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Children's Choices for 2008: A project of the International Reading Association and The Children's Book Council

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Children's Choices for 2008

**A project of the International Reading Association and The
Children's Book Council**

What Is the Children's Choices Project?

Each year 12,500 school children from different regions of the United States read and vote on the newly published children's and young adults' trade books that they like best. The Children's Choices for 2008 list is the 34th in a series that first appeared as "Classroom Choices" in the November 1975 issue of *The Reading Teacher (RT)*, a peer-reviewed journal for preschool, primary, and elementary levels published eight times a year by the International Reading Association (IRA). This list is designed for use not only by teachers, librarians, administrators, and booksellers, but also by parents, grandparents, caregivers, and everyone who wishes to encourage young people to read for pleasure.

Children's Choices is a project of a joint committee supported by IRA and The Children's Book Council (CBC). IRA is a nonprofit educational organization whose members include classroom and reading teachers, school administrators and supervisors, parents, college/university faculty, and others who are dedicated to improving reading instruction and promoting literacy worldwide.

The CBC is the nonprofit professional association of U.S. publishers and packagers of books for young people. It encourages childhood literacy through sponsorship of national initiatives including the annual observance of Children's Book Week and the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature program, as well as cooperative work with other professional associations.

In 1969, IRA and CBC formed a liaison committee to explore areas of mutual interest to reading teachers and publishers. Among the committee's initial charges was the development of a core selection of trade books for the classroom. This list of Children's Choices has remained an important activity of the committee, which each year produces this child-selected bibliography identifying titles that can be used successfully in reading programs, can be related to the classroom curricula, and are known to engage children.

How Are Books Selected and Annotated?

More than 500 books were evaluated by children for Children's Choices for 2008. The books to be tested were selected by publishers from the books they published in 2007 and were sent to five review teams located in different regions of the United States. Each team consisted of a children's literature specialist plus one or more classroom teachers, who in turn worked with other classroom teachers, school librarians, and more than 2,000 children. Throughout the school year the books were in classrooms, being read to or by children.

Children's votes were tabulated in March, and the top 94 titles for 2008 were announced at the annual International Reading Association Convention in May. The review teams provided an annotation for each title on the list.

What Bibliographic Information Is Provided?

Books selected for the Children's Choices list have been grouped by reading levels:

Beginning readers (grades K–2)

Young readers (grades 3–4)

Advanced readers (grades 5–6)

Users should note that many books read easily by beginning readers are also enjoyed by more advanced readers, and many titles for advanced readers are accessible to younger readers or can be read aloud in the classroom.

The title, author, illustrator (when not the author), publisher, and price are provided for each book as well as a brief annotation prepared by a review team. All books listed are hardcover unless otherwise noted. Prices are accurate as of late spring 2008; they are subject to change without notice. These abbreviations are provided for easy reference:

- Ill. illustrator of the book
- Pb. a paperback book
- (library) indicates the library edition of a book
- (trade) indicates the edition of the book available
from booksellers
- pp. page count
- F. paperback is forthcoming but not yet available

All books on this list should be available through your local library or a local bookseller.

Beginning Readers

The Adventures of Max and Pinky, Best Buds
Maxwell Eaton III.

Max, a boy, and Pinky, a pig, capture the imagination of young readers. This book is very easily read by children, but teachers and parents will also enjoy reading this story in class or at home. The book has the engaging universal theme of friendship. (Team 1)
Alfred A. Knopf/Random House Children's Books. 32 pp. US\$12.99 (trade). CAN\$16.99.

Big Bug Surprise
Julia Gran.

Prunella's unending knowledge of insects saves her class from disaster. As her class celebrates, Prunella presents her show-and-tell surprise, much to the delight of her classmates. (Team 2)
Scholastic. 32 pp. US\$12.99 (trade). CAN\$15.99.

Bunny Wishes: A Winter's Tale
Michaela Morgan. Ill. Caroline Jayne Church.

Bunnies Tino and Teeny leave a list of wishes in a hollow log. The list blows away in the winter wind and is found in pieces by mice, who rearrange the words into a new wish for the bunnies. (Team 3)
The Chicken House/Scholastic. 32 pp. US\$16.99 (trade).

Chester
Mélanie Watt.

“Once upon a time,” a huge cat named Chester took a red marker and rewrote Watt’s story about a “boring” mouse. Chester’s editing delights young readers as his humorous revisions make him the star of the book. (Team 4)

Kids Can. 32 pp. US\$18.95 (trade).

Deep in the Swamp

Donna M. Bateman. Ill. Brian Lies.

Young readers engage with poetry, information, and counting practice as they learn combined facts about swamps and the animals that live there. Illustrations are bright and entertaining. (Team 1)

Charlesbridge. 32 pp. US\$15.95 (trade). Pb., Charlesbridge.

US\$6.95.

Delicious! A Pumpkin Soup Story

Helen Cooper.

A duck, squirrel, and cat want pumpkin soup, but there are no pumpkins to use. Although the squirrel and cat make other soups they consider delicious, the duck insists that nothing else will do. Picky eaters will enjoy the duck’s antics with food. (Team 3)

Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 32 pp. US\$16.00 (trade).

Dino-Dinners

Mick Manning and Brita Granström.

In this colorful informational picture book about dinosaurs, sidebars provide interesting facts about each dinosaur, what it ate, and how it ate. Also included is information on how scientists have drawn conclusions about each dinosaur’s diet. (Team 5)

Holiday House. 32 pp. US\$16.95 (trade).

Dino-Hockey

Lisa Wheeler. Ill. Barry Gott.

