

Not Too Old for Picture Books: Using Illustrated Books in the Classroom

A Presentation at NJLA

by

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This is a sampling of possible books to use in the classroom and in part is based on today's presentation. There are many more books on this list than we will be able to cover today, but we felt that those attending would appreciate the longer list we compiled previously.

Banks, Kate. *Max's Words*. Frances Foster Books/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006) Max collects words the way his brothers collect coins and stamps, but when he puts his collection together, wonderful things happen! A wonderful introduction to poetry and writing units. [Language arts]

Borden, Louise. *Across the Blue Pacific: A World War II Story*. (Houghton Mifflin, 2006). World War II at home from the viewpoint of a young girl who corresponds with a neighbor's son deployed on a ship in the Pacific. [History - World War II]

Borden, Louise. *The Greatest Skating Race: A World War II Story from the Netherlands*. (Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2004) During World War II a young Dutch boy emulates his hero and conducts his own great skating race when he smuggles two children across the border to Belgium by skating with them down the canals of Holland. [History - World War II]

Borden, Louise. *Sleds on Boston Common: A Story from the American Revolution*. (Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2000) This book, based on local legend, tells the story of a nine-year-old boy in 1775 who, when he is unable to sled down Boston Common hill on his birthday, asks General Gage to move the British encampment out of the way. Personalizes history. [History - Revolutionary War]

Bower, Tamara. *How the Amazon Queen Fought the Prince of Egypt*. (Atheneum, 2005) This unusual book is based on one of the stories in *The Story-Cycle of King Petubast*. The hieroglyphics, the story, and the paintings all make this a major asset in teaching about the ancient world. [History; social studies; literature]

Bunting, Eve. *Gleam and Glow*. (Harcourt, 2001) Based on a true story. Gleam and Glow are goldfish who must be left behind when the family evacuates the town. When the family finally returns to total devastation, they find that the fish have not only survived, but have

- reproduced spectacularly. Pair with other war stories to show hope. [History - war in Bosnia]
- Bunting, Eve. *One Green Apple*. (Clarion, 2006) A young Muslim immigrant girl begins to assimilate into her new world on a school trip to a farm. [Immigration; multicultural; dealing with prejudice]
- Charles, Veronika Martenova. *The Birdman*. (Tundra, 2006) Fictionalizes story of Noor Nobi, a poor tailor in Calcutta, and his quest to free captured birds. Magnificent folkloric paintings and an afterword about the real Noor Nobi. Excellent for social studies multicultural units, especially for introducing material on modern day India. [Social studies, multicultural]
- Clements, Andrew. *A Million Dots*. (Simon & Schuster, 2005) Trivia that explains the meanings of quantities: "Tie 578, 504 shoelaces together, and they would reach from New York to Boston." [Math]
- Coerr, Eleanor. *Sadako*. (Putnam, 1993) Ed Young illustrates this picture book version of Coerr's *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, based on the video. It tells of the bombing of Hiroshima and the subsequent medical implications through the eyes of a child who tries to make 1000 paper cranes in hopes of being cured of leukemia. Especially useful where the longer text version is inaccessible to students. [history]
- Corpi, Lucha. *Where Fireflies Dance*. (Children's Book Press, 1997) This bilingual book was inspired by the author's childhood in Mexico. Colorful illustrations by Mira Reisberg enhance the warm feeling of a loving family. [Multicultural].
- Currier, Katrina Saltonstall. *Kai's Journey to Gold Mountain*. (Angel Island Association, 2005) Based on the true story of Albert "Kai" Wong and oral histories from other Chinese immigrants, Kai's Journey tells the story of Wong Kai Chong's entry into America in the 1930's through Angel Island in California. Contains vivid details of the journey from China and detention at Angel Island while waiting to be admitted. Pair with Ellis Island stories. [Immigration, history]
- Cushman, Doug. *Mystery of the Club Sandwich*. (Clarion, 2004) Humorous detective story, especially usable with older children with limited reading skills.
- Cutler, Jane. *The Cello of Mr. O*. (Dutton, 1999) In a war-torn city, Mr. O plays his cello each day to keep his neighbors' spirits up and to maintain a sense of normalcy. When the cello is destroyed in an attack, he continues his tradition by performing daily on the harmonica. Pair with *Sami and the Time of the Troubles*. [Music, history, war]
- Da Costa, Deborah. *Snow in Jerusalem*. (Whitman, 2001) Two boys in Jerusalem, one Arab and one Jewish, begin a friendship when they discover they have the love of a stray cat in common. [Multicultural, effects of war]
- Donahue, Moira. *Alphie the Apostrophe*. (Whitman, 2006) A fun story explaining some of the basics of punctuation painlessly! [Language arts]

