

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

LIBRARY MEDIA CONNECTION



It's time again to let our readers know what the reviews editor considers the best of all the exceptional titles reviewed from August/September 2008 through the May/June 2009 issue. Not all of the titles on the following list are award winners or were rated Highly Recommended by our reviewers, but in our opinion all are special in one way or another. All were selected because of their significance in the school setting. Some cover important or controversial topics or issues; some cover unusual topics not previously explored in the K-12 market;

some offer a different approach to a familiar topic or reflect a new trend in publishing. We feel that all of the titles listed below should be in the appropriate library media center collection. If they are not already in your collection or on your "to be purchased" list, we hope that you will take a good look at them again.

— Shelley Glantz, Reviews Editor

# Editor's Choice Awards—Volume 27 (Aug/Sept 2008 – May/June 2009)

## PICTURE BOOKS

Bacon, Arthur and Henry Bacon. *I Hate Reading*. Upstart, 2008. 978-1-60213-025-8.  
A clever way to get reluctant students to complete that "20 minute" reading assignment; written by two young brothers. Grades 2-4. (May/June, p. 63)

Bunting, Eve. *Walking to School*. Clarion Books, 2008. 978-0-618-26144-4.  
A sensitive portrayal of a chance meeting between a Catholic girl and a Protestant girl in Northern Ireland. Grades 1-6. (January/February, p. 63)

## FICTION K-5

Gratz, Alan. *The Brooklyn Nine: A Novel in Nine Innings*. Dial Press (Penguin Young Readers Group), 2009. 978-0-803-73224-7.  
Readers follow a baseball through nine "innings," each about a different person and era. Grades 4-6. (May/June, p. 66)

Stewart, Paul and Chris Riddell. *Barnaby Rimes: Curse of the Night Wolf*. David Fickling Books (Random House), 2008. 978-0-385-75125-4.  
This melodramatic Victorian thriller with pseudo-Dickensian language will thrill Lemony Snickett fans. Grades 3-6. (November/December, p. 74)

## FICTION 6-8

Carman, Patrick. *Skeleton Creek*. Scholastic, Inc., 2009. 978-0-545-07566-4.  
A compelling mystery, supplemented with online video clues. Grades 5-8. (May/June, p. 69)

Hesse, Karen. *Brooklyn Bridge*. Feiwel and Friends, 2008. 978-0-312-37886-8.  
Set in the early 1900s, Hesse's flawless writing style chronicles the life of one family; historical fiction at its best. Grades 6-12. (March/April, p. 72)

## FICTION 9-12

Friesen, Jonathan. *Jerk, California*. Speak (Penguin Young Readers Group), 2008. 978-0-142-41203-9.  
Realistically capturing the pain of a protagonist living with Tourette's syndrome, readers will find this novel a page-turner. Grade 8 & Up. (January/February, p. 75)

Galante, Cecilia. *The Patron Saint of Butterflies*. Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2008. 978-1-59990-249-4.  
This debut novel is a unique story of two diverse young teens in a religious commune. Grades 7-12. (August/September, p. 76)

## GRAPHIC NOVELS

Abel, Jessica and Gabriel Soria. *Life Sucks*. First Second Books (Roaring Brook Press), 2008. 978-1-59643-107-2.  
A graphic-novel look at the life of the vampires among us; after all, they have to work to pay rent too. Grade 9 & Up. (October, p. 76)

Myers, Walter Dean. *Amiri & Odette: A Love Story*. Scholastic, Inc., 2009. 978-0-590-68041-7.  
A poetic love story based on the "Swan Lake" ballet, "part rap, part rhapsody" in graphic format. Grades 6-12. (May/June, p. 76)

## SPANISH LANGUAGE OR BILINGUAL

Diaz, David. *De Colores: Bright with Colors*. Marshall Cavendish Children's Books, 2008. 978-0-7614-5431-1.  
Diaz's folk art illustrations bring to life this 16th century song, now the anthem of the United Farm Workers of America. Grades 3-5. (August/September, p. 93)