The obvious attraction of this book is seeing dinosaurs act like humans playing hockey, Meat-Eaters vs. Veggiesaurs. Children love the realistic illustrations as they use their imaginations to learn about dinosaurs and hockey. (Team 1)

Carolrhoda. 32 pp. US\$16.95 (trade). CAN\$21.95.

Duck, Duck, Goose

Tad Hills.

Vivid, colorful characters Duck, Goose, and the new character, Thistle, instill believable messages of friendship and trying your best. Children can explore whether *the friends should accept Thistle and then* decide if these three characters can all be friends. (Team 1)

Schwartz & Wade Books/Random House Children’s Books. 40 pp. US\$15.99 (trade). CAN\$21.00.

Five Little Monkeys Go Shopping

Eileen Christelow.

Back-to-school shopping leads to 4, 3, 7, 3, 14, and finally 5 (no, 6!) little monkeys. In thinking bubbles, see the equations mom uses to add and subtract her monkeys as they wander off and come back again.

(Team 5)

Clarion. 32 pp. US\$16.00 (trade).

Frankie Stein

Lola M. Schaefer. Ill. Kevan Atteberry.

Frankie Stein is a cute baby, but his parents fear he will never be as scary as they are until they learn to see him for the unique Stein that he is in this humorous story. (Team 3)
Marshall Cavendish Children's Books. 32 pp. US\$14.99 (trade).

Ginger Bear

Mini Grey.

This is a humorous tale of a young British boy, Horace, who makes a gingerbread bear. Ginger Bear has adventures as he makes new friends and escapes the family dog. The story comes alive through the detailed illustrations. (Team 4)
Alfred A. Knopf/Random House Children's Books. 32 pp. US\$15.99 (trade). CAN\$21.00.

Grumpy Bird

Jeremy Tankard.

This story is about a bird that wakes up grumpy. It takes some animal friends to help brighten his day by joining him on a walk. Children will easily make a text-to-self connection to the bird and his grumpy feelings. (Team 4)
Scholastic. 32 pp. US\$12.99 (trade). CAN\$15.99.

How Do Dinosaurs Go to School?

Jane Yolen. Ill. Mark Teague.

Large, bright-colored dinosaur characters dwarf teachers and children as the author first speculates about how rebellious the dinosaurs might be and then tells how cooperative and well-behaved they are. The simple text is accessible for young readers. (Team 3)
The Blue Sky Press/Scholastic. 40 pp. US\$16.99 (trade). CAN\$20.99.

How to Be a Baby, by Me the Big Sister

Sally Lloyd-Jones. Ill. Sue Heap.

Big sister explains things you CAN'T do as a baby and things you CAN do as an older child. The humorous story and illustrations help older children appreciate their accomplishments while gaining a better understanding of younger siblings. (Team 4)
Schwartz & Wade Books/Random House Children's Books. 40 pp. US\$15.99 (trade). CAN\$21.00.

I'd Really Like to Eat a Child

Sylviane Donnio. Ill. Dorothée de Monfreid.

Young crocodile Achilles really wants to eat a child, until he meets one and decides that he may not be as big and ferocious as he believes he is. (Team 3)
Random House Books for Young Readers. 32 pp. US\$14.99 (trade). CAN\$19.95.

Millie Waits for the Mail

Alexander Steffensmeier.

Millie the Cow loves to scare the mailman every day. When Millie's tricks leave the mailman in a mess, she learns to love something new. Children make many text-to-self connections to Millie and her silly tricks and hiding places. (Team 4)
Walker Books for Young Readers. 32 pp. US\$16.95 (trade). US\$17.85 (library).

The Perfect Nest

Catherine Friend. Ill. John Manders.

This is a story about Jack, a cat who builds the perfect nest to attract the perfect egg for his omelet. However, Jack winds up with more than he bargained for. Students will enjoy making predictions about what they think will happen next. (Team 4)

Candlewick. 40 pp. US\$16.99 (trade).

Polar Slumber

Dennis Rockhill.

A girl builds a snow bear, dreaming it comes to life. The book introduces arctic animals, including polar bears. Children are drawn to the realistic, colorful illustrations. Readers wonder, “Did the bear really come to life?” and “Where is he?” (Team 4)

Raven Tree. 32 pp. US\$16.95 (trade). Pb., Raven Tree Press. US\$7.95.

There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Fly Guy

Tedd Arnold.

Here’s a creative spin on the classic tale of the old woman who swallowed a fly. It’s highly recommended by first graders; the pictures help students decode words that they otherwise may not know, thereby building their reading confidence. (Team 4)

Cartwheel Books. 32 pp. US\$5.99 (trade). CAN\$7.99.

The Three Little Fish and the Big Bad Shark

Ken Geist. Ill. Julia Gorton.

In this take on The Three Little Pigs, Jim builds a house of seaweed, Tim builds a sand house, and Kim’s wooden ship house saves them all. Easy, patterned language makes this very accessible for early readers. (Team 3)

Cartwheel Books. 32 pp. US\$6.99 (trade). CAN\$8.99.

Tucker’s Spooky Halloween

Leslie McGuirk.

An adorable little dog decides that he wants a fearsome costume for Halloween instead of the usual cute costume that his people get for him. The bright colors and whimsical ideas of the dog will delight small children. (Team 2)

Candlewick. 28 pp. US\$7.99 (trade).

Tyson the Terrible

Diane Fox and Christyan Fox.

Dinosaur children hear the “Boom! Boom!” of the so-called fiercest dinosaur. They hide and hear a tiny tyrannosaurus sobbing and wondering why everyone runs from him. As they invite him to play, his little brother pops up, surprising everyone. (Team 5)

Bloomsbury Children’s Books. 24 pp. US\$12.95 (trade).

