

The 2014 Holiday Buying Guide from Reading Rockets



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 0-3 years old

Baby Animal Farm

by Karen Blair

A jolly group of young children visit baby animals at a farm, chasing, following, feeding them – and more. Each activity includes a sound or a word sure to encourage repetition. Soft lines and gentle colors capture the diverse group of toddlers on each sturdy page.

Backseat A-B-See

by Maria van Luesgiyt

Black and white graphics punctuated with bright yellow show a car driving, “Vroom! Vroom! From the backseat, what do you see?” Signs from A to Z! The small size of the sturdy book is just right for small hands to take on a road trip by car or other means.

Boom Boom

by Sarvinder Naberhaus

Join a diverse group of young children through winter, spring, summer and autumn in simple rhyming text and play-filled, mixed media illustrations. Rhyming words evoke the sound of each season that will read well aloud.

Crabby Crab

by Chris Raschka

Crabby Crab is not happy with its claws or legs – but “we love you just the way you are, even when you’re crabby!” Readers will also appreciate the title character’s silly ideas in *Cow Cow* (Abrams; 1419710559). Childlike humor in simple text and line and wash illustrations on colored pages are used in the appealing “Thingy Thing” series.

Lola Plants a Garden

by Anna McQuinn

Lola wants a garden like the girl in her library book (“Mary, Mary, quite contrary,/how does your garden grow?”). Together with her mom, they get ready and plant and patiently await the flowers. Childlike illustrations capture Lola’s joy in the experience.

My Bibi Always Remembers

by Toni Buzzeo

Tembo, a young elephant, explores the savannah but always responds when Bibi, her grandmother, calls. The large format and dramatic illustrations complement the comfortably repetitious narrative while presenting an elephant herd.

My Bus

by Byron Barton

Joe drives his car to the bus he drives. He then picks up one dog, two cats, etc., before taking them to travel by boat, plane or train. Bold shapes and colors and simple, staccato sentences effectively depict Joe’s satisfying day.

My First Book of Baby Animals

by National Wildlife Federation

Animals and their young in natural habitats are presented in crisp color photographs. Appealing images show animals cuddling, walking and more while the only words on each sturdy page are the name of the animal and its young (e.g., rhinoceros calf).

100 Things That Make Me Happy

by Amy Schwartz

Rhythmic language and colorful cartoon-like illustrations show children engaged in a variety of activities that create happiness. From “the city zoo/zooming planes/chugging trains” to “garbagemen/a good friend/peekaboo” children and their adults will see themselves in this joy-filled book that is sure to be shared aloud.

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More books for children 0-3 years old

Say Hello Like This!

by Mary Murphy

How do animals greet everyone? With woofs and meows for a big hello! Beginning with a dog's "licky and loud . . . bow-wow-wow-wow!" the split pages hide the sounds until the turn — sure to delight young readers. Bold, colorful illustrations exude joy and spirit.

Sweetest Kulu

by Celina Kalluck

The lyrical lullaby begins on the day Kulu was born with, "all of the Arctic Summer was there to greet you." Each animal bestows on the baby something special, from heritage to instinct. Gentle illustrations in soft hues swirl as each creature embraces the newborn.

Swim Duck Swim

by Susan Lurie

A duckling is afraid to swim but with the continued encouragement of his parents and siblings makes the plunge. Surprisingly expressive photographs and the duckling's rhyming narrative convey emotions ranging from trepidation to the joy of success.

Tickle

by Leslie Patricelli

To begin the family frolic, the bald, comically illustrated but appealing baby asserts, "I am NOT ticklish!" Father and child are joined by mom and pets until it's time to start again. The same baby and family explore bodily noises in *Toot* (Candlewick).

Tuck-In Time

by Carole Gerber

Getting ready for bedtime means getting tucked in, but whose "two little eyes [are] shining at me"? Do they belong to the curly haired child, the rabbit toy or maybe the dog? Rhyming text and gentle illustrations present a charming bedtime ritual.