## ANIMALS

*Animals: A Visual Encyclopedia*. DK Publishing, 2008. 978-0-7566-4027-9.  
A true children's encyclopedia with stunning photography, covering all major animal groups. Grades 4-7. (March/April, p. 81)

Arnosky, Jim. *Crocodile Safari*. Scholastic, Inc., 2009. 978-0-439-90356-1.  
Arnosky's journal format invites readers to meet these prehistoric beasts up close; includes a DVD of footage shot in the mangrove swamps. Grades K-3. (May/June, p. 78)

## ART

*Encyclopedia of Art for Young People*. Chelsea House (Infobase Publishing), 2008. 978-0-7910-9477-8.  
An eight-volume set covering not only art works, but also the times, artists, and cultures. Grades 5-9. (November/December, p. 82)

## BIOGRAPHY

Hong, Chen Jiang. *Mao and Me*. Enchanted Lion Books, 2008. 978-1-59270-079-0.  
A powerfully written and illustrated child's view of China's Cultural Revolution; a sensitive self-portrait. Grades 4-8. (May/June, p. 78)

Hughes, Susan. *No Girls Allowed: Tales of Daring Women Dressed as Men for Love, Freedom, and Adventure*. Kids Can Press, 2008. 978-1-55453-177-6.  
The story of seven women and their unorthodox choices, in graphic book format. Grades 4-9. (November/December, p. 83)





## CAREERS

**Great Careers with a High School Diploma (series).** Ferguson Publishing (Infobase Publishing), 2008. 978-0-8160-7836-3.

Series covering a wide variety of occupations for your often overlooked non-college bound students. Grade 9 & Up. (May/June, p. 79)

## FOLK LITERATURE

Alley, Zoe B. *There's a Wolf at the Door: Five Classic Tales.* Neal Porter Books (Roaring Brook Press), 2008. 978-1-59643-275-8.

A graphic novel of five fairy tales starring the big bad wolf, connected so they flow like one tale. Grades K-3. (January/February, p. 83)

Hale, Bruce. *Snoring Beauty.* Harcourt, 2008. 978-0-1521-6314-3.

A wonderful spoof of "Sleeping Beauty"; treat yourself by reading this aloud. Grades 1-4. (November/December, p. 85)

## HISTORY

**Kids' Translations (series).** Capstone Press, 2009. 978-1-4296-1934-9.

Explains important documents from U.S. history in detailed but user-friendly terms, accessible for younger students. Grades 3-6. (May/June, p. 83)

Silvey, Anita. *I'll Pass for Your Comrade: Women Soldiers in the Civil War.* Clarion Books, 2008. 978-0-618-57491-9.

This visually appealing resource covers an often overlooked topic, the role of women in the Civil War. Grades 8-10. (March/April, p. 87)

## MATHEMATICS

Williams, Brenda. *The Real Princess: A Mathemagical Tale.* Barefoot Books, 2008. 978-1-905236-88-6.

A retelling of "The Princess and the Pea," blending fairy tale elements and mathematical concepts. Grades 1-5. (October, p. 85)

## MULTICULTURAL

Mora, Pat. *Abuelos.* Greenwood Books, 2008. 978-0-88899-716-6.

An amusing cautionary tale, rich with Pueblo and Hispanic traditions and a feeling of strong community ties. Grades K-5. (March/April, p. 89)

## NATURE AND ECOLOGY

Franco, Betsy. *Bees, Snails, & Peacock Tails: Patterns & Shapes...Naturally.*

Margaret K. McDerry Books (Simon & Schuster), 2008. 978-1-4169-0386-4.

A poetic look at shapes and patterns in nature; especially useful where poetry is used across the curriculum. Grades 1-3. (January/February, p. 87)

McLimans, David. *Gone Fishing: Ocean Life by the Numbers.* Walker and Company, 2008. 978-0-8027-9770-4.

A counting book that uses numbers to make readers aware of threatened ocean animals and other dangers to the ocean environment. Grades 1-3. (November/December, p. 87)

## POETRY

Hughes, Langston. *My People.* Ginee Seo Books (Simon & Schuster), 2009. 978-1-4169-3540-7.