Young Readers

The Amazing Spider-Man Pop-Up

Marvel Comics.

This pop-up hardback comic book draws in young readers with the history of Spider-Man and his enemies. Spider-Man's beginning story is woven in, explaining how he changed from an attention-seeking boy to a man who does good deeds for people. (Team 3)

Candlewick. 16 pp. US\$19.99 (trade).

Animals in the House: A History of Pets and People

Sheila Keenan. Ill. with photographs.

Fascinating facts, historical details, endearing animal photographs, and some famous people with their pets are presented in a colorful and inviting format that provides young pet lovers with an abundance of reasons for why we love our furry or feathered friends. (Team 4)

Scholastic Nonfiction. 112 pp. US\$17.99 (trade). CAN\$21.99.

Babymouse: Camp Babymouse

Jennifer L. Holm and Matthew Holm.

Spirited Babymouse is back and, this time she goes to camp. As she tries to help her cabin mates win the coveted camp award, things don't go as planned, but Babymouse makes it a memorable experience nonetheless. (Team 3)

Random House Books for Young Readers. 96 pp. US\$12.99 (library). Pb., Random House Books for Young Readers. US\$5.99. CAN\$6.99.

Babymouse: Heartbreaker

Jennifer L. Holm and Matthew Holm.

Babymouse daydreams about her date for the Valentine's Day dance. When she can't get a date, she goes alone. She is bored and about to go home when Georgie (a giraffe) asks her to dance. The evening ends happily. (Team 5)

Random House Books for Young Readers. 96 pp. US\$12.99 (library). Pb., Random House Books for Young Readers. US\$5.99. CAN\$6.99.

Big Cats: Hunters of the Night

Elaine Landau. Ill. with photographs.

Beautiful photographs of wild cats from around the world draw readers into this accessible nonfiction book. With all the components of good expository texts, this book informs readers that big cats' greatest enemies are humans who clear-cut jungles and forests. (Team 3)

Enslo Publishers. 32 pp. US\$22.60 (library).

The Book Club Kit

Patti Kelley Criswell. Ill. Ali Douglass.

This kit contains helpful directions for starting a book club and includes question cards, bookmarks, and activity cards. Suggestions for being a good listener and participant are also included to encourage readers to talk about what they are reading. (Team 3)

American Girl Publishing. 56 pp. US\$10.95 (trade).

Could You? Would You?

Trudy White.

This wonderful book allows children to imagine things that they would do if they could. This is a book that everyone can relate to, no matter their background. (Team 4)

Kane/Miller. 89 pp. Pb., US\$12.95. CAN\$15.95.

Crazy Cars

Matt Doeden. Ill. with photographs.

From Henry Ford's Quadricycle to the fastest dragster, the most unique cars of all time are spotlighted in this captivating book that enthralls young readers as they learn about the intriguing history and continuing fascination with the automobile. (Team 4)

Lerner. 48 pp. US\$26.60 (library).

Dare to Dream!

Carl Sommer. Ill. Jorge Martinez, Greg Budwine, and Kennon James.

By listening to stories told by his father and grandparents, a young boy learns how choices can lead to overcoming adversity. The lives of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington Carver, Ben Franklin, and Helen Keller are highlighted. (Team 2)

Advance Publishers. 48 pp. US\$9.95 (library).

Dinosaurium: 10 Books in One

Laura Buller and Carey Scott.

There's a book for every dinosaur characteristic in this cleverly packaged assortment of fossil knowledge. Dinopedia, Dino Dinners, Dino Swatch (of skins!), Dinotimeline, and others that offer endless prehistoric engagement for kids who are wild about dinosaurs. (Team 4)

DK Publishing. 20 pp. US\$24.99 (trade). CAN\$29.99.

Dinosaurs Across America

Phil Yeh.

Patrick Rabbit and three dinosaur friends take a trip through a magic map to learn about all of the United States. In graphic novel format, information for each state is accessible and encourages further reading to learn more. (Team 3)

Nantier Beall Minoustchine Publishing. 32 pp. US\$12.95 (trade).

Do Not Open: An Encyclopedia of the World's Best-Kept Secrets

John Farndon.

The name of the book alone gets readers to pick it up. Once open, the reader finds it packed with weird and interesting facts. Readers engage in learning through rich illustrations of the world's best-kept secrets. This book contains much more than just trivia. (Team 1)

DK Publishing. 256 pp. US\$24.99 (trade). CAN\$29.99.

Dog Diaries: Secret Writings of the WOOF Society

Betsy Byars, Betsy Duffey, and Laurie Myers. Ill. Erik Brooks.

These short stories show life through a dog's eyes. Some have historical settings like ancient Egypt, and some explain quirky dog behavior. All are told simply and humorously, as a dog might, so they are easily

understood by younger readers. (Team 4)
Henry Holt. 64 pp. US\$15.95 (trade). CAN\$19.95.

Dogs

Meish Goldish. Ill. with photographs.

From the Smart Animals series, *Dogs* uses simple, informational text and photographs to describe how intelligent and loyal these canines are. Two-page chapters discuss topics such as service dogs, the smartest dogs, Pavlov's experiments, and wild dogs. This book includes a glossary, bibliography, and index. (Team 5)

Bearport. 32 pp. US\$18.95 (library).

Encyclopedia Brown Cracks the Case

Donald J. Sobol.

Children will enjoy beating *Encyclopedia* to the solution in each of these 10 short stories. The cases require different knowledge to solve them so this collection is good for history buffs or budding scientists. (Team 2)

Dutton. 90 pp. US\$15.99 (trade). CAN\$20.00. Pb., Puffin. US\$4.99.