You Are My Baby: Pets

by Lorena Siminovich

Familiar animals and their young are presented in a game-like board book that engages and informs. The text on the parent's page and colors provide clues as young children turn smaller pages to identify the puppy, hatchling, kitten, hamster and fish. Forest animals are presented in a companion book, *You Are My Baby: Woodland* (Chronicle).

Audio books to share with kids of all ages

Brown Girl Dreaming

Written and narrated by Jacqueline Woodson

The early years of a girl who grows into a writer has been recreated from family stories combined with memory and presented in verse. Born in February 1963 in Ohio, Woodson's family soon moves to the South during turbulent years. The history of the writer, her family and a nation combine in rich, metaphorical language.

How to Catch a Bogle

by Catherine Jinks, narrated by Mandy Williams

Bogle-catching in Victorian England is comes alive in this deliciously spooky tale effectively presented in an accented voice and a *capella* singing.

Percy Jackson's Greek Gods

Written by Rick Riordan, narrated by Jesse Bernstein

Percy Jackson, son of Poseidon and a human woman (and title character in the Olympian series of novels) retells traditional Greek myths. His voice is informal and chatty, adding contemporary insight and drama. The tellings are punctuated by handsome, theatrical illustrations in a satisfyingly large format.

Princess Posey and the Tiny Treasure

by Stephanie Greene

Posey learns about consequences firsthand when her much-loved toy is taken away in school. The gentle story is pleasantly narrated.

The Doll People

by Stephanie Greene & Laura Godwin, narrated by Lynn Redgrave

The first in the series of adventures shared between Annabelle Doll and Tiffany Funcraft and their families is well-voiced in a light British accent.



Books for children 3-6 years old

Baking Day at Grandma's

by Anika Denise

What better way for three cubs to spend an afternoon than baking with Grandma. Together they bake and wrap chocolate cake before walking home through the snowy woods, all told in warm illustrations and cozy rhyming text. A recipe for Grandma Rosie's chocolate cake is included.

Bats in the Band

by Brian Lies

When the bats awaken from winter hibernation, not only do their stomachs grumble, they are hungry for music! The latest in this series presents the varied music interests of very likeable (and rather human) bats.

The Big Green

by Peggy Gifford

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.

Big Pigs

by Leslie Helakoski

Three little pigs named Sweet Pea, Nibbles and Clean Bean, try to be big, bigger, biggest as they "flopped and plopped...muddled and puddled...walloped and wallowed" until stopped by their mother. Comic illustration and lively language make a fun farm tale.

Call Me Tree/Llamame arbol

by Maya Christina Gonzales

Children are like trees. They grow tall and strong, free yet rooted. "All trees have roots/All trees belong." Swirling, color-filled illustrations complement and enhance the poetic language in both English and Spanish of this reassuring, lyrical book.

Flip Flap Farm

by Axel Scheffler

Meet animals like the cow in informative rhymes and cartoon illustrations. Turn half the page and make a "pow" – half pig, half cow. Funny critters emerge with each half page turn. See and read the poem about another farm animal when pages match

Flora and the Penguin

by Molly Idle

Flora dances on a thick sheet of ice with a penguin companion who appears from a hole in the ice. Humor and movement are enhanced by the gentle depiction of fluid girl and bird body language, and through the unique perspectives shown. Glued-in flaps and fold-outs add another dimension and a bit of surprise.

Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night

by Peter Spier

More than 40 years ago, Spier won a Caldecott Honor for his illustrations of this traditional folk song. In it, a fox cheerfully poaches the farmer's geese. Now the artist has added color to original black/white illustrations, enlivening the tale for a new generation. Music and additional verses are included.

Have You Heard the Nesting Bird?

by Rita Gray

A boy and girl look and listen for birds all around, identifying a woodpecker, starling and mourning dove – but wonder why is the robin silent? Textured collages illustrate the rhyming and informative exploration as the children learn about birds in their backyard.

Have You Seen My Dragon?

by Steve Light

When a boy's dragon goes missing in New York City, he goes out in search of it. Readers can explore the city sights while counting from one dragon to 20 lanterns. Illustrations use black line to create texture with color to define the objects counted.

