Children's literature as parallel readings in the secondary language arts curriculum: An annotated teaching guide

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to match works of children's literature with works typically taught in secondary language arts curricula so that the matched sets may be taught as parallel readings. Selected works have parallels in character, mood or tone, plot, point of view, setting, subject, symbolism, and theme, and are presented as an annotated teaching guide. The matched sets selected were found to have significant parallel literary elements.
Children's Literature as Parallel Readings
in the Secondary Language Arts Curriculum:
An Annotated Teaching Guide

A Graduate Research Paper
Submitted to the
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Division of School Library Media Studies
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by
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This Research Paper by: Kelly Diller

Titled: Children's Literature as Parallel Readings in the Secondary Language Arts Curriculum: An Annotated Teaching Guide

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

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Date Approved

Graduate Faculty Reader

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Date Approved

Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Some of the best literature is in the children's collection. Recently, though, many works written for children are finding their way into other collections as well; middle school and high school libraries now often house such works as David McCauley's *City, Cathedral, and Black and White* (Smith & Yaakov, 1992, and Price & Yaakov, 1995), Dr. Seuss's *Oh, the Places You'll Go*, and Barbara Cooney's *Emily*, and in middle and high school classrooms, children's books appear on shelves once reserved for "classics" and other books chosen for their superior intellectual content (Reif, 1992, p. 71).

During an era when an animated Disney late show may attract a mostly adult audience, and when college dorm rooms sport posters and linens featuring such characters as Snoopy, Winnie-the-Pooh, and Bugs Bunny, demographics mean little--one can no longer say that children are the only targeted audience for anything. Commercials for everything from breakfast cereal to footwear encourage today's adults to "keep alive the kid inside [Frosted Mini Wheats commercial]."

Current trends in publishing, then, are not surprising; many books which would once have been labeled for children only now use the broader phrase *and up* or, even better, *for all ages* (Bishop & Hickman, 1992, pp. 2-3).

As the articles cited in this research project show, education journals, especially in English language arts, have for at least twenty years contained occasional articles about supplemental uses of children's literature in secondary schools, but more recently these articles reflect the belief that children's literature can and should play more than a
supplemental role in the most creative educators' classrooms. Some children's books
deserve the preferred status once reserved only for adult books and should not be treated
as inferior works, but rather as equally worthy, quality literature. Judith Rovenger (1987),
a children's public librarian and consultant laments:

Many times perfectly marvelous books never reach their potential audiences because of format, age category,
labeling, or book jackets that suggest only a younger audience. Too often we allow a book to remain a prisoner
in the straight jacket of its classification. While this is true for all genres of children's literature, it is especially so for
picture books. (p.38)

This research began as a result of this researcher's participation in the 1991 Florida Writing Project at the University of Florida. Under the leadership of Dr. Ben Nelms, editor of the English Journal, twenty-six participants, a balance of elementary and secondary educators, were each responsible for presenting their best ideas for teaching writing as a process. Although the emphasis on process made forcing applications across grade levels unnecessary, early in the presentations participants found that not only was the process applicable to all grade levels, but also the literature out of which the writing experiences grew in the elementary teachers' presentations seemed to defy grade level labels. Conversely, few works mentioned in the high school presentations could be used in elementary classrooms--alternate titles would have to be substituted--however, several titles used in elementary teachers' presentations sparked conversation among secondary teachers about possible uses in their classrooms.

At the writing project's conclusion, encouraged to be innovative writing teachers, this researcher and other project participants experimented with various children's works in secondary language arts classrooms and shared results at monthly writing project meetings. More recently, in an issue of the English Journal, teachers responded to the question, "What work of children's literature do you find useful in the junior- or senior-
high classroom?" (Nelms, 1992, p.78). Of the eight responses published, three relate to a
use explored by this researcher following the Florida Writing Project.

Few, if any, articles which note the presence of children's literature in the
secondary curriculum explore studying a children's story to note its similarities to a work
in the secondary language arts curriculum.

In The Child As Critic, Glenna Davis Sloan (1991), whose work is based on the
ideas of Northrop Frye, notes, "Literary works relate through their likenesses. These
likenesses--similarities recurring throughout all literature" unify them (p.47-48). Sloan
further explains, "Our literature is a continuous journal of people's search for identity" (p.
50), occurring in literature in four patterns, which together form one cycle--"the 'one
story,' people's collective imaginative efforts to give shape to all of human experience" (p.
52).

**Purpose of the Research Project**

The purpose of this research project was to determine if a substantial number of
books published for children can be matched with adult books typically used in secondary
language arts classes, and then to produce a teaching guide to assist teachers in selecting
appropriate children's works which would enhance secondary literature instruction.

Matches were determined by analyzing parallels in literary elements between a children's
title and an adult title. Those pairs so identified are included in the teaching guide.

**Definitions**

The following definitions are selected for their particular applications to this study.

**Canon.** A canon is a list of works deemed worthy of study because of their literary quality
(Hawthorn, 1992, p.25). In secondary language arts, this list is becoming more fluid as
the inclusion of specific titles is debated by practitioners.

**Parallelism.** Parallelism is "a term for the structural devices that indicate underlying
similarities of content" (Frye, Baker, and Perkins, 1985, p. 335). In the context
of this study, it refers specifically to similarities between two separate works, rather than
similarities occurring within the same work, or even within the same
sentence.
Secondary. In the context of this study, secondary will refer to grades seven through twelve.

Test. In the context of this study, test means a commercially prepared teaching guide or test.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to secondary school titles for which teaching guides or tests are available from educational publishers.

Children's works were limited to those with significant parallels to the selected secondary level works and which were available from Iowa public libraries in Cedar Falls, Des Moines, West Des Moines, and Mason City. The University of Northern Iowa library and interlibrary loan were also used when necessary.

Assumptions

An underlying assumption of this research was that children's literature is as worthy of study as works in the secondary language arts canon; consequently, matching these works revealed more similarities than are currently acknowledged by secondary literature teachers and may enhance literature study for secondary students.
Review of Literature

During the past twenty years, as our society and our schools have further evolved, so, too, has the secondary school literary canon. English teachers constantly challenge its boundaries so that it is now more fluid, more diverse, more representative of the variety of the general population. Anthologies now include more works by women and by various ethnic and minority groups (Applebee, 1992, pp 31-32). But professional literature also reflects a challenge against the audience labels placed on literature. As the examples in the following sections illustrate, secondary teachers are finding places for children's literature in their programs: as a separate course or unit of study, in adult literacy programs, in speech competition, and in many areas of language arts.

Children's Literature as a Separate Course or Unit

The examples in this section demonstrate that the earliest uses of children's literature with young adults were with high school seniors. None of the teachers involved attempted to integrate the literature into their classes, but rather they created a separate unit and course on children's literature. A more recent program for teenage parents includes a course which trains students to encourage their own children's intellectual growth and development.

Ruth Loeffler (1974) devised a unit on children's literature following a class discussion about certain poets' romantic attitudes toward children. The unit focused on language development, with assigned readings on various stages of speech development in children. Then Loeffler's students read a variety of children's books including poetry, completed independent projects, and participated in small group discussions.
Two years later, Lalise Melillo (1976) described an elective course offered to seniors at North Haven High School in Connecticut. During the course, in addition to reading children's works, students reviewed books, wrote stories of their own, explored issues related to children's literature, studied the art of illustration, participated in a coloring day, and conversed with an illustrator. During the second semester, the course focused on drama, with students reading, writing, and producing plays for children.

More recently, Susan G. Doneson (1991) reported the success of a program in Michigan for teenage parents. Doneson's course "Children and Books" was designed to help program participants, many of whom were reluctant readers, become "comfortable and confident in reading to their children" (p. 220) and "build an informed parenting style that will survive graduation" (p. 221). After reading and discussing books, program participants brought their children, who otherwise stayed in the school's nursery, into the classroom for reading sessions. By the end of only one semester, participants demonstrated an increase in both confidence and competence as parents.

Children's Literature in Adult Literacy Programs

Peggy Ford (1992) regularly tells children's stories to her adult reading students, whose ages range from 17 to 70, with reading levels as low as third grade. "For me," Ford explains, "storytelling has proven to be one of the most effective means to share the joys of reading...to encourage reluctant readers, and to introduce (or perhaps reintroduce) poor readers to the world of print" (p. 484).

Another adult literacy program, however, takes another approach. Peggy A. Sharp (1991) uses children's books with adult students to "emphasize learners' roles as competent parents, rather than their roles as deficient readers" (p. 216). In Sharp's program, the students' desire to help their children is the initial motivation to learn to read themselves. The books examined in class, then, are offered as suggestions for use with students' children rather than materials appropriate for adult beginning readers. Both
parents and children benefit as they, "appreciate picture books on different levels and for
different reasons, but they enjoy reading and listening to them just the same" (p. 218).

**Children's Literature in Speech Competition**

In response to the wide use of children's titles at Iowa state speech contests, Del
Brink (1993) created a resource for speech coaches, an annotated bibliography of picture
books appropriate in various divisions of contest speech. According to Brink, picture
books, "transcend age and speak of the human experience through language, simplicity,
and a directness that other materials cannot" (p. 7).

**Integrating Children's Literature in Secondary Schools**

Children's literature serves several purposes within existing courses in secondary
schools.

One middle school teacher (Krogness, 1991) read to eighth graders stories such as
James Clavell's *Children's Story* and Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* as
exercises in critical thinking. The depth of discussions the class eventually attained
dispelled some students' earlier misgivings that they were studying stories "for babies" (p.
31). But Krogness's students became more than just better thinkers. After discussing the
importance of reading aloud to children during their preschool years, students committed
to read to siblings and, eventually, to their own children.

Similarly, David Ludlam (1992) described with anecdotal accounts his attempts to
prepare students for parenthood. Responding to the public library's minimal children's
collection, staff members at Ludlam's high school decided to put children's books in the
high school library for students to borrow to read to their own children. Besides
incorporating picture books into a unit on historical writing in his classes, Ludlam created
other opportunities to share children's books in his English classes, explaining that, as
parents and future parents, students would find practical applications for their studies.
After teaching high school for 25 years, Ludlam concluded that students' reading, "does
not have to be limited to the classics and that there is much to be gained from the use of contemporary [children's] literature" (p. 89).

The bulk of the articles published about children's literature in secondary schools illustrate its connections to writing instruction.

James Schultz and Carol Reynolds (1992), for example, read aloud Cynthia Rylant's When I Was Young in the Mountains to eleventh and twelfth graders as a model for their own "When I was young" statements. Providing students with a basic structure within which to arrange their own ideas removes the pressure they feel staring at a blank page (Mitchell, 1977). The brevity of many children's books, while conveniently allowing the books to be shared entirely in one class session, emphasizes the importance of each word in the text, which "works almost as a poem does. It is honed down, with a few carefully selected words used to convey feelings and themes" (Chatton, 1990, p. 16).

Other teachers provided a specific, appropriate audience for the writing inspired by children's books—children themselves. Maureen Miletta (1992) points out that wordless books "provide vivid imagery for students to write original stories suitable for younger children" (p. 555). In Illinois, a high school teacher (Wiseman, 1979) required even more of students. After being steeped in children's books for a few days, high school students wrote and edited their own original stories for children while elementary school students wrote stories for the high school class. A visit from the elementary students to share their stories alerted the older writers to the necessity of clear, simple writing. After editing their own stories, the high school students visited the elementary school to read their stories to their intended audience. Students concluded that writing is hard work, but that having a real audience made it more satisfying.

Another important function of children's literature is that it can act as a springboard or the inspiration for students' writings. Judith Rovenger (1987) described as "a gold mine of inspiration for creative writing classes" (p. 38) a book heavy on creative inspiration:
It would be a pity if The Mysteries of Harris Burdick (Houghton, 1984) by Chris Van Allsburg were overlooked by older children or their teachers. This tour de force of illustrative imaginings engages the "reader's" interests beyond the pages of the book. Fourteen eerie, light struck pictures with equally mysterious captions beckon readers to create their own stories. (p. 38)

In choosing books to use for writing ideas, Maureen Miletta (1992) suggests that teachers choose books which have made a strong impression on them and "stories that speak to difficult issues children face in today's world" (p. 555).