Every Minute on Earth: Fun Facts That Happen Every 60 Seconds

Steve Murrie and Matthew Murrie. Ill. Mary Anne Lloyd.

Readers find this book to be a fun way to learn facts about our planet and challenge other readers to match wits as they become knowledgeable citizens of the earth. Students learn nonfiction can be fun. (Team 1)

Scholastic Reference. 224 pp. Pb., US\$9.99. CAN\$11.99.

Explorer: A Daring Guide for Young Adventurers

Dugald A. Steer. Ill. Milivoj Ceran and Alastair Graham.

Go forth and explore! Armed with sage advice, historical examples, and helpful instructions, readers are encouraged to become explorers with fun pop-ups, booklets, flaps, letters, and even an adventurer's board game in this interactive informational book. (Team 3)

Candlewick. 32 pp. US\$15.99 (trade).

Extreme Dinosaurs

Robert Mash. Ill. Stuart Martin.

The oldest, smallest, heaviest, toughest, fastest, slowest, most ferocious, longest, tallest, smartest, and most extreme eaters are among the dinosaurs described in this book. Drawings, photographs, posters, foldouts, and movable parts help readers learn more about these animals. (Team 5)

Atheneum. 32 pp. US\$21.99 (trade). CAN\$26.99.

Extreme Pets!

Jane Harrington. Ill. with photographs.

A humorous and informative guide to unusual pets, such as skunks, hedgehogs, slugs, and hissing cockroaches. Each pet is graded for coolness, aroma, neatness, ease of care, and cost. Kids also learn how to convince their parents they need one. (Team 5)

Scholastic Reference. 163 pp. US\$12.99 (trade). CAN\$14.99.

Goosebumps Graphix 3: Terror Trips

R.L. Stine. Ill. Jill Thompson, Jamie Tolagson, and Amy Kim Ganter.

Stine's brand of horror combines with the graphic novel format to grab readers' attention. The book provides fun and scary tales in short, easy reads, a genre enjoyed by this age group. Black and white illustrations and different art styles add to the intrigue. (Team 1)

Graphix. 140 pp. US\$16.99 (trade). US\$17.99 (library). CAN\$20.99. Pb., Graphix. US\$8.99.

A Horse in the House and Other Strange but True Animal Stories

Gail Ablow. Ill. Kathy Osborn.

A Komodo dragon undergoes acupuncture, donkeys get married, a parrot captures robbers, a greyhound wears contact lenses, a cow eats diamonds, an elephant is fitted with dentures, a chicken visits a psychologist, and more "strange but true" stories can be found in this book. (Team 5)

Candlewick. 40 pp. US\$17.99 (trade).

How Big Is It? A BIG Book All About BIGNESS

Ben Hillman. Ill. with photographs.

Living, extinct, human-made, and geological BIG wonders fill this book. Interesting facts accompany large photographs that provide visual comparisons to show the true enormity of these objects. Layout, pictures, and information make this book irresistible.

Scholastic Reference. 48 pp. US\$14.99 (trade). CAN\$17.99.

Medical Detective Dogs

Frances E. Ruffin. Ill. with photographs.

Young readers love dogs. The fact that dogs can be used to help people detect illnesses is even more intriguing. Readers find this book factual, informative, and very interesting. (Team 1)

Bearport Publishing. 32 pp. US\$18.95 (library).

Military Dogs

Frances E. Ruffin. Ill. with photographs.

This book traces the history of dogs in the military from 1884 to the present. Illustrations provide photographs of dogs in action during war. The stories about dogs who became heroes especially interests boys in this age group. (Team 2)

Bearport Publishing. 32 pp. US\$18.95 (library).

Monday With a Mad Genius

Mary Pope Osborne. Ill. Sal Murdocca.

In this educational fiction book, Jack and Annie magically travel back in time to meet Leonardo da Vinci through whom they also meet Mona Lisa. History comes alive as readers learn about the Renaissance and search for the secrets of happiness. (Team 1)

Random House. 128 pp. US\$14.99 (library). US\$11.99 (trade). CAN\$15.99. Pb., Random House. US\$4.99.

Mythology

Dugald A. Steer.

The illustrations, maps, and interactive pop-ups in this book will develop a child's interest in mythology. Add to that a sidebar of mystery on every page and they will learn the relationships between the

characters in no time. (Team 2)
Candlewick. 32 pp. US\$19.99 (trade). Pb., Back Bay Books. US\$13.99.

Old Penn Station
William Low.

This story accurately chronicles the rise and fall of an amazing building during the height of train travel in and out of New York City. Readers are engaged by lifelike illustrations. (Team 1)
Henry Holt. 40 pp. US\$16.95 (trade). CAN\$21.00.

The Painted Circus
Wallace Edwards.

Each page reveals an intriguing optical illusion or visual puzzle for the reader to solve, from spotting pirates to counting ducks. This delightful book will charm and entertain young readers. (Team 3)
Kids Can. 32 pp. US\$17.95 (trade).

Race Horses
Michael Sandler. Ill. with photographs.

From the Horse Power series, this volume uses simple informational text and photographs to describe horse racing, famous races, and some of the most famous race horses. A table of contents, index, and glossary are included. (Team 5)
Bearport Publishing. 32 pp. US\$18.95 (library).

Real-Life Sea Monsters
Judith Jango-Cohen. Ill. Ryan Durney.

This book asks, Are sea monsters fact or fiction? Vivid illustrations grab the reader's attention from the first page. Deep-sea tall tales are contrasted with current research. (Team 4)
Millbrook. 48 pp. US\$25.26 (library).

The Richest Poor Kid
Carl Sommer. Ill. Jorge Martinez.