Hi, Koo! A Year of Seasons

by Jon Muth

A series of 26 poems, all haiku, mark each of the four seasons starting with autumn while highlighting the letters of the alphabet. Each short poem is accompanied by Koo, the young panda, who is joined by two children and illustrated in handsome, spare watercolors.

Hooray for Hat!

by Brian Won

A surprise box is delivered to the very grumpy Elephant. In it, he discovers a host of hats which he shares with his animal friends to improve their grumpiness, too. Flat forms on open pages make this a true celebration of friendship — and hats!

Horton and the Kwuggerbug and More Lost Stories

by Dr. Seuss

Classic Seuss rhymes and illustrations of stories that have only been published heretofore in magazines are put together in a new collection. Adults will appreciate the introduction by Seuss scholar, Charles Cohen, while children will enjoy seeing well-loved characters (Horton and the Grinch, for example) in "new" stories.

I Got Rhythm

by Connie Scholfield-Morrison

On a sunny day, a child and her mother go for a walk in the park. The rhythm the girl hears in her head is all around, bringing an entire community together. Infectious language repeats (SNAP SNAP; STOMP STOMP), accompanied by full-color double-page spreads that will surely be read — and voiced — many times.

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More books for children 3-6 years old

I'm Brave!

by Kate & Jim McMullan

Just like his counterpart the garbage truck from *I Stink* (Harper; 0064438368), this very confident and informative fire truck enjoys showing off all of his parts. Firefighter and truck aficionados will appreciate the overview of working trucks and firefighting.

Ivan: The Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla

by Katherine Applegate

Ivan lived like a human until he began to grow into a silverback gorilla. He was just an infant when captured by poachers in his native country in Africa and was in captivity for over half his life. Using spare text and evocative illustrations, Ivan's story comes into focus for younger readers. Those interested in Ivan's story will learn more from the back matter and may be interested in reading Applegate's Newbery Medal winning *The One and Only Ivan* (Harper; 0061992259)

Mix It Up!

by Hervé Tullet

Are you ready to shake and mix to make new colors? "Tap the gray spot...to see what happens." With a turn of the page many colors appear for readers to mix. Simple blobs of color and simple instructions on uncluttered pages creatively present color mixing.

Monster Book

by Alice Hoogstad

A young artist brings color to a colorless city with her imaginative drawings of nonthreatening creatures. Though scolded by adults who wash color away, other kids have been inspired to continue. Humor abounds in the detailed line drawings as the girl and critters inspire others.

The Orchestra Pit

by Johanna Wright

Even though the green-spotted snake wanders into the wrong pit — an orchestra pit — he takes the time to explore, noting that the tuba is roomy and the trombone is quite long. Rib-tickling illustrations reveal a different tale until the small snake returns to the right pit.

Pig and Small

by Alex Latimer

Can a big pig and a small bug be friends? At first it seems impossible, but then the duo finds that they can happily share some activities. The silly story is comically illustrated and told in a straight narrative to augment the humor.

A Possum's Tail

by Gabby Dawnay & Alex Barrow

Samuel Drew takes his dog-on-wheels toy with him to the London Zoo where unbeknownst to Samuel, four young possums follow the pull-dog. But before returning to the zoo via balloon, the possums join Samuel for a picnic. Delicate, detailed illustrations and a rhyming text create a story and a city worth examining.

Outside

by Deirdre Gill

"Outside, snow falls silently on the house. Inside a boy has nothing to do." That is, until he bundles up and creates an entire world in the snow. The soft lines and changing colors beautifully illustrate the magic of imagination in a wintry world.

Rupert Can Dance

by Jules Feiffer

Mandy loves to dance and so does her cat, Rupert, although he practices only when Mandy is asleep. Mandy discovers Rupert's secret one night and the feline dance stops entirely — until Mandy comes up with an idea. Characteristic line and wash combine with the straightforward text for an engaging and imaginative tale.

Stella's Starliner

by Rosemary Wells

Stella loves her silver starliner — a mobile home — until she's teased about living in a trailer. When other kids think her home is gorgeous, Stella comes to appreciate what they see and feels pride, actually like a "squillionaire!" Signature illustrations effectively convey Stella's rollercoaster emotions and the ultimate comfort of friends, family and home.