At least three educators have written about the value of children's books in teaching literary devices to older students. Jerry J. Watson (1978) suggested that the concepts satire and allegory are too complex for students to learn while studying a lengthy, complicated novel. However, if introduced to these concepts within the context of a short children's story, older students are able to understand the concepts before they are required to apply them to difficult selections.

Concurring with Watson, Susan Hall (1990) created perhaps the most comprehensive guide for teaching literary devices through children's works. Hall asserts that "the picture storybook can exhibit mature intellectual and emotional depth" (p. 3), making it a viable genre for any age group. Hall's book lists specific titles which lend themselves to the study of literary elements commonly found in the glossaries of secondary literature texts.

Still other educators introduce or conclude the study of a novel with a children's work. Kimberly Austin (1992) introduces high school students to themes in Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird by first examining and discussing Dr. Seuss's The Sneetches and Other Stories. Students are then prepared to look for examples of prejudice in Lee's novel and other works with similar themes.

Both Carolyn Chiever (1992) and Debra Williams (1992) use children's books to conclude the study of a novel. After reading George Orwell's Animal Farm, Chiever's
students compare Dr. Seuss's Yertle the Turtle to Russian history; similarly, Williams' students, after reading All Quiet on the Western Front, discuss parallels of Dr. Seuss's The Butter Battle Book with the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Apart from its value as a discussion aid in the study of novels, children's literature has an inherent value--"it is itself real literature, worthy of study, differing from other literature only in its adaptations to an implied primary audience of young, less experienced readers" (Bishop & Hickman, 1992, p. 2). By introducing children's works with the same enthusiasm, seriousness, and intellectual respect given to other works, teachers encourage students to value these works as well (Rief, 1992, p. 73).

**Challenging the Literary Canon**

As times change, as society changes, the literary canon changes with them; although, some contend, change in the canon occurs too slowly and to a less than desirable degree. The modern literary canon, especially in the areas of nonfiction and book-length works, represents a largely white, male, Eurocentric authorship, while the number of canonized authors who are female or who are from other cultures remains disproportionate to their membership in the general population (Applebee, 1992). Living authors in the canon are sparse; consequently, some have asserted that today's literature students find few experiences with which they can relate in the *classics*. Jim Burke (1993) explains:

> Students look to literature, as we all do, to discover themselves in it, and to experience different dimensions of the human condition that they may or may not realize they are a part of. What the majority of students see is that their world, their reality, is not worthy of literature, is not worthy of study. (p.58)

For many teachers, literature is "a pyramid with the 'best' works residing at the topmost point. This implies a single set of criteria that determine what is the 'best'" (Beach, 1992, p. 554). But those works which have been commonly recognized as best should be questioned. According to John Pfordresher (1993), "Canons must be
challenged and changed. . . . We must always be ready to doubt old favorites and to look for new ones. Only in this way will any canon, and its individual elements, remain alive and valid" (p. 29).

But in challenging the canon and in choosing alternate titles to study with their classes, Brian Ford (1993) maintains that decisions should be made "out of the thinking, feeling, and experience of the teacher" (p. 60). Those works which have great meaning for the teacher will be more meaningful to students than works taught simply because they are part of the canon. Ford further reminds teachers of the rich variety of works they have read and suggests that students can benefit from their teachers' wide reading experiences. Ford concludes that, whatever works teachers choose, "let's make our choices as if they mattered" (p. 61).

**Parallel Readings in Secondary Language Arts**

Although much has been written on the place of children's literature in the secondary curriculum and on the changing literary canon, articles and studies on the use of parallel readings in literature classes are conspicuously absent. In teaching any unit, conscientious teachers draw from a variety of sources. Educational trends such as resource based teaching (Bleakley & Carrigan, 1994, p.4) and higher order thinking skills (Presseisen, 1992) have further underscored the importance of using many sources; however, professional literature does not address parallel readings.

**Summary of Literature Review**

Constant change--in society, in its values, in the kinds of experiences students bring with them to their learning--makes choosing the literature teachers will choose with students an increasingly complex task. Teachers want their students to leave school with a
broad foundation of literary experiences that are practical, meaningful, and inspirational. Some educators have found that works of children's literature can accomplish what a narrowly defined, although now more frequently challenged, literary canon cannot. English teachers have only begun to discover the ways in which children's works enhance literature study for secondary students, showing that, "Good children's literature is for everyone, not just young children" (Rief, 1992, p. 71).

Methodology

The purpose of this research project was to determine if a substantial number of books published for children can be matched with adult books typically used in secondary language arts classes, and then to produce a teaching guide to assist teachers in selecting appropriate children's works which would enhance secondary literature instruction.

Description of the Product

The results of this project are presented in the form of an annotated teaching guide. The guide contains bibliographic citations for each title, descriptive annotations of each work, analyses of points of parallelism, and a chart depicting visually which elements points of parallelism in each group of works. Because the intended audience for the guide is secondary teachers, the guide is arranged alphabetically by secondary level titles.

Analysis Instrument

Before possible matches may be analyzed for points of parallelism, a list was are points of parallelism in each group of works. Because the intended audience for the guide is secondary teachers, the guide is arranged alphabetically by secondary level titles.
constructed, indicating elements in which parallels might occur. These elements, as defined by C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon (1986) in *A Handbook to Literature*, include the following:

**Character.** In literature, characters are those beings with human traits whose thoughts, actions, words, and interactions with others form the story (p. 81).

**Plot.** The plot of a story its arrangement of interrelated events. It is the characters' actions, which, resulting from conflict between opposing forces, form a unified pattern (p. 377).

**Point of View.** Point of view describes the narrator's relationship to the story itself—the narrator's vantage point. An omniscient narrator reveals the thoughts and feelings of any or all of the characters, seemingly at will. Or a third-person narrator may limit the reader's knowledge to the thoughts and feelings of only one character. A first-person narrator is a character in the story who relates events from his own perspective (pp. 386-387).

**Setting.** The setting is the background against which events in a story take place. The setting includes the geographical location or physical arrangement of items in a place, the occupations and daily routines of the characters, the historical time period or season of the year, and any other aspect of the characters' environment, such as religious, moral, or emotional conditions (p. 465).

**Symbol.** In literature, a symbol represents something beyond its literal self. A symbol may suggest a universal meaning or a meaning derived from the way in which it is used in a particular work (p. 494).

**Subject/Theme.** The topic of a work is its subject, and a central idea is its theme. Whereas the subject of a work may be expressed in a word or phrase, the theme is expressed in a statement about the subject (p. 502).

**Mood/Tone.** Tone refers to the author's attitude toward the subject of the work and toward its audience. For example, the tone may be formal, informal, solemn, playful, ironic, or sarcastic, to name just a few of the possibilities (p. 503).

**Books Selected for the Research Project**

Secondary level literary works, to be selected for the research project, must have a commercially prepared test or teaching guide available for each from an educational publisher.
Next, the resulting population of secondary titles were submitted to people who work with children's books to determine which children's titles are potential matches with the secondary works as parallel readings. These people included Dr. Barbara Safford, University of Northern Iowa school library media studies professor and Mrs. Lucille Lettow, University of Northern Iowa youth collection librarian. Selection tools which list children's titles by theme were also consulted, as well as any professional articles which mention children's titles with thematic connections to titles in the secondary population.

**Procedures**

When a selection form (see appendix A) was constructed which includes literary elements, each potential group of matched titles were read, analyzed for their parallel features, and described in annotations. Those groups of titles which share at least two parallel elements were selected for the study. Additionally, sources such as ERIC, the MLA Index, Cliffs Notes, and Outstanding Books for the College Bound, and commercially prepared tests and teaching guides were used to determine which elements of each secondary level work are emphasized in teaching. See appendix C for a list of these tests and teaching guides. To make the product useful to a wider audience of educators, alternate titles were suggested for each group when appropriate, and each group contains both a picture storybook and an intermediate level children's book when possible.
Chapter 3

Annotated Teaching Guide

This guide is intended for use primarily by secondary language arts teachers and their students so that they may conduct parallel readings while studying literary works typically taught at the secondary level. These sets of works were chosen for their parallelism of at least two literary elements including characters, mood/tone, plot, point of view, setting, subject, symbols, and theme. For each matched set, bibliographic information and summaries are listed on a page, followed by a chart which shows the points of parallelism.

Language arts teachers could use the teaching guide several ways. For example, during a unit on one of the secondary selections, the children's selections could be used to illustrate the literary elements before beginning the secondary selection. After an introduction to the elements in a simple example, which can often be read and discussed in a single class period, students could then apply the concept to the more complex secondary work.

Another use of the guide would be as a means of introducing children's literature to the students as potential future parents. If this were the reason for integrating the children's selections, the unit could be followed with a general study of children's literature, including examining types of children's books, illustrative techniques, and prominent children's authors.

Yet another use of the guide would be to individualize instruction for challenged readers. Those children's selections with the strongest connections to secondary works could be substituted for a secondary selection to provide a challenged reader with similar content, covering similar subjects and themes in a quality literary.
Finally, the guide could be used to enhance discussion of a secondary selection. Discussing the selections while comparing and contrasting elements within a matched set ensures that higher order thinking skills are used. An added bonus is that literature study guides such as Cliff's Notes do not contain such comparisons and contrasts; students have to read the selections in order for that higher order interaction to occur.

These suggested uses for the guide are not exhaustive. The language arts teachers who use the guide may find their own unique uses for it.

**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 254

**Summary:** When a submarine nuclear attack just misses the fictional Central Florida town of Fort Repose, easygoing Randy Bragg, who has managed to avoid responsibility to this point, becomes the survivors' unlikely leader. At first concerned only for his brother's wife and children and for his friends, Randy eventually takes responsibility for the whole town. Losing to the war all modern conveniences, the group adapts to a new way of life, which includes rationing their food and water and discovering new sources for those necessities, reestablishing law and order, and planning for their future.


**Type/Level:** Intermediate  
**Pages:** 249

**Summary:** After a war claims her entire family and town, and, as far as she knows, possibly the entire earth, Ann Burden adjusts to life alone in the valley surrounded by "dead" space. Self-sufficient on her family's farm, Ann wishes for company, until one day a man in a protective suit appears from the dead territory and threatens to take control of the comfortable life Ann has built for herself--and of Ann herself. Unwilling to be controlled by the unstable Mr. Loomis and fearing for her life, Ann steals the suit and strikes out in search of other inhabited valleys beyond the dead space.


**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 131

**Summary:** Dissatisfied with the way they are treated by the farmer Mr. Jones, the farm animals, led by the respected boar Major, overtake the farm, running the humans off the property. Major warns the others that, if things are to be better, the animals must abhor human behavior and treat each other as equals. At first, without the farmer, life is better--each animal is given more to eat and the animals enjoy the fruits of their own labors. After Major's death, however, a greedy new leader, Napoleon, emerges, who keeps for himself and his favorites the choicest foods while reducing the portions of the workers. Gradually Napoleon becomes more human until, at the end of the novel, he is seated in the kitchen of the farmhouse with other human farmers, bragging about his tyrannical farm management methods.

**Type/Level:** Intermediate  
**Pages:** 62

**Summary:** No one notices when the last human disappears, but driven from their pastures by hunger, the sheep move into town in search of food. After discovering stocked refrigerators and cupboards, they wander from house to house, where, watching television they decide they want to live as people did. Wearing clothes, attending school—they live human lives. An imbalance of supply and demand creates a ruling class, who withhold the choicest resources for themselves. Making the same mistakes as the humans before them, and taking on the most self-destructive human traits, the sheep gradually disappear as the people did.

