

The 2013 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 0-4 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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More books for children 0-4 years old

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.

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 tucked 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 different 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 communicate 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! Cheerful 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. Miming 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.

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.

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."



Books for children 6-7 years old (made for sharing)

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 mummification 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 titillate, 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

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.