In a modern-day twist on the story of King Midas's touch, Randy learns that if you have a loving home, clothes to wear, and food to eat you can be happy. This book teaches the character traits of appreciation, cheerfulness, and trust. (Team 2)
Advance Publishing. 48 pp. US\$16.95 (library). US\$9.99 (trade).

Scholastic Book of World Records 2008
Jennifer Corr Morse. Ill. with photographs.

Fascinating photographs and text in almanac format works perfectly for readers in this age group. Well-written, concise, and interesting details engage students, who will not want to stop reading. (Team 1)
Scholastic Reference. 304 pp. US\$9.99 (trade). CAN\$11.99.

See What You Can Be: Explore Careers That Could Be for You!
Diane Heiman and Liz Suneby. Ill. Tracey Wood.

An appealing journal format, lively cartoons and photographs, engaging activities that match personalities and interests to potential career choices, combined with spotlights on real women in real professions, give

young girls a wide range of future possibilities to explore. (Team 4)
American Girl Publishing. 108 pp. Pb., US\$9.95.

Spike the Rebel!

Carl Sommer. Ill. Enrique Vignolo.

Spike is a big bully who thinks that he doesn't need anybody. But when he is hurt and a neighbor helps him, he discovers that kindness and caring for others is important after all. (Team 2)
Advance Publishing. 48 pp. US\$16.95 (library).

Turtle Summer: A Journal for My Daughter

Mar y Alice Monroe. Photographs by Barbara J. Bergwerf.

The nature photography and sketches in this book will teach young children about the wonders of the sea turtle and how to respect and preserve the turtles' natural habitat. (Team 2)
Sylvan Dell. 32 pp. US\$15.95 (trade). Pb., Sylvan Dell. US\$8.95.

Wolves

Duncan Searl. Ill. with photographs.

Everything you need to know about wolves is here. The text includes sections on wolves' intelligence, life in the wild, and protection as an endangered species. This is a great resource for reports, due to the number of quick facts. (Team 2)
Bearport Publishing. 32 pp. US\$18.95 (library).

The Worst Name in Third Grade

Debbie Dadey. Ill. Tamara Petrosino.

What could be worse than being named Bridgett Butt? Nothing—until her favorite teacher moves, her best friend chooses someone else, and Bridgett's beloved dog becomes ill (but only temporarily). Although things look bleak, all is well in the end. (Team 5)
Scholastic Paperbacks. 66 pp. Pb., US\$3.99 (trade). CAN\$4.99.

Advanced Readers An Inconvenient Truth: The Crisis of Global Warming

Al Gore. Adapted by Jane O'Connor.

Gore makes a convincing argument through simple, short text and illustrative photographs, maps, and graphs that show how global warming is causing major problems. He encourages U.S. citizens (even children) to take responsibility for making lifestyle changes to help combat global warming. (Team 5)
Penguin Young Readers Group. 192 pp. US\$23.00 (trade). CAN\$28.50.

Beowulf: Monster Slayer

Paul D. Storie. Ill. Ron Randall.

The heroic exploits of Beowulf are recounted in this well-researched graphic novel. The story begins when Beowulf slays the monster, Grendel, and ends when he—an old man and king—is killed by a dragon but not before he helps destroy it. (Team 5)
Graphic Universe. 48 pp. US\$26.60 (library).

Blue Lipstick: Concrete Poems

John Grandits.

Humorous poems about topics near and dear to adolescent girls' hearts, such as a bad hair day, pep rallies, brothers, secrets, volleyball practice, and adults who talk but don't listen. Read this book for fun or for studying poetry. (Team 5)

Clarion. 48 pp. US\$14.60 (library). US\$15.00 (trade). CAN\$19.95. Pb., Clarion. US\$5.95.

Bone #5: Rock Jaw: Master of the Eastern Border

Jeff Smith.

The Bones go into the wilderness to return a lost rat cub to its mountain home and encounter Rock Jaw, a mountain lion, and Kingdok, the leader of the rats, in this fifth book of the Bone series. (Team 3)

Graphix. 116 pp. US\$19.99 (trade). CAN\$24.99. Pb., Graphix. US\$9.99.

Bone #6: Old Man's Cave

Jeff Smith.

The action continues as the Bone cousins and Thorn seek to outwit the rat creatures and the Lord of the Locusts. Dreams haunt Thorn, who begins to mistrust her grandmother and so leaves her. The ominous ending forecasts terror. (Team 3)

Graphix. 118 pp. US\$19.99 (trade). CAN\$24.99. Pb., Graphix. US\$9.99.

The Book of Time

Guillaume Prévost. Trans. William Rodarmor.

Beautiful artwork and readable text encourage teenage readers to follow Sam's suspenseful travel through time periods in this first book of the series. Students who love history and imagination will make a strong connection with the lifelike characters. (Team 1)

Arthur A. Levine. 240 pp. US\$29.95 (library). US\$16.99 (trade). CAN\$20.99. Pb., Scholastic Paperbacks. US\$6.99.

The Cat Master

Bonnie Pemberton.

This is a raw, uncompromising look at the lives of feral and indoor cats. Conflict between good and evil erupts when the current cat master dies and a new one must be chosen. Prejudice is overcome and good prevails. (Team 4)

Marshall Cavendish Children's Books. 272 pp. US\$16.99 (trade).

Children's Night Sky Atlas: The Universe Mapped, Explored, and Revealed

Robin Scagell. Ill. with photographs.

An interesting and beautifully represented view of the universe for the budding astronomer and stargazer. This book is full of facts, illustrations, and clear overlays to keep young readers engaged. (Team 1)

DK Publishing. 48 pp. US\$19.99 (trade). CAN\$24.99.