**Item:** Huxley, Aldous. (1932). *Brave new world.* Avon, CT: Cardavon Press.

**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 237

**Summary:** In a society marked by uniformity, a rigid caste system, institutional child-rearing, the suspension of aging and disease, and near-constant drug-induced euphoria, Lenina, whose job it is to vaccinate embryos in the lab where they are produced and raised in glass containers, takes a vacation with Bernard Marx to New Mexico, a still primitive area of the world, where a series of events change the lives of several people. There they meet Linda, formerly a citizen of the "civilized" world who was accidentally impregnated and left behind, and her son John. To the "savage" world, Linda is immoral, believing as she was raised to believe that everyone belongs to everyone else and that monogamy is obscene. Her son John grows up an outcast of the savages. Realizing that Linda was the companion of one of his superiors, Bernard arranges for Linda and John to return with them to civilization, where Linda spends her remaining days drugged and euphoric. John, a curiosity to the civilized, is appalled by the immorality and dehumanization he sees. When it becomes increasingly apparent that John, Bernard, and writer Helmholtz Watson do not belong in the community, they are allowed to relocate to islands with others who cannot conform. John, however, chooses isolation. When the press continues to hound him and he sees that he will always be a curiosity, he hangs himself.


**Type/Level:** Intermediate  
**Pages:** 167

**Summary:** The grand-niece of a luxury inn owner, twelve-year-old Abby Tabor is kidnapped along with the son of a wealthy guest and taken to an artificial world construction site as slave labor. In this artificial world, called VitaCon, children are disposable labor and life is not at all like life on earth. Housed in pink dorms where all of the furnishings are pink, the children dress in pink suits like footed pajamas, with numbers...
to identify them rather than their names. Security cameras, color-coded guards with stun
guns used on anyone who is not completely obedient, tasteless drugged food, and hours of
manual labor contradict the guards' assertion that VitaCom is a vocational school, and that
the children are lucky to be there. Realizing that the guards do not intend to allow any of
the children to leave VitaCon alive, Abby and Bryan, with the help of an adult worker they
stumble into on their way to the freight deck in an attempt to escape, are smuggled off the
planet as stowaways on a shuttle, eventually ending up at Bryan's home, where plans are
made to return Abby to her uncle. With the money Bryan's mother give Abby to ensure
against a lawsuit, Abby rescues the other children from VitaCon and provides for their
future.


Type/Level: Secondary Pages: 128

Summary: Stolen from his home in California, Buck, a mixed-breed pet dog is
transported to the Klondike to be a sled dog. Unused to the grueling life of a sled dog,
Buck finds adapting to his new life difficult until his will to survive awakens in him the
primitive instincts of his ancestors. He gradually learns to enjoy the rigors of his work,
winning the respect of his fellow dogs and his master, until he becomes the leader of his
team. Surviving the harsh elements and a group of inexperienced owners, Buck finally is
owned by John Thornton, the best master he has had, and for whom he pulls an amazingly
heavy load to win his master a bet. As he travels with Thornton, Buck feels increasingly
drawn to the roam alone, hunting, exploring his primitive instincts. When John Thornton
dies, however, Buck's last connection to civilized life dissolves, and Buck leaves to lead a
group of wolves. He becomes a legend to the Native Americans of his area.


Type/Level: Intermediate Pages: 82

Summary: Gray Boy, a large mixed-breed dog, from the onset of adulthood seems only
half tame. His hunting instincts strong, the dog is caught several times killing small
animals belonging to neighbors. Each time, Ian Emerson, the dog's young owner pleads
for the dog's life to be spared. On the day before Gray Boy is to be taken from Ian and
destroyed, the dog escapes to the mountains, living as a wild animal. After hearing the
dog has been sighted, Ian searches, finding him wounded from a tangle with a fisher in a
trap. When he falls through the ice, Gray Boy remembers Ian, and uses his last moments
of life to pull the boy to safety from the icy waters.

**Type/Level:** Picture storybook  
**Pages:** 26

**Summary:** A dogsled runner hitches his team and runs his dogs in the night. The narrator describes poetically the beauty and stillness of the night run, capturing the excitement of the dogs and their love for their work.


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**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 145

**Summary:** In 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts, Reverend Parris's daughter's illness, for which, according to the doctor, there is no physical cause, prompts suspicions that evil is at work in the community. Some of the young women have been seen dancing in the woods with the slave Tituba, and the girls, led by the reverend's orphaned niece Abigail Williams, begin accusing townspeople of bewitching them. A slew of trials ensue, with the list of accused witches steadily growing to include even some of the most respected citizens. Among them is Elizabeth Proctor, whose husband Abigail has designs on, prompting Elizabeth to put her out of their house. Confronted by John Proctor, the Proctors' servant Mary Warren admits that the girls are lying--that the situation began as a sort of sport which spiraled out of control. When Proctor presents Mary to the court, however, she gives in to pressure from the other girls, joining them in their mass "fit" and accusing John Proctor of attempting to undermine the court for evil. Although some of the nearly one hundred accused falsely confess to save their lives, John, after wavering somewhat, is unwilling to live without his good reputation, and so he refuses to confess.

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**Item:** Lasky, Kathryn. (1994). *Beyond the burning time.* New York: Blue Sky Press.

**Type/Level:** Intermediate  
**Pages:** 272

**Summary:** From the perspective of the fictional Mary Chase, *Beyond the Burning Time* chronicles the Salem Witch Trials of the late seventeenth century. When a group of girls begin having "fits," fear takes hold in Salem. Mary's mother Virginia, a widow trying to run the farm with only her daughter and a hired hand, notices that, with few exceptions, the fingers of the "afflicted" girls always point in the direction of wealthy prominent townspeople in competition with their families, as in land disputes or in business. As number of accused rises, the Chases know that it is only a matter of time before they are targeted. Caleb Chase, a carpenter's apprentice in the Salem shipyard, anticipates this tragedy and begins planning his mother's rescue. After Virginia is taken to jail, Caleb deposits Mary safely in Boston with an acquaintance, where she enlists the help of a sea
captain. On the morning of her scheduled execution, Virginia is rescued in transit to the gallows by her children and whisked safely to sea by Captain Coatsworth. Soon after, the trials are halted.


Summary: Cyrano de Bergerac is a sharp-witted, respected soldier who is self-conscious about his enormous nose. Upon discovering Roxane's infatuation with handsome Christian, and although Cyrano loves Roxane himself, Cyrano helps the dull-witted soldier win Roxane's heart by speaking for him poetic confessions of love which appeal to Roxane's intellect as well as her emotions. After the lovers' secret marriage, the soldiers are called to battle, where Cyrano continues to send letters to Roxane on Christian's behalf. The letters are so moving that Roxane risks her safety to go to Christian in battle, where she confesses that she would love him even if he were ugly. Before Christian can tell her that the soul she loves is Cyrano, Christian is mortally wounded. Ten years later, with a head injury from a silly accident Cyrano visits her at a convent. As he reads aloud Christian's final letter, Roxane realizes that the words are Cyrano's, but too late--he dies admitting his love for her.


Summary: The Souls, a group of four close sixth grade friends, are selected by their paraplegic teacher, Mrs. Olinski, to represent their class in an academic competition. After winning their school competition, a surprising feat considering that no sixth grade team had ever defeated seventh and eighth grade teams, they go on to win the New York state competition.


Summary: A legend of the Plains Indians, this is the story of a young man who is too shy to express his feelings to a beautiful girl whom many young men love. Frustrated that he lacks the courage to speak up, the young man journeys into the forest, where the birds and animals give him a magic flute, which will convey his feelings to the girl for him. When he returns home and plays the flute, all of the women love the sound, but the beautiful girls leaves her tipi to meet him, recognizing the song as his confession of love for her.

**Type/Level:** Secondary

**Pages:** 340

**Summary:** Forced into hiding during World War II, eight people including Anne Frank, her family, and the Van Pels family, survive for a time in a secret annex above Mr. Frank’s office with the help of his employees. As they hide, Anne keeps a diary called Kitty, in which she records her thoughts about the people and events she observes. Coping with hunger, boredom, confinement, and the constant threat of danger and discovery, Anne left us a glimpse into the horror of inhumanity of the Jewish Holocaust. Approximately two years after going into hiding, Anne and the others were discovered and transported to Auschwitz. All except Otto Frank, Anne’s father, died in concentration camps.

**Alternate title:** Schindler's list

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**Item:** Lowry, Lois. (1989). *Number the stars.* New York: Dell.

**Type/Level:** Intermediate

**Pages:** 137

**Summary:** Ten-year-old Annemarie Johanson and her family live in German-occupied Copenhagen in 1943, next door to the Jewish Rosen family, whose daughter Ellen is Annemarie’s best friend. When Ellen's parents disappear one night, and Annemarie’s parents tell the girls that Ellen will stay with the Johansons and pretend to be their daughter, Annemarie knows not to ask questions. At Annemarie's uncle's home, Ellen is later reunited with her family, who, along with other Jews, will make the trip to Sweden hidden in the fisherman’s boat. But when a mishap leaves the group without the envelope which is the key to their safety, Annemarie must risk her life to deliver it to her uncle in time to save the group. When she meets German soldiers on the way, with quick thinking Annemarie averts disaster and saves the lives of the others.

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**Type/Level:** Picture storybook

**Pages:** 32

**Summary:** Rose Blanche, a child in Germany during World War II, watches trucks full of soldiers pass by each day. One day when a little boy escapes from the back of a truck and then is recaptured by a soldier, Rose Blanche follows the truck to a place in the woods surrounded by electric barbed wire. There she sees hungry children, Jewish prisoners, to whom she regularly brings her food. When Germany is finally invaded, while other townspeople flee, Rose Blanche visits the camp in the woods again, where she finds the camp empty. Mistaking her for the enemy in the fog, a German soldier shoots Rose Blanche.

Type/Level: Secondary          Pages: 602

**Summary:** Adam and Charles Trask, joint-heirs of their father's land, become rivals for the beautiful, mysterious Cathy, a prostitute who arrives at their door half-dead, having been beaten by a client. After nursing her back to health, Adam marries her, although secretly she visits Charles during the night, and later bears his twins. Shortly after their marriage, Adam and Cathy move to California, where Adam prospers. After the twins are born, however, Cathy leaves Adam, returning to prostitution. As the twins, Caleb and Aaron grow up, a pattern emerges: people naturally favor Aaron, and Caleb, jealous and seeming never to be able to please others as his brother does, exacts revenge on both those who favor Aaron and on Aaron himself. When his father refuses a large gift of money from Caleb when he is seventeen, Caleb takes his brother to see their mother at the brothel she runs. Wild with grief, Aaron leaves college, joins the army, and is killed in battle. When news of his son's death reaches Adam, he has a stroke, from which he will not recover. Guilty again, Caleb comes to his father's bedside asking forgiveness for his part in his brother's death. Adam tells his son in a word that he can overcome the temptation to do evil—he is capable of being good. The story is a modern retelling of the biblical stories of both Cain and Abel and Jacob and Esau.


Type/Level: Intermediate          Pages: 216

**Summary:** In the early 1940's on a small Chesapeake Bay Island, Louise Bradshaw's intense jealousy toward her sister Caroline grows. Louise, the older twin, feels that the circumstances of their birth set the pattern for the rest of their lives: Caroline, who was sickly at birth, required much care and attention at first, while Louise was left lying in a basket alone. Pretty, musically gifted Caroline continued throughout their childhood years to be the center of attention. A mysterious former island resident returns to the island and becomes close to Louise, but when he and his wife provide money to send Caroline away for advanced voice training, Louise again feels that her sister has stolen from her. Louise's jealousy reaches its peak, though, when her childhood friend announces his engagement to Caroline. Challenged by her friend Captain Wallace to find her interests, Louise decides to study medicine, and so becomes a midwife, but with plans to be physician someday. The reader knows that she has overcome her jealousy when, while attending to a mother with newborn twins, she saves the younger twin in the same way Caroline was saved as a newborn.