This celebration of poetry and photography creates a piece of art to be appreciated on many levels. Grade 3 & Up. (May/June, p. 88)

Lewis, J. Patrick. *Birds on a Wire.* Wordsong (Boyd's Mills Press), 2008. 978-1-590783-83-2.

One day in the life of a small town, told in renga (an ancient Japanese verse form). Grades 2-4. (January/February, p. 88)

## REFERENCE

**One Million Things: A Visual Encyclopedia.** DK Publishing, 2008. 978-0-7566-3843-6.

Eye-catching visuals and succinct writing on a wide range of topics make this a beautiful general reference source. Grades 3-8. (November/December, p. 88)

## SCIENCE

Kudlinski, Kathleen V. *Boy, Were We Wrong about the Solar System!* Dutton Children's Books (Penguin Young Readers Group), 2008. 978-0-525-46979-7.

Not overwhelming for the young reader; students will learn about scientific theories about the solar system and why they have changed. Grades 1-3. (January/February, p. 89)

Yoder, Eric and Natalie Yoder. *One Minute Mysteries: 65 Short Mysteries You Solve with Science!* Science, Naturally!, 2008. 978-0-9678020-1-5.

Scientific concepts help readers solve brief mysteries; science fans will shine with this title. Grades 6-8. (March/April, p. 91)

## SOCIAL STUDIES

Cooper, Elisha. *Ridiculous/Hilarious/Terrible/Cool: A Year in an American High School.* Dial Books for Young Readers (Penguin Young Readers Group), 2008. 978-0-803-73169-1.

Cooper followed eight seniors at a prestigious Chicago high school for a year; students' stories are told from their perspective. Grades 8-12. (November/December, p. 90)

Ellis, Deborah. *Off to War: Voices of Soldiers' Children.* Greenwood Books, 2008. 978-0-88899-894-1.

Sensitively done interviews give a glimpse into the toll that war is taking on the children of military families. Grades 4-12. (January/February, p. 91)

## SPORTS & GAMES

Hatton, Caroline. *The Night Olympic Team: Fighting to Keep Drugs Out of the Games.* Boyd's Mills Press, 2008. 978-1-59078-566-9.

True story of drug use and drug testing at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympic Games. Grade 7 & Up. (October, p. 91)

## PROFESSIONAL READING

(Linworth and Libraries Unlimited titles excluded)

Frey, Nancy. *Teaching Visual Literacy Using Comic Books, Graphic Novels, Anime, Cartoons, and More to Develop Comprehension and Thinking Skills.* Corwin Press, Inc., 2008. 978-1-4129-5321-2.

With something for everybody, this book has creative lesson plans and a quick course for readers who are new to graphic novels or anime. Professional (Grades K-12). (August/September, p. 65)

## FREE WEB

**ThinkFinity.**  
[www.thinkfinity.org](http://www.thinkfinity.org).

Verizon Foundation, 2008.

This is where the good stuff lives—more than 55,000 resources, accessible and searchable. Professional (Grades K-12). (November/December, p. 94)

## SUBSCRIPTION WEB

**Pop Culture Universe.**  
[www.pop.greenwood.com](http://www.pop.greenwood.com).

Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008.

A fun database for research and browsing, this online collection of more than 300 full-text volumes was the first electronic winner of the Dartmouth Medal. Grades 7-12. (March/April, p. 94)

**World Book Discover.**  
[www.worldbookonline.com](http://www.worldbookonline.com).

World Book, Inc., 2008.

Includes features that would complement World Book Online Reference Center in middle and high schools, and also enhance World Book Kids in elementary schools. Grade K & Up. (January/February, p. 94)

## VIDEO

**A Raisin in the Sun: Character Studies Conversations.** Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2008. 978-1-4213-8639-3.

Discussion about Lorraine Hansberry's play by those involved in various productions (actors, directors, etc.); instructor's guide available online. Grades 9-12. (January/February, p. 95)