- Dunlap, Julie and Marybeth Lorbiecki. *John Muir and Stickeen: An Icy Adventure with a No-Good Dog*. (NorthWord, 2004) The environmentalist and his unwelcome dog on an Alaskan glacier. [Social studies, environmental science]
- Fritz, Jean. *Leonardo's Horse*. (Putnam, 2001) Leonardo worked for years on a statue of a horse, but never completed it. This book details his steps as well as those of the people who honored him by completing his work. [Art, history, nonfiction]
- Garland, Sherry. *The Buffalo Soldier*. (Pelican, 2006) The story of one Black soldier's army career from the Indian wars through the Spanish-American is very personal and engaging. [History, multicultural]
- George, Jean Craighead. *Frightful's Journey*. (Dutton, 2002) A picture book continuation of the story of Frightful, a peregrine falcon that was introduced in *My Side of the Mountain*. Good to introduce that book as well as for science curricula. [Science]
- George, Jean Craighead. *Luck*. (Laura Geringer/HarperCollins, 2006) The story of the migration of a young sandhill crane and his family has a great deal of information about these birds as well as a subtle warning about pollution. [Science; Earth Day]
- Gilbert, Suzie. *Hawk Hill*. (Chronicle Books, 1996) Shy Pete moves to a new town, and he gradually becomes friends with a woman who rehabilitates injured raptors. The birds are especially well drawn, and there is a section in the back with illustrations and descriptions of 14 raptors. [Science]
- Guillot, Claude. *The Ghost of Shanghai*. (Abrams, 1999) A tale of life in modern Shanghai, with cultural details and many Chinese words, defined in a glossary. [Multicultural]
- Hazen, Barbara Shook. *Katie's Wish*. (Dial, 2002) As the Irish potato famine begins, Katie blames herself for causing it through her wishing potatoes to go away. Deeply personal tale of Irish immigration in the 1840's. Pair with Patricia Reilly Giff's *Nory Ryan's Song*. [Immigration, history]
- Heide, Florence Parry and Judith Heide Gilliland. *Sami and the Time of the Troubles*. (Clarion Books, 1992) The 1975 Lebanese civil war from the viewpoint of a ten-year-old boy, this resonates especially today. [History, social studies, war]
- Holman, Sandy Lynne. *Grandpa, Is Everything Black Bad?* (The Culture Co-op, 1998) A young boy learns from his grandfather to appreciate his African heritage. [Multicultural, history, values]
- Hopkinson, Deborah and James E. Ransome. *Sky Boys: How They Built the Empire State Building*. (Schwartz & Wade Books, 2006) A young boy watches it being built. [History, science]
- Krensky, Stephen. *Dangerous Crossing: The Revolutionary Voyage of John Quincy Adams*. (Dutton, 2005) In February 1778, Johnny Adams (later President John Quincy Adams) accompanied his father, John Adams, on a dangerous and exciting voyage to France to seek support for the colonies in the American Revolution. [History, social studies]