Clarice Bean, Don't Look Now

Lauren Child.

The Ruby Redfort Survival Handbook is Clarice's guide for living and knowing what to do in situations that only young adolescent girls can imagine. Clarice worries about everything, especially the worst worry she did not even know she had to worry about. (Team 5)

Candlewick. 256 pp. US\$15.99 (trade). Pb., Candlewick. US\$5.99.

The Companions Quartet, Book One: Secret of the Sirens
Julia Golding.

This is the engaging and original story of Connie, a young woman able to communicate with animals and mythical creatures. Students love this fast-paced magical adventure story. (Team 1)
Marshall Cavendish Children's Books. 368 pp. US\$16.99 (trade).

Cracker! The Best Dog in Vietnam
Cynthia Kadohata. Ill. with photographs.

Cracker, a German Shepherd, and Rick, his human handler, train together and participate in difficult missions during the Vietnam War. After being separated in an ambush, their bond is demonstrated as they search for (and eventually find) each other. (Team 5)
Atheneum. 320 pp. US\$16.99 (trade). CAN\$19.99. Pb., Aladdin. US\$7.99.

Demonkeeper
Royce Buckingham.

Not all demons are evil, some are merely mischievous. It is Nat's job as Demon keeper to prevent them from harming humans and humans from harming them. His fast-paced adventures keep readers laughing while they hide under the covers. (Team 2)
G.P. Putnam's Sons. 216 pp. US\$15.99 (trade). CAN\$20.00. Pb., Puffin. US\$7.99.

Diary of a Renaissance Man: Axioms, Aphorisms, Art, and Poetry
John D. Evans.

The candor, wit, stealth, and poignancy of the words of poet John Evans grabs young readers, surrounding them with words of belief, understanding, strife, life, and diversity. An inspiring collection of poetry in tribute to the Harlem Renaissance writers. (Team 1)
iUniverse. 108 pp. Pb., US\$13.95.

The Down-to-Earth Guide to Global Warming
Laurie David and Cambria Gordon. Ill. with photographs.

Difficult concepts about global warming are explained as apt analogies of everyday situations. Students respond to this presentation of global warming as a serious problem they can help fix. Practical projects for children are found in the final chapter. (Team 4)
Orchard Books. 112 pp. Pb., US\$15.99. CAN\$19.99.

Eli Remembers
Ruth Vander Zee and Marian Sneider. Ill. Bill Farnsworth.

Eli learns the secret to the sadness that surrounds the family's celebration of Rosh Hashanah. In learning the secret, he understands his family heritage and vows to remember what happened in the Ponar Forest. (Team 2)
Eerdmans Books for Young Readers. 32 pp. US\$18.00 (trade).

Encyclopedia Horrifica: The Terrifying TRUTH! About Vampires, Ghosts, Monsters, and More
Joshua Gee. Ill. with photographs.

This intriguing collection of eyewitness accounts, interviews, and images includes ghostbusters, aliens, phantoms, mummies, and vampires to name just a few. Horror fans will enjoy this page-turning

anthology. (Team 3)
Scholastic Paperbacks. 129 pp. US\$14.99 (trade). CAN\$18.99.

Feathers

Jacqueline Woodson.

Hope is the thing with feathers—a line from an Emily Dickinson poem—is the sentiment that sets the stage for this story. Frannie learns to look beneath the surface and discover who people really are, always hoping that there is good in everyone. (Team 3)
G.P. Putnam's Sons. 118 pp. US\$15.99 (trade). CAN\$20.00.

Ghosts

Stephen Krensky.

This informational book examines topics such as why people have been intrigued by ghosts for centuries, famous ghosts from the past, modern ghosts, haunted places, how to contact ghosts, and movies and television shows that feature ghosts. (Team 5)
Lerner Publications. 48 pp. US\$26.60 (library).

Girl Wonders

Karen Salmansohn.

Girl Wonders contains a series of wonderings by Alexandra, who isn't quite sure what being a teen is all about. Readers will laugh out loud at her bizarre family and friends and will identify with her as she experiences her first crush. (Team 2)
Topeka Bindery. 128 pp. US\$15.95 (library). Pb., Tricycle Press. US\$6.95.

Hottest NASCAR Machines

K.C. Kelley. Ill. with photographs.

Facts about race cars, people that drive them, and the sport of racing itself can be found here. The text has been written to engage any young race car enthusiast and is well stocked with photographs. This book appeals to spectators as well as aspiring drivers. (Team 1)
Enslow Publishers. 48 pp. US\$23.93. (library).

The Invention of Hugo Cabret

Brian Selznick.

The combination of graphics, black and white photographs, and absorbing, unique text make this a must-read book. Readers feel a kinship with the main character and enjoy his fantastic adventure. This is a sure winner. (Team 1)
Scholastic. 544 pp. US\$22.99 (trade). CAN\$27.99.

Lawn Boy

Gary Paulsen.

The first-person account of a 12-year-old who used his grandfather's riding lawn mower to make money is also a story of investment, undocumented workers, boxing, and a protection racket. Students love the action and humor as well as the big summer money! (Team 3)
Wendy Lamb Books/Random House Children's Books. 96 pp. US\$15.99 (library). CAN\$16.99. US\$12.99 (trade).

Middle School Is Worse Than Meatloaf: A Year Told Through Stuff

Jennifer L. Holm. Ill. Elicia Cataldi.

Follow the clues left in this mixed diary/scrapbook as it traces a girl's journey through seventh grade and the stresses of middle school. During this time, she also has to deal with the major adjustment of a new stepfather after losing her father years ago. (Team 4)

Atheneum. 128 pp. US\$12.99 (trade).

