combine in text and illustration in this humorous, memorable and poignant novel.

Fortunately the Milk
by Neil Gaiman
The children’s mother is away but finally they separate their dad from his newspaper to go out for milk. When he returns with it, father regales the narrator and his sister with his adventures that start when he goes out for milk and is taken by aliens but always saves the milk! Droll line illustration combines with exaggeration for a very funny tall tale.

King for a Day
by Rukhsana Khan
The narrator awakens early on the most exciting day of the year. It is Basant, a day to celebrate a new season with kite-flying and kite-fighting from the rooftops of Lahore. Rich mixed media illustrations add texture to the vivid and discussable story of the kite-flyer who is in a wheelchair but not limited as he becomes king from his rooftop.

The Reluctant Dragon
by Kenneth Grahame
The Boy, a shepherd, helps his friends – a large, peaceful dragon and dragon-slaying St. George – find a solution that satisfies all. Line drawings by Ernest Shepard (illustrator of Winnie the Pooh) and enduring themes continue to appeal. An introduction to the 75th anniversary edition by Leonard Marcus puts the tale into historical context.

What the Heart Knows: Chants, Charms and Blessings
by Joyce Sidman
Each of four sections (chants, spells, laments, praise songs) celebrate the power of words that are intended to bring comfort, humor, hope and more. Sophisticated readers will appreciate the texture of those words and the stylized illustrations which appear in a handsome package.

When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop
by Laban Carrick
From his early childhood in Jamaica, Clive loved all types of music. When he was 13 years old, he moved to New York where his affinity for music blossomed. Ultimately Clive, now Cool Herc, achieved his dream of being surrounded by music as a DJ and started a new music form. Angular illustrations and informative back matter complete this portrait of music and a musician.