- Landowne, Youme. *Selavi, That is Life*. (Cinco Puntos Press, 2004) A contemporary story of homeless Haitian children and the founding of Lafanmi Selavi (a home for children) and Radyo Timoun (Children's Radio). While the story is fictionalized, the afterward contains information on the real Lafanmi Selavi and Radyo Timoun and an essay by author Edwidge Danticat. [Multicultural]
- Lasky, Kathryn. *She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head!* (Hyperion, 1995) David Catrow's illustrations lend humor to this book about the founding of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Hundreds of birds were killed and used to decorate hats, and at a time when women could not yet vote, two women set out to stop the slaughter. [Environmental issues]
- Lee, Milly. *Landed*. (Frances Foster Books, 2006) Similar to the earlier *Kai's Journey to Gold Mountain*, Milly Lee tells the story of her father-in-law's journey from China to America through Angel Island. Twelve-year old Lee Sun Choi travels with his father, and is nervous about the questions the immigration officials will ask. [Immigration]
- Lee, Milly. *Nim and the War Effort*. (Frances Foster Books, 1997) In San Francisco's Chinatown in 1943, Nim is collecting newspapers for the war effort, and wants to bring honor to her family by collecting the most papers in her school. [Multicultural, history, World War II].
- Lorenz, Albert. *Journey to Cahokia: A Boy's Visit to the Great Mound City*. (Harry N. Abrams, 2004) Little Hawk travels with his family from their home near modern day Lake Erie to Cahokia, the famous mound city on the Mississippi River. According to the Author's Note, the illustrations and information are as accurate as possible. [Archaeology]
- Lunn, Janet. *Charlotte*. (Tundra, 1998) This story of a child whose family and whole life are torn apart by the Revolutionary War is listed as nonfiction in the cataloging but is fictionalized. It brings to life what happened to families when Loyalists fled New York in 1783. Published by a Canadian press, this book has many uses, not least of all to teach point of view. [History – Revolutionary War, effects of war on families]
- Mak, Kam. *My Chinatown: One Year in Poems*. (Harper Collins Publishers, 2002) Mak describes and illustrates the sights and sounds of New York's Chinatown throughout the year from the perspective of a young boy. [Multicultural]
- McElroy, Lisa Tucker. *Love, Lizzie: Letters to a Military Mom*. (Whitman, 2005) Correspondence between a young girl and her mother, who is deployed overseas during the current war. Very useful with other war books to add immediacy. [War]
- McKay, Lawrence Jr. *Journey Home*. (Lee & Low Books, Inc., 1998) Mai travels with her mother to Vietnam to find her mother's birth family. Their only clue is a kite that she had when she came to America as a child. [Multicultural]
- McNulty, Faith. *If You Decide to Go to the Moon*. (Scholastic, 2005) Steven Kellogg illustrates this fact-filled imaginary adventure for young readers. [Science]
- Mobin-Uddin, Asma. *My Name is Bilal*. (Boyd's Mills Press, 2005) A brother and sister transfer to a new school where they are the only Muslim students. Bilal must decide whether or

not to stand up for his sister when she is picked on for wearing a headscarf.
[Multicultural]

Mochizuki, Ken. *Baseball Saved Us*. (Lee & Low, 1993) Still reeling from being interned in World War II, Japanese-American Shorty finds gratification and self-respect on the baseball field and develops skills that will help him when he returns to mainstream American life. [Japanese internment – World War II]

Myers, Walter Dean. *Jazz*. (Holiday House, 2006) Myers combines his poetic history of jazz with his son Christopher's amazing illustrations to produce an irresistible package to introduce jazz.curricula. A Caldecott Honor Book. {Music, poetry]

Myers, Walter Dean. *Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam*. (HarperCollins, 2002) The experiences of a scared young soldier in Vietnam translates well into today's war in Iraq. The illustrations make it accessible to kids who can't or won't read. Terrific as an introduction to the Vietnam War or to discussions about any war, including Iraq. [History, social studies, poetry]

Neuschwander, Cindy. *Sir Cumference and the Dragon of Pi: a Math Adventure* (Charlesbridge, 1999) and others in the series. Fun books to introduce math concepts. The most recent is *Sir Cumference and the Isle of Immeter* (Charlesbridge, 2006). [Math]

Noble, Trinka Hakes. *The Scarlet Stockings Spy*. (Thomson Gale, 2004) In 1777 Philadelphia, a young girl uses laundry on a clothesline to communicate information about British troop movements to her Patriot soldier brother. [History – American Revolution]

Park, Frances and Ginger Park. *The Royal Bee*. (Boyd's Mills, 2000) Based on the true story of the authors' grandfather in Korea, *The Royal Bee* tells the story of a poor boy who wins a province wide school competition. [Multicultural]