Nancy Drew Graphic Novels, Girl Detective #9: Ghost in the Machinery

Stefan Petrucha. Ill. Sho Murase.

Nancy and her friends are looking for a lost engine that gets 200 miles to the gallon. Students like Nancy Drew in graphic format. The bright colors and quick pace of the book keep readers engrossed. (Team 4)

Papercutz. 112 pp. US\$16.95 (library). US\$12.95 (trade). Pb., Papercutz. US\$7.95

The Phantom Isles

Stephen Alter.

Readers engage in this strange ghost tale told through experiences viewed from different perspectives. A creative, entertaining, and informative novel for students who love exploring spirits from the dead. (Team 1)

Bloomsbury Children's Books. 224 pp. US\$16.95 (trade). Pb., Bloomsbury Children's Books. US\$6.95.

Sea Monsters: A Prehistoric Adventure

Marfe Ferguson Delano.

This text combines colorful, vivid, lifelike illustrations with a personalized story line about a young prehistoric creature's life and quest for survival. Universal lessons of life and death during a full year capture the imagination of students. (Team 1)

National Geographic Children's Books. 32 pp. US\$22.90 (library). Pb., National Geographic Children's Books. US\$6.95

The Short and Incredibly Happy Life of Riley

Colin Thompson and Amy Lissiat.

This book compares the life of a content rat, Riley, to people's lives (especially those who are often not content) in a life lesson of sorts. The book ends with this advice to keep life simple: Release your inner Riley. (Team 3)

Kane/Miller. 32 pp. US\$15.95 (trade). CAN\$19.95.

The Spatulatta Cookbook

Isabella Gerasole and Olivia Gerasole.

This kid-friendly cookbook presents recipes from the webcast Spatulatta.com. Some of the recipes are funny but all are easy to make. Children especially enjoy growing their own Easter grass and making Weiner Weenie Dogs. (Team 2)

Dogs. (Team 2)

Scholastic Reference. 128 pp. US\$16.99 (trade). CAN\$19.99.

Summerhouse Time

Eileen Spinelli. Ill. Joanne Lew-Vriethoff.

This collection of poems tells a story. Sophie shares all her summertime rituals and the adventures of one summer at the beach with her cat, Orange, and cousin Colleen. (Team 2)

Alfred A. Knopf/Random House Children's Books. 224 pp. US\$15.99 (library). US\$12.99 (trade). CAN\$16.99.

Twelve

Lauren Myracle.

Follow Winnie month by month during the year she turns 12. This year brings many changes: breasts, menstruation, pierced ears, the trauma of losing a best friend, and the experience of making new ones. All girls will relate to this humorous, true-to-life story. (Team 5)

Dutton. 202 pp. US\$15.99 (trade). CAN\$20.00. Pb., Puffin. US\$6.99.

Way Down Deep

Ruth White.

A young girl finds herself discovering who her real family is and how she came to be found in a place called Way Down Deep, West Virginia. This story will resonate with tweens who struggle with their identity. (Team 2)

Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers. 208 pp. US\$16.00 (trade). CAN\$20.00.

When the Shadbush Blooms

Carla Mesinger and Susan Katz. Ill. David Kanietakeron Fadden.

This book is arranged so that each two-page spread compares life through the seasons for the Lenape people in the 1600s and today. Children love reading the Native American words that accompany the text. (Team 2)

Tricycle. 32 pp. US\$15.95 (trade).

Wildwood Dancing

Juliet Marillier.

The cover of this fantasy explains it all...enchanted forests, bewitched frogs, lovely young girls, and a handsome prince. Five sisters from Transylvania struggle to save their beloved woods and end up finding true love. (Team 2)

Knopf Books for Young Readers. 432 pp. US\$16.99 (trade). Pb., Knopf Books for Young Readers. US\$9.99.

Yu the Great: Conquering the Flood

Paul D. Storr. Ill. Sandy Carruthers.

Through his ingenuity and persistence, Yu the Great—a hero in Chinese mythology—conquers the floods that have plagued China for decades. Eventually, he becomes emperor and his son establishes the Xia Dynasty. (Team 5)

Graphic Universe. 48 pp. US\$26.60 (library). Pb., Graphic Universe. US\$8.95.

Tips for Parents, Primary Caregivers, and Educators

Initial Book Activities

One of the easiest ways to begin telling the story of a book is through the use of illustrations. Most books for young children are illustrated in great detail, and noting important details related to the characters, plot, and setting will provide a wholesome first literacy activity.

- Set aside a regular time and place for books so that reading books becomes as natural as eating and sleeping.
- Browse through books to help the child become familiar with books and how they are handled.
- Read the story while the child points to the pictures. Adult and child can repeat interesting sounds, repetitive word patterns, and distinctive word features to the delight of both.
- Have the child tell the story using the illustrations, while the adult reinforces the telling. The two can predict outcomes, discuss how the characters feel, and relate the events to their own experiences.
- Read the book to the child and enjoy it together. Retell the story together and talk about the characters, setting, plot, and life experiences.
- Compare the similarities and differences of children's books available as video productions.
- Have children make responses to the books read through art reproductions such as drawings or by using clay, papiermâché, dioramas, or fingerpaints.
- Make regular trips to the library and attend storytelling sessions. Visit bookstores together to begin a personal library for a child.

Beginning Reading-Level Activities

Children at this level should be encouraged to browse through books and pretend to read the story, an initial step toward becoming an independent reader. Children may tell the story to themselves or attempt to read frequently highlighted words.