**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 173

**Summary:** Guy Montag, a fireman of the future whose job it is to burn books, begins to question his job when he meets an unusual seventeen-year-old named Clarisse. In a society in which wall-sized televisions pipe in mindless babble and images all day and when books are outlawed, Clarisse stands out. She is a thinker, and she is the first person who challenges Guy's mind and shows a genuine interest in his happiness. Curious about the books he burns, Guy steals some from fire scenes and begins reading them. With the help of a former college professor who feels partly responsible for not speaking out against censorship in time, Guy begins to understand what he reads and determines to act on his new convictions. When the fire truck next shows up at his own house, Guy kills the fire chief, destroys the "hound," a mechanical tracking device, and goes into hiding, meeting other fugitives who, between them, have memorized several great works of literature, hoping that one day they will be able to share them openly again.


**Type/Level:** Intermediate  
**Pages:** 215

**Summary:** For Harper Jessup, reading is as natural as breathing, sleeping, or eating. But when her parents become missionaries for a militant fundamentalist group, Harper is forced into a life of lies and secret reading. Because her family moves so often, Harper rarely has time to form close friendships, until she meets Gray, a boy who is the same age, who introduces Harper to a host of fantasy and horror writers of whom her parents would certainly disapprove. As her parents become more involved in their work, Harper finds it more difficult to remain with them. So when told she must march in an anti-abortion demonstration, Harper decides it is time to leave home. With Gray's help, she makes the bus trip to her grandmother's home in Georgia.


**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 115

**Summary:** Amanda Wingfield, a mother whose husband long ago abandoned his family, lives in the past, remembering the days when she was a popular girl pursued by many young men. Her daughter Laura, slightly handicapped and terribly shy as a result, lives in a
world of her own, escaping reality in her collection of glass animals. Tom, Amanda's son, is a poet, stuck in a warehouse job he hates, supporting his mother and sister. Prompted by Amanda to bring home a gentleman caller for his sister, Tom invites to dinner Jim O'Connor, a man once popular in high school, who is now a clerk at the shoe company where Tom works. Jim is gracious throughout the evening, even managing to draw Laura out of her shyness a bit as they discuss high school, which they attended together. But when Jim senses Laura's romantic feeling for him, he admits that he has a serious girlfriend, and he cuts the evening short to pick her up at the train station. Laura is crushed, and Amanda comforts her daughter. Tom explains that afterwards, he loses his job at the shoe factory and begins life as a traveler, not staying in one place for very long, but he thinks often of his sister.


**Summary:** Fran Ellen Smith has two houses. One is where she lives with her mother who lies in bed and cries all day, her twelve-year-old brother Fletcher who pays the bills and does all of the talking to grown-ups, her sisters Francine and Felice, and baby Flora. This house is never clean and smells bad. Fran Ellen's other house is at school--the bears' house--a dollhouse occupied by Goldilocks and the three bears--and Fran Ellen when she finishes her math early and sits looking at the house, imagining she lives there. The bears' house is the one thing about school she enjoys when she isn't being hit, poked, and called names because she sucks her thumb and smells. But when her teacher, Miss Thompson, discovers that Fran Ellen has been sneaking away from school during the day, she insists on speaking to Mrs. Smith and accompanies Fran Ellen home from school, where Fletcher talks their way out of being reported to authorities. But Miss Thompson returns on the last day of school to help Fran Ellen carry the bears' house, a reward for not sucking her thumb any longer, and for not fighting with classmates. When Miss Thompson sees that the baby Flora is ill, she leaves, saying she will take care of everything.


**Summary:** Andrew and his dad live at the airport, always moving, so as not to be discovered as residents. Andrew's father works a job on the weekends to save enough money for an apartment, but it will take a while. One day, a bird is trapped in the airport, and Andrew watches its frantic struggle until it finally slips free through an open door. Andrew hopes someday to fly away home like the bird.

Type/Level: Secondary Pages: 573

Summary: Pip, an orphan raised by his sister and her husband Joe, is made a gentleman by an anonymous benefactor. Made to feel inferior and self-conscious by the beautiful Estella, who becomes Pip's childhood playmate at the strange Miss Havisham's house, Pip becomes ashamed of his upbringing and especially of uneducated Joe. But although Pip discovers that his benefactor is a convict he once helped, when he later becomes ill, it is Joe who stays at Pip's side until he is well. Pip happens upon Estella again as an adult, but the two decide to remain friends.


Type/Level: Picture storybook Pages: 32

Summary: Mountain Girl calls a family meeting to discuss the family's need, as she perceives it, for more wealth. Making a list of the family's assets, Mountain Girl realizes that their most valuable assets have nothing to do with money, but rather have to do with the quality of their life. She concludes that her family is wealthy after all, in the most important and intangible ways.


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Type/Level: Secondary Pages: 313

Summary: On a voyage at sea as a ship's physician, Lemuel Gulliver is shipwrecked. Following the shipwreck, Lemuel travels for sixteen years to fantastic places and witnesses unique people and creatures: in Lilliput, Gulliver encounters tiny people; in Brobdingnag, he lives among giants; Laputa features learned men and a flying island; and in the land of the Houyhnhnms, horses are the civilized beings and humans are detested. Upon returning home, Lemuel defends his account of his journey and based on lessons learned during his travels, advises his listeners on how to conduct themselves.

**Type/Level:** Picture storybook  
**Pages:** 32

**Summary:** Two children playing in a sandbox fall through a hole to the North Pole, where they begin their journey home. On the way, they visit Santa Claus, a tree full of fairies, a castle, a cave with mermaids, a ship full of pirates, and some traveling gypsies before arriving at home.

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**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 395

**Summary:** In the future in the Republic of Gilead, formerly the United States, a government takeover by religious fundamentalists leads to a society in which women able to bear children are forced to be breeders for those in power. Offred, a thirty-three-year-old former librarian, serves as handmaid to one of the ruling Commanders, whose trust and favor she gains, allowing her access to classified information and books, which are now prohibited to women. With the help of others, Offred plans and executes an escape plan, but the reader is left to wonder if the vehicle arriving at the Commander's home will take Offred to safety or to arrest and execute her.

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**Type/Level:** Intermediate  
**Pages:** 180

**Summary:** At the Ceremony of Twelve, during which twelve-year-olds receive their life's job assignments, Jonas is named the Giver, a position filled by only one person, except during the training of a new Giver. As the Giver, Jonas alone retains for his entire society knowledge of the past and the freedoms once allowed all citizens. Disillusioned by the contrast between the freedoms once allowed and Jonas's present restrictive society, in which the weak are disposable, Jonas steals a child destined to die for its failure to thrive and attempts to escape with him to a place of freedom. The reader is left to wonder if Jonas's attempt is successful.

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**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 282

**Summary:** Born Marguerite Johnson, the author weaves together bits of her life growing up in Stamps, Arkansas, St. Louis, and California. Raised for most of her childhood by her grandmother in Arkansas, Marguerite learns quickly the order of things in the South--
she learns to fear the hatred of the whites, although she never understands where the hate originates. A rape survivor at eight years old, a dancer, the first black streetcar conductorette in San Francisco, and a high school graduate and unmarried mother at fifteen, Marguerite seeks to define herself and to defy the definitions imposed upon her by a racist society.


**Type/Level:** Picture storybook  
**Pages:** 32

**Summary:** Frogs, snakes, dragons, strangers—nothing frightens the poet. She simply brushes them off. In a poem, she announces that life is not frightening at all.


**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 399

**Summary:** When millionaire John Hammond discovers a way to extract dinosaur DNA from fossils and create living dinosaurs from it, he builds a dinosaur theme park on a remote island, intending eventually to open it to the public. Before the park's scheduled opening however, scientists Alan Grant, Ian Malcolm, and Ellie Sattler are invited to join those already at Jurassic Park, where Ian's prediction that the dinosaurs cannot be controlled or contained comes true. Originally hoping to study the animals, the scientists end up trying to control the compounding disaster as the carnivorous dinosaurs kill several visitors and break free from their containment. The novel is somewhat open-ended, suggesting that some of the animals have escaped the park.


**Type/Level:** Intermediate  
**Pages:** 155

**Summary:** Arthur Denison and his son Will, on an expedition in 1860, are shipwrecked on an island called Dinotopia where dinosaurs and humans live together interdependently. At first concerned with finding a way home, the two soon find a new and fascinating life in their new surroundings. Will studies to become a skybax rider along with his friend Sylvia, whose family were Arthur and Will’s first hosts on the island. Arthur, a scientist, eagerly studies the history and the island environment, eventually daring to explore the island’s forbidden underworld, a place suggested to contain the secret of leaving the island. Will and Sylvia arrive in the capital city of Dinotopia, having earned their apprenticeship as skybax riders, to find that Arthur has returned from the underworld. The story then leaves the reader in suspense about Arthur’s findings in the world below.


**Type/Level:** Picture storybook  
**Pages:** 32

**Summary:** A boy who wishes that dinosaurs lived again imagines what life would be like with dinosaurs. He imagines the dinosaurs as pets, helping humans by scaring away burglars, giving rides on their backs, putting out fires, etc.


**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 246

**Summary:** Although Pedro and Tita are in love, Tita cannot marry him, because according to Mexican tradition, as the youngest daughter she must remain unmarried and take care of her mother for the rest of her life. Unable to live without Tita, Pedro marries her older sister Rosaura so that he can still be near Tita—in the same house. Tita's cooking has a magical effect on all who consume it, and so Pedro's love intensifies as Tita's spell works on him, while Rosaura grows more repulsive to him and more ill each day. Tita resolves to ensure that Rosaura's daughter Esperanza will not have to care for her mother as the tradition requires. When Rosaura dies of a digestive ailment, Pedro and Tita consummate their love and die from too much joy.


**Type/Level:** Picture storybook  
**Pages:** 48

**Summary:** A traditional Southern Cinderella tale, Moss Gown is the story a girl who, unable to articulate her love to her father as well as her sisters, who fawn over him, is sent away from home. She finds work as a servant in a wealthy man's home. When the man hosts a ball to which all are invited, Moss Gown stays home as she does not have a gown. But the magic gris-gris woman appears, gives her a beautiful magic gown, and warns that the magic wears off when day breaks. The wealthy man is captivated by Moss Gown's beauty, and he is saddened when he cannot find her. Invoking the magic of the gown, Moss Gown brings the master his supper dressed in the magic gown, and he is overjoyed to see her again. Although the magic wears off and her gown returns to rags, the master still loves her, and they are married.

**Type/Level**: Secondary  
**Pages**: 54

**Summary**: Gregor Samson awakens one morning to discover that he has become a giant insect. His family, at first empathetic, though horrified, becomes increasingly indifferent about his care and repulsed by his appearance, and so Gregor's feeling of alienation intensifies to the point of hopelessness. Finally losing his will to live, Gregor dies, and shortly after, his family, relieved to be rid of the burden of his care, joyfully makes plans for their future.


**Type/Level**: Intermediate  
**Pages**: 135

**Summary**: Shoebag, named for the place where he was born, awakens to discover that he has turned from a roach into a little boy. Rejected by his roach family, who is now frightened of him, Shoebag, renamed Stuart Bagg, is taken in by the family which finds him in their closet. Stuart has difficulty adjusting to life as a human and to dealing with people's cruelty to one another. When he meets another roach-turned-little-boy, Stuart learns how to become a roach again, and he happily joins his family just before they move from the apartment to a department store.


**Type/Level**: Picture storybook  
**Pages**: 28

**Summary**: Unhappy as a butcher, Louis awakens one morning to discover that he has become a large fish. Put on display at the pet store, whose owner could not bring himself to eat Louis, Louis is finally happy.