Parkhurst, Liz and Pam Strickland. *Under One Flag*. (August House, 2005) When Jeff, whose father is an administrator at the War Relocation Center at Rohwer, Arkansas (alternately called a prison camp), meets George, an inmate his own age, the boys become best friends. Japanese internment from the viewpoint of a European-American boy. [History – World War II]

Paul, Ann Whitford. *All by Herself: 14 Girls Who Made a Difference*. (Brown/deer/Harcourt Brace, 1999) Full-page paintings face poems celebrating the girlhood achievements of a variety of strong women. Great to introduce women's history or in character units. [History, social studies]

Perez, L. King. *First Day in Grapes*. (Lee & Low, 2002) Migrant worker Chico makes a place for himself in a new school through his math ability and his self-confidence. Pura Belpre Honor Book. [Multicultural]

Pilegard, Virginia Walton. *The Warlord's Beads*. (Pelican Publishing, 2001) This fictionalized account of a son helping his father count a warlord's treasure introduces the abacus. See other books in the series for other concepts. [Math]

- Piven, Hanoch. *What Presidents Are Made of*. (Atheneum, 2004) Collage illustrations representing, literally, what presidents are made of for each of the presidents pair with short phrases depicting the president's character and a short paragraph to illustrate the phrase. Wonderful for character units, units on presidents, art units. [Social studies, history, art]
- Polacco, Patricia. *Pink and Say*. (Philomel Books, 1994) Story of a young Union soldier helped by a young Black boy and his mother during the Civil War. Pair with James Collier's *With Every Drop of Blood*. [History – Civil War]
- Reynolds, Susan. *The First Marathon: The Legend of Pheidippides*. (Whitman, 2006) The story of Pheidippides, the runner who ran from the plain of Marathon to ask for help from Sparta for the Greeks' battle against the Persians, then ran back again to fight in the battle. Particularly good for cross-curricular units. [History – ancient Greece; physical education; Greek mythology units]
- Roth, Susan L. in association with Angelo Mafucci. *Do Re Mi: If You Can Read Music, Thank Guido d'Arezzo*. (Houghton Mifflin, 2006) A very simple biography of the medieval choirmaster who invented musical notation. [Music; middle ages]
- Rumford, James. *Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta, 1325-1354* (Houghton Mifflin, 2001) Ibn Battuta left Morocco and traveled the Eastern world in the 1300's. This beautiful book gives a lyrical introduction to this interesting figure. Pair with books on Marco Polo to give a balanced look at early explorers. [Multicultural, history, nonfiction]
- Russell, Barbara Timberlake. *Maggie's Amerikay*. (Melanie Kroupa Books/ Farrar, Straus and Giroux) In 1898 Maggie, an Irish immigrant, makes a place for herself in New Orleans. Excellent discussion of Black-Irish relations as well as a very good companion to Ellis Island and Angel Island stories. [History – immigration and assimilation, multicultural]
- Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride*. (Scholastic Press, 1999) A fictionalized anecdote illustrating the friendship of two strong women: Amelia Earhart and Eleanor Roosevelt, and night flight they took together. [Might be used as adjunct to history, but has basic factual flaws.]
- Schanzer, Rosalyn. *How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning*. (Harper Collins, 2003) This is not a biography of Franklin, but instead concentrates on his inventions, including lightning rods, bifocals, second hands, and stoves. Schanzer also describes some of his experiments, including of course the kite, but also how he discovered the Gulf Stream by taking water temperatures while sailing between England and America. [Science – nonfiction]
- Scieszka, John and Lane Smith. *Seen Art?* (Penguin, 2005) While looking for his friend Art, a young boy comes upon New York's Museum of Modern Art and its fantastic holdings. Great for introducing art. [Art]
- Schotter, Roni. *The Boy Who Loved Words*. (Schwartz & Wade, 2006) Selig's hobby is collecting words. Great for vocabulary.