Tap to Play

by Salina Yoon

Blip, a round red creature on open pages, has one goal: to get to the bar with numbers on it — but he needs the readers' help. Count down from five to one as the book is shaken and tilted to get to the surprise at the end — a new (very purple) friend.

Telephone

by Mac Barnett

When Peter's mom asks other birds to tell him to come home for dinner, the message takes on each bird's special interest, from sports to firefighting. The variety of birds, all simply but effectively illustrated, sits on a telephone wire in this playful riff of a familiar game.

The Troublemaker

by Lauren Castillo

There's a troublemaker making trouble for a boy and his sister, but it isn't a naughty child. Rather, it's a furry masked bandit — a raccoon — that snitches stuffed toys and even a blanket until the culprit is discovered. Strong lines of the idyllic setting are just right to hide the real thief on many pages.

'Twas Nochebuena

by Roseanne Greenfield Thong

In the cadence of Clement Moore's holiday poem, a Latino family celebrates Christmas Eve. They make *tamales* with *masa*, play games (including a *piñata*) and more until the children are in bed and everyone is wished *Feliz Navidad!* A glossary of Spanish words concludes this cheerfully illustrated *fiesta*.

Waz Dot?

by Michael Slack

A blue alien arrives on a farm, "Blip, stop! Zot, wazzzzdot?" he wonders. Young readers will readily recognize the silhouette of a pig but will exclaim with the alien when the page turns. Lively illustrations and clipped language leaps and jumps across the pages as the exploration continues.



Books for children 6-9 years old

About Parrots: A Guide for Children

by Cathryn Sill

Some fly, others only walk but regardless of where they live or what they eat, the parrots presented are fascinating. They are pictured in handsome, realistic illustrations and a brief text. Further information about each parrot appears at the end, along with a glossary and additional resources, making this a book that can be enjoyed by many.

Alvin Ho: Allergic to the Great Wall, the Forbidden Palace & Other Tourist Attractions

by Lenore Look

Alvin Ho is back, and this time the young worrier is traveling to China with his family. Not only does Alvin worry, but his actions create worry for his dad and others. Readers, on the other hand, will find lots of humor and just may learn a bit about China, its greatest attractions and some Chinese history.

Amelia Bedelia Goes Wild

by Herman Parish

Young Amelia, the literalist who grows up to be a truly unique maid, is inspired to start her own backyard zoo. As in other Amelia Bedelia stories, the wordplay is sure to amuse as it expands readers' language.

As an Oak Tree Grows

by G. Brian Karas

On a sunny summer day long ago, a boy planted an acorn. From that grew an oak tree that survived for more than two centuries until it was felled by lightning. Simple but lush illustrations depict the evolution of the world surrounding the oak and how it remained useful in the "furniture, firewood and mulch." And soon, another oak begins to grow.

Ashley Bryan's Puppet: Making Something from Everything

by Ashley Bryan

Unique puppets created from stones, shells and other found objects on a Maine beach launch stories and poems. In the hands of an award-winning master storyteller, poet, author and illustrator, each poem or tale becomes a memorable experience. Bryan and his puppets are shown in vibrant, full-color photographs.

Ballerina Dreams: From Orphan to Dancer

by Michaela & Elaine DePrince

Michaela DePrince and her adoptive mother share Michaela's story of how her dream to become a professional dancer came true. Orphaned in Sierra Leone's ongoing war, Michaela and her best friend came to the United States and were adopted. Her story is told through personal narrative and paintings punctuated by actual photographs.

How Big Were Dinosaurs?

by Lita Judge

How big were the dinosaurs really? Though a deadly hunter, the microraptor "would barely be able to look a modern-day chicken in the eye." Energetic illustrations contrast dinosaurs to things familiar and contemporary. Add animated text for a memorable look at size and prehistoric creatures.

The Book with No Pictures

by B.J. Novak

There are no pictures in this book. None. But it screams to be shared aloud. The deal is that *everything* must be read. Even words like "BLORK." Yup. Even that. Written by actor and director Novak, this clever, hysterical book is sure to be interpreted again and again by readers young and experienced.