**Type/Level**: Secondary  
**Pages**: 131

**Summary**: Seeking help for their blind and deaf daughter Helen, Kate and Arthur Keller are referred by Alexander Graham Bell to Michael Anagnos, who hires a governess for the girl. Annie Sullivan, once blind herself, serves as Helen's first teacher, expecting the best from Helen while confronting the family's method of dealing with Helen, which only encourages bad behavior. When allowed to take Helen away from the family to a secluded cottage near the house, Annie is able finally to break through to Helen, teaching her sign language by spelling and "speaking" into Helen's hand. For the first time in her life, Helen is able to communicate.

**Type/Level:** Intermediate  
**Pages:** 95

**Summary:** Although Alexander Graham Bell is best known for his invention of the telephone, his first love was helping the deaf. When a specialist referred the Kellers to Mr. Bell, a friendship began which lasted for the rest of Mr. Bell's life. Although Bell could not help Helen himself, he referred her family to Michael Anagnos at the Perkins Institution for the Blind, where Annie Sullivan was asked to become Helen's teacher. It took only four months for Annie to open up the world to Helen with communication, after which Helen became quite accomplished for any woman, seeing or blind, hearing or deaf. Determined to hold her own, Helen graduated from Radcliffe with honors, wrote several books, and worked the rest of her life on behalf of the handicapped.


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**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 16

**Summary:** When a houseguest reluctantly gives to the White family a charm which supposedly will grant them three wishes, the Whites first wish for two hundred pounds to clear the debt on their home. Shortly thereafter, their son dies in a machinery accident at work, and although his employer claims no responsibility, the company gives the family two hundred pounds as a death benefit. Horrified that their wish may have cost their son's life, Mr. and Mrs. White then wish their son alive. But when they hear sounds at the door, Mr. White, remembering the way in which the first wish was granted, fears what may be on the other side of the door, and wishes the creature away again with the third and final wish.

**Type/Level:** Intermediate  
**Pages:** 126

**Summary:** John Midas loves chocolate. In fact, his mother has trouble getting him to eat anything else. Then John finds a coin with his initials on it in front of a candy store, where he promptly spends it on a box of chocolates. But the box contains only one chocolate, which the boy eats, and immediately after, everything which touches his lips turns to chocolate: his pencil, his gloves, eating utensils, his trumpet, and even his mother when he kisses her. By the end of the day, tired of chocolate and horrified that his mother has become a chocolate statue, John returns to the candy store, where the owner assures John that everything will be restored to its original condition if John has learned not to be so greedy.


**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 127

**Summary:** To prove that he is still a great fisherman, the Cuban Santiago sets out to catch a giant fish. When he hooks an eighteen-foot marlin, the man and the fish battle for days until finally, bruised and exhausted, the man wins. Before he can get the fish back home, however, sharks have eaten away most of its flesh. Even so, the other townspeople can see from the skeleton the great feat performed by the old fisherman.


**Type/Level:** Intermediate  
**Pages:** 195

**Summary:** Thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson, on his way to visit his father, is thrust into unfamiliar territory when the pilot dies suddenly and Brian takes over the controls. After managing to land the plane, Brian must survive in the wilderness armed only with a hatchet, not knowing if anyone will ever find him. Relying on instinct and good sense, Brian battles his environment until he learns not only how to survive, but to enjoy the daily struggle. Just as he has adapted to his new way of life, he is rescued.

**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 309

**Summary:** Alexandra Bergson looks back at her struggle to make a success of her Swedish immigrant pioneer family's farm in Nebraska. Left in charge by her father upon his death, Alexandra must first deal with the bruised egos of her brothers, who object to a woman in charge of their future and fortune. In running the farm, Alexandra intimidates Carl Linstrum, the artistic soul who loves Alexandra but who cannot succeed as farmer and leaves to seek his fortune elsewhere, hoping to become worthy enough to come back for Alexandra. The youngest Bergson son, Emil, attends college. When he returns home, he cannot stay away from his only love, Marie Shabata, who is married. When Marie's husband finds his wife in Emil's arms, he kills them both. Understanding that Marie and Emil were as much to blame as her husband, Alexandra later attempts to have Frank pardoned for the crime. During her trip to see Frank, she sees Carl as well, and the two plan to marry finally and return to the farm, which has prospered under Alexandra's management.


**Type/Level:** Picture storybook  
**Pages:** 48

**Summary:** In a wagon pulled by oxen, Zoe and her family arrive in the Nebraska Territory to settle. Like their new friends the Svensons, Zoe's family builds a sod house and plants corn. On a trip to town with her father, Zoe spots a dandelion plant and digs it up to take home for their mother as a birthday surprise. In the early morning, Zoe and her sister Rebecca plant the dandelion on the roof of the soddie, but the plant looks wilted. Mama tells Zoe not to expect a miracle, but that she can wait.


**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 90

**Summary:** Kino, a poor Mexican fisherman, finds a great pearl which brings hopes of a better life for his family. But immediately after finding the pearl, Kino's fortunes change. The rich doctor who at first refused to treat his son Coyotito, who was stung by a scorpion, plots to steal the pearl from Kino, sending a thief to steal into the family's hut at night. When the hut is burned to the ground, Kino, his wife Juana, and the baby strike out in search of safety. Pursued by greedy would-be thieves, the family flees, but Coyotito is shot and killed in Juana's arms. Having lost everything dear to him, Kino curses the pearl and throws it back to the sea where it can cause him no more harm.

**Type/Level:** Picture storybook  
**Pages:** 26

**Summary:** Finding a freshwater pearl mussel which he is certain contains a great pearl, Beaver dreams of what the pearl will do for him. He imagines being the envy of his animal friends, but he thinks that if they are too envious, they may invade his lake, looking for their own pearls, and in so doing, destroy his dam and then the lake. He imagines the animals in front of a fire fearing thieves in the dark, and he imagines a spark from the fire burning up his home, his pearl, and him. Waking in a fright, Beaver considers the mussel he holds, hurls it back into the water, and then joins his friends in the water to play.

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**Type/Level:** Secondary  
**Pages:** 63

**Summary:** Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet, from feuding families, fall in love and marry secretly, setting in motion a tragic chain of events. Having seen Romeo attend an uninvited Capulet ball, Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, attempts to duel with Romeo in the streets of Verona. Having just married into the Capulet family, Romeo refuses. Thinking Romeo a coward, Benvolio, Romeo's friend, duels with Tybalt in Romeo's place, but is mortally wounded. In retribution for his friend's death, Romeo kills Tybalt and is banished. After spending his wedding night with his new bride, Romeo leaves for Mantua, and Juliet seeks advice from Friar Laurence. He gives her a drug which will make her appear dead; after her family places her in the family vault, Romeo may remove her and take her with him to Mantua to live together. Juliet follows his instructions, but the letter the friar sends to Romeo explaining the plan does not reach him before news of Juliet's death. A grief-stricken Romeo visits the vault where, seeing Juliet, he poisons himself. Juliet then awakens to find her dead husband and stabs herself with his dagger. At the funeral for the couple, the feuding families are chided for allowing their disagreement to kill their children.

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**Type/Level:** Picture storybook  
**Pages:** 32

**Summary:** Long ago in Ethiopia the princess Aida is taken captive by Egyptian soldiers and given to the Egyptian princess Amneris as her handmaiden. When Aida's beauty wins her the love of Radames, captain of the Egyptian army, Amneris is jealous, as she loves Radames herself. The Egyptian army battles with Ethiopia, bringing home with the captives Aida's father Amonasro, who does not reveal that he is king, but does reveal that he is Aida's father. Out of love for Aida, Radames requests that Pharoah release the Egyptian prisoners, which he does, although he keeps Amonasro as a good faith pledge. Urged by her father to discover from Radames the secret road out of Egypt, Aida does so, asking the soldier to leave with her and help her rule Ethiopia. They are discovered by
Amneris and the High Priest, however, and Radames is sentenced to be buried alive for his treason. Unwilling to live without him, Aida waits for him in the vault, where they are sealed together, dying in each other's arms.


Type/Level: Secondary  Pages: 186

Summary: At an exclusive New England prep school in 1942, sixteen-year-old friends Gene and Phineas feel sheltered from the war going on in the rest of the world. Gene, the intellectual, and "Finny," the popular gifted athlete, as an initiation rite into a secret fraternity, jump from a huge tree into the river below. However, when the two boys are both on the limb together one day, Gene out of jealousy for his well-liked friend, intentionally jars the limb, throwing Finny off balance, sending him crashing to the ground. Finny's badly broken leg eventually leads to his death, leaving Gene to face his own evil.


Type/Level: Intermediate  Pages: 101

Summary: Eleven-year-old Henry Cassavant works in a grocery store for a racist grocer in a neighborhood of immigrants. His employer's racist comments disturb Henry, who has recently befriended a Holocaust survivor, Mr. Levine, who works tirelessly each day at the city's arts and crafts center, carving an intricate model of his village which was destroyed during World War II. When the village is finished, Mr. Hairston coerces Henry to destroy the village, threatening to fire him, to have his mother fired from her job, and to ensure that neither of them will be employed by any other merchants in town. On the other hand, if Henry does destroy the village, he will keep his job, his mother will be promoted, and Mr. Hairston will pay for a monument for Henry's deceased brother's grave. Torn between his affection for Mr. Levine and the welfare of his family, Henry stands above the village alone one evening in the arts and crafts center, a wooden mallet poised above his head. When a rat frightens him, the mallet falls, destroying the village. Mr. Hairston's glee at the news shows Henry that his motive in getting Henry to perform this act was to rob him of his innocence. Henry refuses to accept any of the rewards for the deed, however, and Mr. Levine begins rebuilding his village.


Type/Level: Secondary  Pages: 296

Summary: In a small Southern town in the late 1930's, Scout and Jem Finch watch as their widowed father Atticus, an attorney, defends a black man accused of raping a white girl. Meanwhile, the two children develop a fascination, fear, and then a friendship with a mysterious neighbor who is the subject of several rumors in town. Although the black
man on trial, Tom Robinson, is convicted of the crime, Atticus counts the loss as a step in the right direction, as some jurors considered a not guilty decision. The mysterious neighbor, Arthur "Boo" Radley saves the children's lives when they are assaulted by the father of the alleged rape victim.


Type/Level: Intermediate          Pages: 62

Summary: Ten-year-old Jeremy Simms does not understand the prejudice he sees in other white citizens, including his own family. After a bus fills with people outside his father's store, Jeremy observes the bus driver order the black passengers off to make room for more white people. One of those who disembarks is Josias Williams. Following Josias to the bridge, Jeremy sees the bus careen over the railing and he assists Josias in trying to save the passengers.