- Schuch, Steve. *A Symphony of Whales*. (Harcourt Brace, 1999) Based on a true story of the rescue of Beluga whales trapped by the ice in the Senyavina Strait of Siberia. The whales eventually follow an icebreaker playing classical music back to the sea. [Science]
- Shea, Pegi Deitz. *The Carpet Boy's Gift*. (Tilbury House, Publishers, 2003) In this contemporary story, young Nadeem works at a Pakistani carpet factory all day, seven days a week to pay back a loan made to his parents. He discovers from Iqbal Masih that the Master of the carpet factor is ignoring laws and he and the other child workers do not need to stay. Based on true conditions in Pakistan, the back matter also describes the life of Iqbal, who was murdered at 12, and gives many links for discovering more about the issue. [Multicultural]
- Shlasko, Robert. *Molly and the Sword*. (Jane & Street, 1996) In a time of war, young Molly braves enemy troops to go to the village square for water for her family. She is challenged, but the enemy troop's commander orders her freed. Years later, having become a concert violinist against all odds, Molly performs in the country of the former enemy and is reunited with the former commander. [Strong women, war]
- Uchida, Yoshika. *The Bracelet*. (Philomel, 1976) As her family settles into the internment camp in 1942, Japanese-American Emi loses the bracelet her best friend gave her before she left Berkeley, California, but she learns that she doesn't need something material to remember her friend – or the life she left behind. [Japanese internment - World War II]
- Visconti, Guido and Bimba Landmann. *The Genius of Leonardo*. (Barefoot, 2000) Quotations from Leonardo's manuscripts enliven this biography told from the viewpoint of his apprentice. [History, science]
- Wang, Xiaohong. *One Year in Beijing*. (China Sprout, 2006) This Chinese-published book is an introduction to Chinese culture as seen through the eyes of a child in Beijing. Month-by-month discussions are followed with sections on food, holidays, places, and traditions. Pair with Claude Guillot's *The Ghost of Shanghai* for a good look at contemporary life in China. [Social Studies, multicultural]
- Wesley, Valerie. *Freedom's Gifts: A Juneteenth Story*. (Simon & Schuster, 1997). June and her cousin Lillie from New York City celebrate Juneteenth in Texas. Lillie learns that Juneteenth commemorates the day in June when slaves in Texas finally learned they were free, nearly two years after Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. [Multicultural].
- Williams, Mary. *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*. (Lee & Low, 2005) Written by the founder of The Lost Boys Foundation, this book tells one boy's story from age eight when he was separated from his family in Sudan by war until age 21 when he emigrated to the United States, including his wanderings around Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya, his time in refugee camps, and his association with other boys left on their own by war. [War, multicultural]
- Yin. *Brothers*. (Philomel, 2006) The sequel to *Coolies* (below), this tells the story of Ming, brother of the two in the first book, his arrival in San Francisco, and his friendship with an Irish boy whose family also had come to build the railroad. Glorious paintings depict

late nineteenth century San Francisco, while the text highlights the problems of the Chinese in the United States at that time. [History; multicultural]

Yin. *Coolies*. (Philomel, 2001) A luminously illustrated story of two Chinese brothers and the building of the railroad across the west in the 1800s. It is framed by a modern celebration of the Ching Ming Festival, a day of the dead when Chinese pay respect to their ancestors. [Multicultural, immigration, history]

Zaunders, Bo. *The Great Bridge-Building Contest*. (Abrams, 2004) Story of Lemuel Chenoweth and his covered bridge, designed in 1850 and still in use today. Great to introduce units on bridges, architecture, engineering. [History, science]

www.shens.com :A site that sells multicultural books, has a blog about multicultural literature, and links to other sites.

www.oyate.org: Recommends and sells books about Native Americans and Native American culture. Also has “Books to Avoid” section that reviews some books that are felt to have offensive portrayals of Native Americans.

<http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/>: Excellent resource for Children’s Literature information.

Also see the article *Examining Multicultural Picture Books for the Early Childhood Classroom: Possibilities and Pitfalls* by Jean Mendoza & Debbie Reese at <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v3n2/mendoza.html>.

<http://english.unitecology.ac.nz/resources/resources/picbooks.html> :A list from a New Zealand perspective.

http://www.childrenslit.com/th_picbkolder.html :A detailed annotated list of books from a reliable librarian-run website.

Robert, Joyce and Tammy Watanabe Hall. *Using Picture Books with Older Students*. (Prufrock Press, 1995). Quoted in our presentation. A literature search will produce other relevant titles.