Creature Features

by Steve Jenkins & Robin Page

Meet a variety of animals face-to-face and then learn about some of their most unique features. For example, why do the harpy eagle's feathers stick out? Questions are posed and then answered by the animals themselves, shown full-face in striking, realistic collages. Additional information about animals, their size and distribution is included.

Dear Malala, We Stand with You

by Rosemary McCarney

This tribute to the Pakistani girl who has become the face for children's education worldwide provides an introduction to the issues. Color photographs and brief text present what Malala has come to represent; her touching 2013 speech at the United Nations is included.

Edward Hopper Paints His World

by Robert Burleigh

In an afterword, the author asks if an artist can be a hero or an explorer. The answer is sure to be a resounding 'yes' after examining this thoughtful, attractive and informative overview of artist Edward Hopper and his work. Several Hopper paintings, selected quotes, additional resources and a note from the illustrator are included.

The Flying Beaver Brothers and the Hot-Air Baboons

by Maxwell Eaton III

The Beaver Brothers in all their silliness are back for another madcap adventure. This time, Ace and Bub decide to hit the ski slopes on their winter vacation. As with others in the series, nothing goes quite as planned. Fans of the zany comic book beavers will again find lots of chuckles here.

Freddie Ramos Stomps the Snow

by Jacqueline Jules

Will Freddie Ramos' superpower shoes work in the snowstorm? Not to worry! Inventor/maintenance man Mr. Vaslov has invented superpower snowshoes — just in time to help Freddie fight crime. The latest in the Zapato Power series is equally charming and highly readable.

Hermelin the Detective Mouse

by Mini Grey

Offley is a vibrant street where a delightful white mouse named Hermelin lives and narrates his story. Using an old manual typewriter, Hermelin shares how he solves mysteries and even saves a baby — and ultimately finds a human friend and partner. Humor abounds in the clever illustration and narrative in Hermelin's appealing saga.

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More books for children 6-9 years old

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An Illustrated Treasury of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales

illustrated by Anastasiya Archipova

Tales translated into English from Danish author Hans Christian Andersen have become part of the oral tradition and adapted into movies and more. Faithful versions of some of the best-known tales have been compiled anew, delicately illustrated and presented in a handsome volume. Be warned, however, Andersen's endings are not always happy!

Issun Boshi: The One-Inch Boy

by Icinori

A farmer and his wife longed for a child and miraculously got one who they named Issun Boshi, the One-Inch Boy. Though small, Issun Boshi proved his bravery in this Japanese tale. Imaginative illustrations suggest art from both the East and the West bring the hero into focus.

Judy Moody and Stink: The Big Bad Blackout

by Megan McDonald

Grandma Lou joins Judy, Stink and their parents to ride out a hurricane. When the power is off, does a pretzel-eating ghost join the family? Characteristic good humor, recognizable situations and likeable characters are hallmarks of this series.

Magic Tree House Survival Guide

by Mary Pope Osborne & Natalie Pope Boyce

Jack and Annie share what they've learned about survival throughout their time travel adventures. They provide tips when lost in the wilderness, how to make it through a natural disaster and more. Practical advice even for unlikely events (such as surviving on spiders) adds another entertaining though factual "what-if" element.

Nuts to You

by Lynn Rae Perkins

While eating lunch outdoors one day, the author met a squirrel who spoke human (or is it English?). The old squirrel then shared the story revealed in this book about how a squirrel captured by a hawk meets another group and saves the day. Lively language with witty asides are punctuated by the author's illustrations.

Our Solar System

by Seymour Simon

Spectacular photographs (primarily from NASA) and a readable, up-to-date text present current information about our solar system. Moreover, the author's interest in science and this topic are effectively shared and may inspire readers.

Pirate, Viking and Scientist

by Jared Chapman

Can science find a peaceful resolution to the discord between Scientist's friends, Viking and Pirate? Using the scientific method, Scientist demonstrates that it can be achieved! Comic illustrations and jaunty text not only show how the intersection of interests can lead to an unlikely friendship, but also introduce science concepts.