- Read the story as the child points to the pictures on each page.
- Let the child pretend to read the story as the adult points to the pictures.
- Read alternate pages, ask each other questions, and discuss the story. The adult models what he or she thinks of when reading the page so the child gets a variety of perspectives on the ways words have different meanings.
- Use computer programs to expand a child's interest in specific topics and to provide valuable information for later curriculum study.
- Compare and contrast video adaptations of children's books for this and more advanced literacy levels.

Primary-Grade Book Activities

- Continue to spend time reading with the child; set aside a specific time and place.
- Be familiar with Children's Choices books and other high-quality children's literature.

- Become aware of the interests of your children and of books that extend life experiences so they know what happens in the world around them.
- Encourage children to share books read in school with parents and caregivers at home. Parents and caregivers should encourage children to share books they've read at home with their teachers and schoolmates.
- Continue to extend the information and knowledge bases through computer programs and other technology that capitalize on topics initiated through reading.

Independent Reader Activities

- Challenge readers to compare and contrast books.
- Encourage children to develop an interest in a variety of genres, such as biography, historical fiction, and poetry.
- Encourage children to read books related to beginning career and vocational choices.
- Seek a balance between school book activities; home and school literature activities; and familiarity with newspapers, magazines, and other text media that address contemporary social, cultural, and civic issues.

Develop the Desire to Be a Lifelong Reader

- Have students bring what is read to bear on what is viewed on film, television, and computer and other media technologies.
- View technology in the reflection of the literature.
- Keep in mind that the most memorable conversations are often filled with anecdotes from literature.
- Relate what has been read to the solution of problems. By internalizing what has been read, we use knowledge and wisdom to solve personal problems, to make significant decisions related to career choices, to find solutions to community and social problems, and to develop healthy attitudes toward a positive world environment.

IRA/CBC Liaison Committee
 Jan L. LaBonty, 2007–2008 Cochair
 Jeff Reynolds, 2007–2008 Cochair

More About Children's Choices

Who Is on the IRA–CBC Joint Committee and Who Are Members of the Review Teams?

Cochairing the 2007–2008 IRA–CBC Joint Committee were Jan L. LaBonty, University of Montana, Missoula, and Jeff Reynolds, National Geographic Children's Books, Washington, DC. Representing IRA on the committee were Debra Conroy, Jill Caton Johnson, Lauren Aimonette Liang, Diane M. Mallett, and Beth Pendergraft; those representing CBC were Anamika Bhatnagar, Tanya S. Dean, Eileen Kreit, and Ted Parkhurst. CBC administrative staff coordinated the teams' work.

The review teams described below coordinated the project at each of the following five test sites:

Team 1: Marysville, California, consisted of six urban schools and four rural schools. Team Leader: Jesus Cortez

Team 2: Crete, Illinois, consisted of one International Baccalaureate elementary school, four suburban elementary schools, one sixth-grade school, and one parochial school. Team leaders: Kelly Place and Gail Bohnenstiehl

Team 3: Omaha, Nebraska, consisted of four urban elementary schools and three suburban elementary schools. Team leaders: Wilma Kuhlman and Kathy Danielson

Team 4: Middletown, Delaware, consisted of one suburban kindergarten center, four suburban elementary schools, one rural elementary school, and two suburban middle schools. Team leader: Christy Payne

Team 5: Wilmington, North Carolina, consisted of two urban elementary schools, four suburban elementary schools, one rural elementary school, one urban middle school, and two suburban middle schools. Team leader: Jeanne Swafford

How Can I Become a Team Leader?

Team leaders are selected by the IRA–CBC Joint Committee based upon numerous factors such as location within the United States; cooperation between team leaders, school administrators, and library media specialists; and ability to attend orientation sessions at the International Reading Association's annual convention. Information about how to become a team leader is available from the Children's Book Council, Attn: Team Leader Information, 12 W. 37th Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10018-7480, USA. All applications remain on file, and periodically CBC reconfirms applicants' interest. For additional information about this project and a downloadable application form, visit CBC's website at www.cbcbooks.org.

Where Else Can I Find the List?

Offprints of the Children's Choices are no longer available, but the list can be viewed for free on the Association's website, www.reading.org.

Are Other Booklists Available?

The International Reading Association prepares two additional annual booklists. Teachers' Choices describes

approximately 30 new trade books published for children and adolescents that teachers themselves have found to be exceptional in curriculum use. The list appears each year in the November issue of *The*

Reading Teacher. Young Adults' Choices lists approximately 30 new trade books that middle, junior high, and senior high school students have selected as being particularly appealing for their age group. This list appears each November in the International Reading Association publication *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. Both lists are also available on the Association's website, www.reading.org.

Annual lists distributed by the Children's Book Council (CBC) are Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People, a project of the National Council for the Social Studies–CBC Joint Committee, and Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children, a project of the National Science Teachers Association–CBC Joint Committee. Copies of these lists are available from the Children's Book Council. Please send your order with a self addressed envelope and US\$5.00 per copy to: Children's Book Council, Attn: Social Studies or Attn: Science. 12 W. 37th Street, Floor 2, New York, NY 10018-7840, USA.

How Do Publishers Obtain Information About Submitting Titles for Future Lists?

The Children's Choices project is open to all U.S. publishers of children's books. Publishers who are not members of the CBC pay a per-title administrative fee to submit books for consideration. Submission information is available in late May. Publishers may request submission notification by e-mailing bibliographies@cbcbooks.org.

CBC welcomes publishers, large and small, to join its diverse membership. For membership information, write to Children's Book Council, 12 W. 37th Street, New York, NY 10018-7840, USA, or e-mail info@cbcbooks.org.

How Can I Find Out More About the Children's Book Council?

For a complete listing of CBC's activities and publications, visit their website at www.cbcbooks.org.