Type/Level: Picture storybook          Pages: 26

Summary: As an adult, Miss Elizabeth remembers fondly the woman who cared for her as a child, Willie Rudd. Now Miss Elizabeth recognizes the discrimination Willie Rudd suffered because she was African American, and Elizabeth imagines that if she could see Willie Rudd again, she would be treated better.
| **Alas, Babylon**  
by Pat Frank | **Z for Zachariah**  
by Robert C. O'Brien |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> After a nuclear war spares the town of Fort Repose, Florida, its residents must revert to a more primitive way of life with no modern conveniences. After adapting to their new lifestyle, they begin dealing with the larger issue of life beyond Fort Repose, realizing their responsibility in the future of humankind.</td>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> After nuclear and biological warfare kills her entire town and family, sixteen-year-old Ann Burden survives alone on the family farm, growing her own food, finding an uncontaminated water source, and hoping someone else will come along. When mentally unstable Mr. Loomis tries to take control of Ann and the valley, Ann strikes out on her own, hoping that there are other people alive in other valleys, and realizing the importance of her role in continuing human life.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Characters:</strong> In all of the characters, but especially in Randy Bragg, the need to survive taps into an inner strength they did not know they had. Becoming self-sufficient gives Randy's life the focus and purpose it lacked before the war.</td>
<td><strong>Characters:</strong> Ann Burden— Survival instincts in Ann, too, produce a strength she did not know before the war. Having to be self-reliant, she is much more mature than sixteen-year-olds who do not have immediate concerns for their survival.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Setting:</strong> The aftermath of a nuclear war</td>
<td><strong>Setting:</strong> The aftermath of nuclear and biological war</td>
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<td><strong>Subject:</strong> Survival after a nuclear war</td>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> Survival after a nuclear and biological war</td>
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| **Animal Farm**  
by George Orwell | **Baaa**  
by David Macaulay |
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<td><strong>Plot:</strong> At first, life without human rule is pleasant for the animals of Animal Farm, and they vow not to adopt unpleasant and immoral human behaviors, but as power corrupts the leader, he becomes a tyrant who with statistics and charts convinces the other animals that they are much better off than they were under the farmer’s care.</td>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> When humans mysteriously disappear from the earth, sheep at first enjoy their freedom as they eat their way from one home to another. But their increasingly human behavior gives rise to a human-like social structure with a ruling class, who with graphs and charts try to convince the poor and hungry sheep that they are still better off than they were before the humans disappeared.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Characters:**  
**Pigs**--The ruling class on the farm. They greedily save the choicest foods for themselves, while cutting the rations of the others. Gradually, they take on all of the vilest human characteristics they once detested in Mr. Jones. | **Characters:**  
**Sheep**--Like the pigs in *Animal Farm*, the greedy ruling class of sheep which emerges takes the best resources for themselves, while convincing the rest that everyone is better off now that the humans are gone. |
| **Mood/Tone:** A satirical look at corruptive human behaviors  
**Setting:** A farm from which the humans have been driven—a society of animals ruling themselves.  
**Subject:** The corrupting influence of power on those who possess it, displayed in an allegory with animals as the primary characters. | **Mood/Tone:** A satirical look at destructive human behaviors  
**Setting:** A world without humans where sheep rule themselves.  
**Subject:** Like Orwell's satire, *Baaa* demonstrates that power corrupts those who possess it and its misuse leads to the destruction of the society. |
**Brave New World**  
by Aldous Huxley

**Plot:** Although surrounded by people who seem to enjoy the lifestyle provided by the government, three nonconformists appalled by the dehumanization they perceive, realize that they will never be content in the society and are allowed to relocate.

**Characters:**  
John Savage--Ironically, John is the least savage character in the novel. He is deeply disturbed by the uniformity and sterile obscenity of the "brave new world." Strong in his moral convictions but unable to reconcile his convictions to any of his environments, he takes his life.

**Mood/Tone:** *Brave New World* is an ominous cautionary tale.

**Setting:** A dystopian society sometime in the future, when years are measured A.F. (after Ford).

**Subject:** A dehumanized futuristic dystopian society marked by extreme uniformity

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**Away Is a Strange Place To Be**  
by H. M. Hoover

**Plot:** Kidnapped and taken to an artificial world under construction as slave labor, Abby Tabor is horrified to hear from other children there that they enjoy their new life on VitaCon. With the help of spoiled Bryan Bishop, whose stepfather placed him in the colony, Abby escapes from the community.

**Characters:**  
Abby Tabor--At VitaCon, Abby abhors the dehumanizing way in which the child laborers are treated. Deeply sensitive and caring, she would rather lose her life trying to escape than to spend the rest of it in such a barren environment.

**Mood/Tone:** This novel is also an ominous look at the potential for exploiting the powerless (in this case children) which exists some non-democratic structures.

**Setting:** A small community of slave labor in space in the year 2349.

**Subject:** A dehumanized space community which exploits its child laborers
| **Call of the Wild**  
by Jack London | **Gray Boy**  
by Jim Arnosky | **Dogteam**  
by Gary Paulsen |
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<td><strong>Plot:</strong> Buck, a large mixed breed pet dog, is stolen from his comfortable California home and transported to the Klondike to be a sled dog. Adapting to his harsh new environment awakens in Buck primitive instincts, which draw him gradually farther from civilized life as a pet. His one tie to life as a pet is John Thornton, his loving master, for whom Buck will do anything. But when John Thornton dies, Buck answers the “call of the wild,” reverting permanently to the life in the wild as leader of a wolf pack.</td>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> Gray Boy, a large mixed breed pet dog often strays from home to explore the wild, hunting his own food. His journeys from home become longer and more predatory until, like Buck, finally he breaks completely with his owner and lives as a wild dog. When his owner, thirteen-year-old Ian Emerson falls through thin ice near the wounded dog, Gray Boy remembers his love for the boy and pulls him to safety, giving his life for his former master.</td>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> A sledding experience for a team of dogs is related. Like Buck, the Paulsen’s dogs find joy in their work.</td>
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| **Character:**  
**Buck**--Once domesticated, content as a pet, Buck later becomes increasingly wild, as his struggle to survive awakens instincts he never had to use as a pet. Finally preferring life in the wild, Buck breaks from domesticated life entirely. | **Character:**  
**Gray Boy**--At adulthood, Gray Boy is drawn from the farm to the woods more often and for longer periods of time. Never completely tame, he finally yields to predatory instincts, abandoning completely domesticated life for life as a wild dog. | **Character:**  
**Dogteam**--A sledding experience for a team of dogs is related. Like Buck, the Paulsen’s dogs find joy in their work. |
<p>| <strong>Setting:</strong> It is the change in setting from the farm or civilization to the harsh Klondike which precipitates the change in Buck. The need to survive awakens instincts of his wild ancestors, which eventually grow stronger than his ties to civilization. | <strong>Setting:</strong> For Gray Boy as for Buck, setting is the source of his internal conflict—he is torn between life on the farm as a pet and life in the mountain forest as a wild creature. | <strong>Setting:</strong> As for Buck in <em>Call of the Wild</em>, the setting creates the work that the dogs so enjoy. |
| <strong>Point of View:</strong> <em>Call of the Wild</em> is told from the dog Buck’s point of view, allowing the reader to understand and experience the transformation as Buck experiences it. | <strong>Point of View:</strong> As in <em>Call of the Wild</em>, portions of <em>Gray Boy</em> are told from the dog’s point of view, heightening the impact of the animal’s transformation for the reader. | <strong>Point of View:</strong> As in <em>Call of the Wild</em>, the feelings of the sled dogs are related. |
| <strong>Subject:</strong> The dichotomous nature of dogs—the contrast between their domesticated | <strong>Subject:</strong> The dichotomous nature of dogs—the contrast | <strong>Subject:</strong> The work of a sled dog |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Call of the Wild</th>
<th>Gray Boy</th>
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<td>characteristics and their natural instincts.</td>
<td>between their domesticated characteristics and their natural instincts.</td>
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| **The Crucible**  
by Arthur Miller | **Beyond the Burning Time**  
by Kathryn Lasky |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> Based on lies told by a group of girls, dozens of people are found guilty of witchcraft and sentenced to hang.</td>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> Based on lies told by a group of girls, two dozen people die accused of witchcraft.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Characters:**  
Abigail Williams, Susanna Walcott, Betty Parris, Ann Putnam, Mercy Lewis, and Mary Warren--According to Mary Warren, these girls began their accusations as a sort of sport. For unfathomable reasons, the girls sent innocent people to their deaths. If the devil was in Salem, he took the form of these accusers.  
John and Elizabeth Proctor, Sara Good, Sarah Osburn, Rebecca Nurse, and Giles Corey--Among those accused and found guilty of witchcraft. | **Characters:**  
*Beyond the Burning Time* contains many of the same characters as *The Crucible*, those names which appear in historical records of the event, but in addition, Lasky adds fictional characters such as the Chases, the Dawsons, and Gilly. In Lasky's novel, however, it is Mary Warren rather than Abigail Williams who conspires to eliminate Elizabeth Procter (spelled with an *e* in Lasky's story) and to take her place in John's life. |
| **Mood/Tone:** Dark, foreboding. Once the accusations begin, all become fearful, knowing that no one is assured of safety from being named a witch. | **Mood/Tone:** Dark, foreboding. Once the accusations begin, as prosperous farmers about to enter a lucrative shipping venture, the Chases realize that they are likely to be accused. |
| **Point of View:** The play focuses mainly on the experiences of the Proctors during the witchhunt. | **Point of View:** Whereas *The Crucible* focuses on the Proctors (spelled Procter in Lasky's novel), Lasky's story focuses on the fictional Chases. |
| **Setting:** 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts | **Setting:** 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts |
| **Subject:** The Salem Witch Trials | **Subject:** The Salem Witch Trials |
| **Theme:** Miller's play emphasizes the danger of mass hysteria which results from indulging the darkest parts of human nature, such as greed and envy, without a bit of concrete evidence to support the allegations. | **Theme:** Lasky's novel, like Miller's play, emphasizes the appalling ease with which a community is manipulated into a frenzy with mere accusations. Lasky's novel emphasizes the economic reasons for which some of the accused were targeted more than does Miller. |
| **Cyrano de Bergerac**  
by Edmond Rostand | **The View from Saturday**  
by E.L. Konigsburg | **Love Flute**  
by Paul Goble |
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<td><strong>Plot:</strong> The soldier Cyrano, feeling self-conscious about his enormous nose, cannot confess his love directly to the beautiful Roxane. Instead, he speaks for/through the handsome Christian until, though much later, Roxane finally recognizes the words as Cyrano's own and confesses her love for him as well. When challenged or ridiculed because of his appearance, Cyrano wins, not only with his sword, but also with his wit.</td>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> Mrs. Olinski, challenged and ridiculed by an unruly student in class, wins the confrontation with her intelligence and well-chosen, effective words.</td>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> A young man is too shy to confess his love for a beautiful girl until he is given a magic flute, which conveys to her for him that he loves her. She recognizes his song as his confession of love for her, and she loves him as well.</td>
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<td><strong>Character:</strong> Cyrano de Bergerac--Courageous, noble, and intelligent, Cyrano compensates for his physical flaw with his wit. When challenged, he fights not only with his sword, but also with his words, and when he wins Roxane's heart, it is with his words. Mrs. Olinski--A paraplegic, Mrs. Olinski compensates for her physical disadvantage, like Cyrano, with her keen intelligence, wisdom, and tremendous courage.</td>
<td><strong>Character:</strong> The young man--Although no physical flaw is mentioned, the young man is extremely shy, so shy that, like Cyrano, he is unable to confess his love directly to the beautiful girl.</td>
<td><strong>Symbol:</strong> Just as Cyrano's white plume represents his courage, so Julian's ivory monkey represents Mrs. Olinski's courage and strength of character in her triumph over the class bully. The monkey is constructed so that it may balance on any one of its four limbs. Mrs. Olinski's physical capabilities may be limited, but she is able to maintain her &quot;balance&quot; by &quot;thinking on her feet.&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>Subject:</strong> Compensating for a physical flaw with intelligence and character and winning battles or confrontations with words <strong>Subject:</strong> Compensating for a physical handicap with intelligence and character and winning battles or confrontations with words</td>
<td><strong>Symbol:</strong> Cyrano's white plume, which he wears during battle and clutches at his death, symbolizes his courage.</td>
<td><strong>Symbol:</strong> The monkey is constructed so that it may balance on any one of its four limbs. Mrs. Olinski's physical capabilities may be limited, but she is able to maintain her &quot;balance&quot; by &quot;thinking on her feet.&quot;</td>
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| Diary of a Young Girl  
by Anne Frank | Number the Stars  
by Lois Lowry | Rose Blanche  
by Roberto Innocenti |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Characters:**  
Miep Gies, Bep Voskuil, and others who assist the Franks, Mr. Dussel, and the van Pels—These are remarkably courageous and unselfish people who risk their own safety to help the Jews. | **Characters:**  
Annemarie Johanson—Annemarie, like Anne Frank and those who helped her, is also courageous and unselfish, as her strength is tested during adversity. | **Characters:**  
Rose Blanche—Like Miep and Annemarie, Rose Blanche is generous and brave for the benefit of others. |
| **Mood/Tone:**  
Ominous and fearful, as all characters face the threat of danger and discovery | **Mood/Tone:**  
Ominous and fearful | **Mood/Tone:**  
Ominous and fearful |
| **Plot:**  
Miep, Bep, and Mr. Frank’s other employees assist those in hiding, putting themselves in grave danger. | **Plot:**  
Annemarie risks her own safety to help Jewish people in hiding. | **Plot:**  
Like Miep, Bep, and Annemarie, Rose Blanche risks her own life to assist Jewish people. |
| **Setting:**  
World War II, Europe  
(Netherlands) | **Setting:**  
World War II, Europe  
(Denmark) | **Setting:**  
World War II, Europe  
(Germany) |
| **Subject:**  
World War II, Jewish Holocaust | **Subject:**  
World War II, Jewish Holocaust | **Subject:**  
World War II, Jewish Holocaust |
| **Theme:**  
Despite the inhumanity of war, courageous people exist who risk their own lives to save others. | **Theme:**  
Despite the inhumanity of war, courageous people exist who risk their own lives to save others. | **Theme:**  
Despite the inhumanity of war, courageous people exist who risk their own lives to save others. |
| **East of Eden**  
by John Steinbeck | **Jacob Have I Loved**  
by Katherine Paterson |
| --- | --- |
| **Plot:** A twin acts on his intense jealousy of his brother, who seems to be favored by everyone. The story is a modern retelling of the biblical stories of both Cain and Abel and Jacob and Esau. As in the story of Jacob and Esau, Caleb, the jealous twin, offers his father a monetary gift, which his father refuses and scoffs. In response, Caleb sets in motion a chain of events leading to his brother’s death, and, when questioned about his brother, responds as Cain did, questioning his responsibility for his brother.  
**Characters:**  
**Caleb Trask**—The stronger of Adam’s twin boys, whose life bears resemblences to those of Cain and Esau in the biblical stories. Caleb allows his jealousy to govern his actions, which in turn, fuels his jealousy of his good-hearted brother.  
**Aron Trask**—The handsome, innocent, favored son of Adam, who resembles Abel and Jacob of the biblical stories.  
**Subject:** Sibling rivalry played out in the pattern of the stories of Cain and Abel and Jacob and Esau.  
**Theme:** Jealousy need not govern a person’s thoughts and actions. One of our gifts as human beings is the ability to choose what one will do—we can overcome the temptation to commit evil. At the end of the novel, Adam shows Caleb that he forgives him by reminding him of this fact. |
| **Plot:** Louise Bradshaw’s intense jealousy of her pretty, talented twin sister grows as her sister seems to take everything and everyone important to Louise—her “birthright.” Caroline wins the affection of Louise’s friend and mentor, Captain Wallace, and even receives from him a scholarship for musical training, and later Caroline marries her sister’s closest childhood friend.  
**Characters:**  
**Louise Bradshaw**—Like Caleb of *East of Eden*, Louise is ruled by her jealousy for her twin, who seems to receive everyone’s attention and favor.  
**Caroline Bradshaw**—Like Aron of *East of Eden*, Caroline is beautiful, talented, and well-liked by everyone.  
**Subject:** Sibling rivalry played out in the form of the story of Jacob and Esau.  
**Theme:** Jealousy need not govern one’s thoughts and actions. Discovering one’s talents and interests and then pursuing them can help one move beyond an all-consuming jealousy. Louise is able to let go of her contempt for her sister when she pursues a medical career. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fahrenheit 451</th>
<th>Memoirs of a Bookbat</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>by Ray Bradbury</strong></td>
<td><strong>by Kathryn Lasky</strong></td>
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**Plot:** A fireman whose job is to burn books rather than put out fires, Guy Montag questions the outlawing of reading and joins in an effort to preserve great literary works of the past.