Quest

by Aaron Becker

The children first introduced in the story *Journey* (Candlewick; 0763660531) begin another imaginative adventure armed with magic markers that add color to an otherwise monotone world. No words are needed as this visual voyage stands on its own and is sure to encourage multiple examinations.

Skateboard Party

by Karen English

Richard has put off his report on howler monkeys and now he's got to get a note from his teacher signed. It surely will thwart his plans to attend the skateboard birthday party! How Richard resolves his dilemma is as realistic as the kids and adults in this engaging, contemporary tale.

Stink and the Shark Sleepover

by Megan McDonald

Stink would have preferred a trip to James Madison's home but is happy when his parents win a sleepover at the aquarium. At the aquarium, Stink likes learning about sharks and other creatures but he still finds it kind of creepy. Share the evening with Stink and his family, learning and laughing.

Shooting at the Stars: The Christmas Truce of 1914

by John Hendrix

Charlie, a young British soldier, tells of an experience he had on a battlefield in France in 1914. Based on an actual event during World War I — framed by the fictional soldier's letter to his mother and illustrated by evocative illustrations — a touching bit of history is brought to light for younger but sophisticated readers.

Viva Frida

by Yuyi Morales

Mixed media illustrations evoke artist Frida Kahlo and lyrical language is used to suggest her life. Rather than a biography, this homage to art and an artist is visually stunning and will likely generate interest in many topics. An afterward about Frida in Spanish and English culminates the presentation.

Water Rolls, Water Rises/El agua rueda, el agua sube

by Pat Mora

Evocative watercolors and short, lyrical poems take readers on a trip, "Around our round world" where "water rolls/water rises/under gold sun, under white moon." A brief note from the author and the illustrator provides insight into their inspirations.

Winter Bees and Other Poems

by Joyce Sidman & Rick Allen

How animals survive — even thrive — in winter is presented in a variety of poetic forms, each accompanied by factual information. Textured prints dramatically bring the frozen setting and its inhabitants to life as they await spring.



Books for children 9-12 years old

Brown Girl Dreaming

by Jacqueline Woodson

The early years of a girl who grows into a writer has been recreated from family stories combined with memory and presented in verse. Born in February 1963 in Ohio, Woodson's family soon moves to the South during turbulent years. The history of the writer, her family and a nation combine in rich, metaphorical language.

Double Reverse

by Fred Bowen

Jesse isn't as good a football player as his older brother but with a bit of encouragement from a friend, he tries out and gets the position of quarterback on the freshman team. And can a girl be the team's kicker? Appearances don't always reveal what a person can do — even in football. Recognizable concerns are sure to resonate with readers.

Firebird

by Misty Copeland

Misty Copeland, the African American Ballet Theater soloist, has an encouraging conversation with a young black aspiring ballerina: "darling child, don't you know/you're just where I started/let the sun shine on your face...." Stunning mixed media illustrations capture the movement of dance and emotions of hope.

Little Author in the Big Woods: A Biography of Laura Ingalls Wilder

by Yona Zeldis

The pioneering homesteading family, which includes the "Little House" books author, moved a great deal and is reflected in Laura's books. Wilder fans and those interested in American history will be engaged by instructions for a cornhusk doll and recipes for Johnnycakes, gingerbread and butter as well as the family's story.

The Fourteenth Goldfish

by Jennifer Holm

Middle school is tough enough but what happens when your grandfather — a scientist who has uncovered some really interesting jellyfish properties — attends with you as a 13-year old? It's a totally new experience! Told with verve and humor (and a touch of science), this is a coming-of-age tale for 11-year old Ellie and Melvin, her teenaged granddad.

How They Choked: Failures, Flops, and Flaws of the Awfully Famous

by Georgia Bragg

Everyone makes mistakes — even well-known people — which is why this collection of humorous and often insightful biographical sketches begins with a warning: "If you only want to see people at their best, this book isn't for you..." as it reveals how 14 luminaries made mistakes. Black/white illustrations add humor and spirit.

Percy Jackson's Greek Gods

by Rick Riordan

Percy Jackson, son of Poseidon and a human woman (and title character in the Olympian series of novels) retells traditional Greek myths. His voice is informal and chatty, adding contemporary insight and drama. The tellings are punctuated by handsome, theatrical illustrations in a satisfyingly large format.

Meet Matisse

by Jean-Vincent Senac

An unnamed narrator dreams he has visited the studio of artist Henri Matisse where he meets the artist himself. Matisse's words and mixed media illustration are used to explore Matisse's paper cutouts briefly but effectively. Color, line and language introduce not only an artist but are sure to inspire further exploration.

National Geographic Cookbook: A Year-Round Fun Food Adventure

by Barton Seaver

Foodies and cooking aficionados as well as those only marginally interested in food are sure to find something to enjoy in this handsomely formatted and enriching look at food. Recipes range from easy to more complex and are placed amid information and activities for the entire year.

The Next Wave: The Quest to Harness the Power of the Ocean

by Elizabeth Rusch

Meet the Mikes, both of whom grew up to study oceans, energy, and more. The science comes into focus as readers explore with the actual scientists working in the field and share their discoveries. For those interested in land-based issues, *Beetle Busters: A Rogue Insect and the People Who Track It* (Houghton; 0547792670) explores a voracious creature and its impact on the environment with an equally engaging personal perspective.

The Silver Donkey

by Sonya Hartnett

Sisters, Marcelle and Coco, find a blind English soldier in the woods near their home in France. With the help of their older brother and his friend, Lt. Shepherd makes it across the Channel, leaving a small silver donkey and stories about the creature with the girls. Set during World War I, this is a timeless, gentle and hopeful story.

The Spy Catchers of Maple Hill

by Megan Frazer Blakemore

The rumors of a Russian spy in Hazel's small Vermont town and the threat of Communist infiltration are palpable to her. With the help of a new kid in town and a bit of spying, Hazel tries to uncover the goings-on. Though set in the 1950s, themes remain relevant in this fast-paced adventure.



More books for children 9-12 years old

Stories of My Life

by Katherine Paterson

Sophisticated readers who have enjoyed books by two-time Newbery Medalist Katherine Paterson, can learn about the author's life and the backstory for her novels. Black and white photographs open each chapter. The book concludes with the death of her beloved husband, John. The stories may inspire rereading and the sharing of family stories.

Tesla's Attic

by Neal Shusterman & Eric Elfman

The first in the Accelerati Trilogy, 14-year old Nick, his younger brother and his father have moved from Tampa (FL) to a ramshackle Victorian house in Colorado Springs. Peculiar things happen when items from the attic are sold. Could they really be inventions from inventor Nicola Tesla? Intrigue with plenty of humor and likeable characters in a fast-pace will leave readers awaiting the next book.

Unusual Creatures: A Mostly Accurate Account of Some of Earth's Strangest Animals

by Michael Hearst

Really peculiar critters (in which the author includes himself) make for an engaging and informative book. Each double page spread introduces unique but real animals and insects from around the globe. Included with the informal text are scientific names, distribution and detailed drawings of each creature.

You Call That Art?!

by David Carter & James Diaz

In an attractive, sturdy package, readers are invited to learn about the history of sculpture and several prominent sculptors (such as Rodin and Duchamp). Then readers are invited to create their own cardboard structures, called "a maquette — a French word for a small study of the sculpture..." Ready-to-punch-out pieces and instructions are included.

Voices from the March on Washington

by J. Patrick Lewis & George Ella Lyon

An August day on the national Mall has been made famous by the powerful "I Have a Dream" speech given by Martin Luther King, Jr. But many others were there, too. Real and imagined voices from that day are presented in varied poems, bringing it into focus and reminding young readers that they "... can make a difference ... [they] have a voice."

Zane and the Hurricane: A Story of Katrina

by Rodman Philbrick

Zane, his paternal great-grandmother and his much-loved dog are evacuating New Orleans before Katrina hits when another catastrophe strikes: Bandit escapes the van and Zane takes off after him. Zane narrates his sometimes grisly, sometimes humorous, always plausible story.