**Characters:**
Guy Montag—Unlike most of his peers, Guy is open-minded after meeting Clarisse, who helps him begin to question his own happiness and to search for it in ways he had never imagined. Suddenly, he was aware of and enjoyed what there was of a natural environment around him, and he reaches out to others, seeking a personal connection and honest communication. Following his convictions, Guy chooses the difficult path, with the hope that he will help bring intellectual freedom back to his dying society of unhappy people.

**Subject:** Censorship

**Theme:** The speeches of Faber and the fugitives Guy joins at the end of the novel warn against the dangers of allowing others to decide what one may or may not read. The high suicide rate and constant self-medication by some of the characters suggest also that freedom of thought is a necessary ingredient both for an individual’s mental health and for the health of a society.

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**Plot:** A girl whose family is actively working toward a fundamentalist religious censorship in schools and libraries refuses to allow them to control her mind and her life by choosing to live with her grandmother instead.

**Characters:**
Like Guy, Harper resents others deciding for her what to think and read, and although it is difficult for her to leave her sister, she demonstrates great courage in standing up to those who would control her.

**Subject:** Censorship

**Theme:** On a smaller scale than in *Fahrenheit 451*, *Memoirs of a Bookbat* applauds the individual who possesses the courage and wisdom to preserve intellectual freedom. Whereas *Fahrenheit 451* looks at the effects of the highest degree of censorship on an entire society, Lasky’s novel looks at its effects on an individual. *Memoirs...* is how a situation like *Fahrenheit 451* begins.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>The Glass Menagerie</th>
<th>The Bears' House</th>
<th>Fly Away Home</th>
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<tr>
<td>by Tennessee Williams</td>
<td>by Marilyn Sachs</td>
<td>by Eve Bunting</td>
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**Plot:**
- The Glass Menagerie: A fragile, handicapped young woman with no job or marriage prospects lives in her own world—of glass figurines she collects.
- The Bears' House: A poor, neglected ten-year-old escapes from her troubles by imagining she lives in a dollhouse.
- Fly Away Home: A homeless child living in the airport with his father identifies with a small bird trapped there, and wishes he could escape with the bird.

**Character:**
- Laura Wingfield—Painfully shy and self-conscious about her handicap, Laura finds her life too painful to deal with, and so she escapes by focusing her efforts and attention on her collection of glass figurines.
- Fran Ellen Smith—Ridiculed by her classmates for being underprivileged and not as clean as they are, Fran Ellen wishes for a different life. Like Laura, Fran Ellen looks to an inanimate collection of miniatures to provide her escape.
- Andrew—Like Laura and Fran Ellen, Andrew hopes for a different kind of life, focusing his thoughts on an object which in some ways represents him, providing a momentary escape.

**Mood/Tone:**
- The tone is one of sadness as the reader feels empathy for Laura, whose situation has created in her a mindset which only perpetuates her situation.
- As in The Glass Menagerie, the tone of The Bears' House is one of sadness and empathy. The reader wants to hug Fran Ellen and take care of her and her siblings.
- As in the first two selections, the reader empathizes with Andrew and his father.

**Subject:**
- Escapism as a means of coping with unpleasant circumstances. Laura finds being handicapped so unbearable that she seeks refuge from reality in inanimate objects.
- Escapism as a means of coping with unpleasant circumstances. Fran Ellen imagines herself in the bears' house with the things which are missing from her own life—emotional support of loving parents in a clean, well-furnished home.
- Escapism as a means of coping with unpleasant circumstances. Andrew understands the bird's panic at being trapped in a place where he does not belong, and wishes that he could escape with the bird to a real home.

**Symbolism:**
- The glass unicorn represents Laura. Before Jim's visit, Laura is like the unicorn—different from all of the others (in her collection, the unicorn stands out from the horses, which do not have the unicorn's delicate horn) and easily broken. When Jim breaks the unicorn's horn, it looks like the other figurines, just as momentarily, as Jim draws Laura out during his visit, she seems like any other young lady enjoying herself.
- Just as an object represents Laura, the bears' house represents Fran Ellen's life—more specifically what it lacks—love and emotional support, parents, and adequate housing.
- The trapped bird represents Andrew. Both are trapped in a place where they do not belong, struggling to get out.
| **Great Expectations**  
| by Charles Dickens  |
|---|---|
| **Plot:** Having been made a gentleman by an anonymous benefactor, Pip, after several hardships, realizes the value of his friendships, and learns that wealth has little to do with money.  |
| **Character:**  
| Pip (Philip Pirrip)—Dissatisfied with his socioeconomic status, Pip wants to be wealthy and is ashamed of his family. Especially ashamed of his uneducated friend Joe, Pip tries to change him by trying to teach him to read.  
| Joe Gargery—Pip’s sister’s husband Joe has been kinder to Pip than anyone. When Pip is made a gentleman, Joe is genuinely happy for him and does not take offense at Pip’s avoidance and obvious embarrassment of him. But when Pip is in need, Joe is forgiving, a faithful friend, who helps Pip put into perspective friendship and wealth.  |
| **Subject:** Wealth and its influence on both those have it and those who do not  |
| **Theme:** Pip learns that goodness makes a gentleman, not money and that real wealth has very little to do with money and more to do with having faithful friends such as Joe and Biddy.  |
|---|---|
| **The Table Where Rich People Sit**  
| by Byrd Baylor  |
| **Plot:** During a family meeting, Mountain Girl, who wishes her family had more money, realizes that her family is wealthy in more important ways.  |
| **Character:**  
| Mountain Girl—Like Pip, Mountain Girl is not satisfied with what her family has—she wants more money, commenting that she looks worse than anyone else at school. She even suggests to her parents that they take more lucrative jobs in town.  
| Mountain Girls’s parents—Like Joe, these parents are satisfied with what they have and measure their wealth in terms other than money. They patiently help their daughter put into perspective and define wealth.  |
| **Subject:** The true meaning of wealth  |
| **Theme:** Like Pip, Mountain Girl learns that wealth should be measured in intangible ways, and she learns to be happy with what she has.  |
| **Gulliver’s Travels**  
by Jonathan Swift | **The Journey Home**  
by Alison Lester |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> After he is shipwrecked on an island with tiny people, physician Lemuel Gulliver journeys for sixteen years through fantastic lands with unusual creatures.</td>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> After falling through a hole in their sandbox to the North Pole, Wild and Wooly journey through fantastic places, meeting mythical creatures on their way home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characters:</strong> Lilliputians, Brobdingnags, Laputians, and Houyhnhnms—Imaginary people and creatures Gulliver encounters on his journey.</td>
<td><strong>Characters:</strong> Santa, fairies, a prince, mermaids, pirates, gypsies—imaginary beings that Wild and Wooly encounter on their journey home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting:</strong> Imaginary places including a land of tiny people, a land of giants, a land of scholars, and a land where horses rule.</td>
<td><strong>Setting:</strong> Imaginary places including Santa’s home, a fairies’ tree, a castle, a cave for mermaids, a ship of pirates, and a gypsy’s wagon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> A journey through imaginary places. In Swift’s case, the story serves as a satirical look at the British government of Swift’s day.</td>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> A journey through imaginary places. In this picture book, the story is a journey through a child’s imagination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Handmaid’s Tale</td>
<td>The Giver</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>by Margaret Atwood</td>
<td>by Lois Lowry</td>
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</table>

**Plot:** Much of the novel details Offred’s assigned station in life. When she rebels and attempts an escape, the outcome is open-ended and the reader is left to decide if she is successful.

**Character:**
**Offred**—Offred is an independent thinker, whose core is unaffected by attempts to brainwash her. She uses her intellect to gain the trust and favor of the Commander, thus gaining access to information denied others. She sees through the public lies the controlling government and longs to escape it to seek the freedom she remembers before Gilead, willing even to risk her life for that freedom.

**Mood/Tone:** The mood of the novel is oppressive; the characters live in fear of those in power. All individual desires are suppressed, and even outlawed.

**Setting:** A dystopian society, the Republic of Gilead, formerly the United States, in the near future.

**Subject:** Dystopian society and the danger of too much government control.

**Symbolism:** The color red distinguishes handmaids from others, making it the color of fertility and subjugation. Offred means “Of Fred,” identifying her as the Commander Fred’s property, but later it takes on a second meaning, off-red, as the protagonist rebels against her oppressors.

---

**Plot:** Much of *The Giver* details Jonas’s training and life as the Giver. As in The Handmaid’s Tale, the outcome is open-ended.

**Character:**
**Jonas**—Like Offred, Jonas is a nonconformist in thought and is not convinced that the life imposed by his society is best. For the sake of what is right, Jonas is willing to risk his life to escape.

**Mood/Tone:** The atmosphere becomes oppressive for Jonas when he sees the injustice and inhumanity of his society, and he fears for his life and the life of the child as he attempts his escape.

**Setting:** An unnamed dystopian community sometime in the future.

**Subject:** Dystopian society and the danger of too much government control.

**Symbolism:** Color is significant in *The Giver* in that only the Giver is allowed to experience color differentiation. Color’s absence for other citizens reinforces the sameness that permeates their existence and the lack of aesthetic beauty. In recognizing the intrinsic value of a child considered useless by society, Jonas “sees” beyond that which he is allowed to see.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</th>
<th>Life Doesn’t Frighten Me</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>by Maya Angelou</strong></td>
<td><strong>by Maya Angelou</strong></td>
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</table>

**Plot:** The author describes her childhood, during which she faces racism in the South, survives a rape, and becomes a mother at fifteen.

**Point of View:**
The story is told in first-person by the author—it is autobiographical.

**Subject:** An African American’s search for identity and struggle to come to grips with a racist society.

**Theme:** Taken from a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar, the title of the book refers to the author’s ability to thrive in spite of difficulties. In the events described in this portion of the author’s autobiography, the author emerges from each obstacle stronger, more self-assured, and ready to face whatever she must.

**Plot:** In a poem, the author lists things which are frightening, but announces that they do not frighten her—life does not frighten her at all.

**Point of View:**
The poet narrates in first-person.

**Subject:** The poet’s ability to conquer her fears.

**Theme:** Although much more general than Dr. Angelou’s autobiography, this poem reiterates the pulse of her autobiography—that there is nothing really to fear, for difficulties are temporary obstacles to be overcome.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurassic Park</th>
<th>Dinotopia</th>
<th>If the Dinosaurs Came Back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by Michael Crichton</td>
<td>by James Gurney</td>
<td>by Bernard Most</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plot:** Through scientific discoveries, dinosaurs coexist with humans in the modern world. In Crichton's novel, this coexistence is not peaceful, however—the dinosaurs are powerful predators uncontrollable by humans.

The novel is open-ended, suggesting that dinosaurs may have escaped the island.

**Setting:**
1989 on a remote island off the coast of Costa Rica inhabited by dinosaurs

**Subject:**
Dinosaurs coexist with humans in the modern world.

---

**Plot:** As in Jurassic Park, dinosaurs of Dinotopia coexist with humans in the modern world, but in contrast to Jurassic Park, the dinosaurs of Dinotopia are as civilized as human beings.

The story is open-ended, leaving the reader to wonder what Arthur has discovered in the underworld.

**Setting:**
1860 on a secret island inhabited by dinosaurs

**Subject:**
Dinosaurs coexist with humans in the modern world.

---

**Plot:** As in Jurassic Park, dinosaurs coexist with humans in the modern world, but in contrast to Jurassic, the dinosaurs of Most's story are pets rather than predators.

**Setting:**
A modern city inhabited by dinosaurs

**Subject:**
Dinosaurs coexist with humans in the modern world.
| **Like Water for Chocolate**  
by Laura Esquivel | **Moss Gown**  
by William Hooks |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> Destined to live unmarried and to cook for the family and care for her mother, Tita watches as her sister marries Pedro, Tita's love. Through the magic spells of her cooking, Pedro's love intensifies. Eventually, the powerful magic brings the lovers together, and they die in each other's arms.</td>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> A servant in a wealthy young man's kitchen, Moss Gown is unable to attend his ball until magic provides a gown for her. When she sees the young man pining for her after the ball, she again invokes the magic, and they are wed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Character:**  
Tita--Kind-hearted and loving, Tita accepts her unpleasant lot in life as the youngest daughter. Her beauty and goodness are irresistible to Pedro, who goes to great lengths to be near her. | **Character:**  
Moss Gown (Candace)--Like Tita, Candace is the youngest daughter, genuinely kind and loving, unlike her fawning sisters. The young master loves her immediately upon seeing her, and loves her even after the magic of the gown fades. |
| **Subject:** Magic as the means of bringing together two people in love kept apart by circumstances, convention, and tradition. In the case of this story, the old saying, "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach" holds true. | **Subject:** Magic as a means of bringing together two people in love, kept apart by circumstance. Ironically, just as in *Like Water for Chocolate*, Moss Gown wins the master after serving him his supper. |
| **Metamorphosis**  
by Franz Kafka | **Shoebag**  
by Mary James | **Louis the Fish**  
by Arthur Yorinks |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> Gregor Samson, a traveling salesperson, awakens to discover that he has turned into a giant insect. During the transformation, he gradually loses his ability to communicate with his family. Frightened and repulsed by his appearance, the family does not understand Gregor’s need for their continued love and support. At first his sister Grete seems to want to make him comfortable, but gradually she sees him as a burden and convinces her parents that he must be disposed of. Gregor’s mother, although she retains some maternal affection and concern for her son, is upset by his appearance, which further underscores Gregor’s feeling of alienation. If even his mother finds him repulsive, what chance has he at being loved? Mr. Samsa, Gregor’s father, never feigns concern for his son’s condition, and only after injuring Gregor by hurling an apple at him which lodges in his shell and festers there, does Mr. Samsa show any remorse for the family’s treatment of the son who so willingly once took care of them. Upon hearing his sister’s declaration that he must be gotten rid of, Gregor loses his will to live and dies the following morning. His family, without Gregor to take care of them, makes plans to provide for themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> Shoebag, a roach, awakens to discover that he has turned into a human boy. Like Gregor, during the transformation, Shoebag loses his ability to communicate with his family, who fear him and are repulsed by him. He misses his family terribly, and the thoughtlessness and cruelty of humans which he experiences increases his feeling of alienation. Unlike Gregor Samson, Shoebag finds a way to return to his family, with the help of another roach-turned-human.</td>
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<td><strong>Plot:</strong> Louis, a butcher weary with being a butcher, awakens one morning to discover that he has turned into a salmon. In contrast to Gregor and Shoebag, by the time Louis turns into a fish, his parents have died, and rather than feeling alienated, Louis is happier in his new state. Although for different reasons, Louis, like the Gregor Samsons of both Metamorphosis and Shoebag, does not return to his former self.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Metamorphosis</td>
<td>Shoebag</td>
<td>Louis the Fish</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Characters:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Characters:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Characters:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gregor Samson--Gregor is the provider for his family, who depend on him financially. Although he does not particularly enjoy his work, he devotes his life to it for his family’s benefit. His transformation alienates them from him, and their inability to appreciate him in his new state causes him to lose hope and his will to live.</td>
<td>Shoebag/Stuart Bagg--Like Kafka’s Gregor, Shoebag is a provider for his family, who tries to save the choicest morsels, usually snatched by his lazy, greedy father, for his mother. His transformation makes his his family’s enemy physically—they fear him and consider him a dirty creature. Just as they have planned to move without him, Shoebag finds a way to return to being a roach.</td>
<td>Louis--Like Kafka’s Gregor, Louis does not enjoy the monotony of a career in which he finds no joy. But unlike Kafka’s Gregor, who feels alienated in his new state and who wishes to be reunited with his family, Louis enjoys his new life and for the first time feels content.</td>
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<td><strong>Mrs. Samson</strong>—Although she finds her son’s changed appearance upsetting, Gregor’s mother retains her maternal feelings for her son. When Mr. Samson threatens Gregor and pelts him with apples, Mrs. Samson pleads for her son’s life. Even as the family decides they must get rid of Gregor, Mrs. Samson agrees with deep regret at the loss of her son.</td>
<td><strong>Drainboard</strong> (Shoebag’s mother)—Although she feels physically threatened and repulsed by her son’s appearance, Drainboard also retains her maternal feelings for her son, even accompanying him on his first day of school. Only when she feels that her son is a danger to the rest of the family does she resign herself to losing him permanently.</td>
<td><strong>Under the Toaster</strong> (Shoebag’s father)—Like Mr. Samson, Under the Toaster is lazy, allowing his son to provide for the family and taking the choicest morsels for himself whenever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mr. Samson</strong>—Characterized as lazy, Mr. Samson allows human Gregor to provide for his family. When Gregor is no longer able to do that, Mr. Samson has no use for him.</td>
<td><strong>Gregor Samson</strong>—Shoebag’s (Stuart’s) friend and defender, Gregor is a respected student at Stuart’s elementary school, respected even by the bully who torments Stuart. Gregor is also a roach-turned-boy, but he can make the transformation back and forth at will. In sharing with Shoebag the secret to revert to his former state, Gregor renders himself unable to transform further, deciding instead to become human permanently.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Metamorphosis</td>
<td>Shoebag</td>
<td>Louis the Fish</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme:</strong> Alienation caused by cruelty, selfishness, and lack of spirituality</td>
<td><strong>Theme:</strong> Alienation caused by cruelty, and selfishness</td>
<td><strong>Theme:</strong> Contentment comes from being ourselves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The Miracle Worker**
by William Gibson

**Plot:** Blind and deaf nearly since birth, Helen Keller learns to communicate with sign language through the patience of her miracle-working teacher, Annie Sullivan.

**Character:**
- **Helen Keller**—Strong-willed and frustrated from years of mental isolation, Helen nevertheless becomes a good student once she understands the connection between the words spelled into her hand and objects.
- **Annie Sullivan**—Nearly blind once herself, Annie persists for Helen’s sake in spite of obstacles brought about by Helen’s indulgent family. She becomes a model of the dedicated teacher.

**Subject:** Annie Sullivan’s breakthrough in educating the blind and deaf

**Theme:**
Annie and Helen’s experience shows that even the most insurmountable obstacles can be overcome with persistence and hard work.

---

**Dear Dr. Bell...Your Friend, Helen Keller**
by Judith St. George

**Plot:** Helen Keller, as a result of her first meeting with Alexander Graham Bell, is connected with Annie Sullivan, who teaches her to communicate. Helen’s friendship with Dr. Bell continues to grow as she becomes an accomplished student, writer, speaker, and political activist.

**Character:**
- **Helen Keller**—In St. George’s account, Helen continues to learn everything she can after her initial breakthrough with Annie Sullivan. Her refusal to be hindered by obstacles is inspirational.
- **Annie Sullivan**—Throughout the rest of her life, Annie Sullivan remained Helen’s teacher, the two of them inseparable.

**Subject:** Annie Sullivan’s, Helen Keller’s, and Alexander Graham Bell’s accomplishments in educating the blind and the deaf

**Theme:**
The theme of St. George’s account is the same, except that her account emphasizes the role of friendship and encouragement plays in overcoming obstacles.
The Monkey’s Paw
by W. W. Jacobs

**Plot:** A family is granted three wishes, which come true, but not in the manner in which they expect them to be fulfilled. In having their wish for money granted, they lose their son.

**Characters:**
Mr. and Mrs. White and son Herbert--Motivated by greed, the family ignore their guest’s warnings that the paw is evil and wish upon it anyway. Immediately they are sorry they did not heed the warning.

**Subject:** The destruction brought about by greed

**Theme:** The monkey’s paw is a cautionary tale, which warns, “Be careful what you wish for—you just may get it.” The White’s wishes were granted, but by tragic means.

---

The Chocolate Touch
by Patrick Skene Catling

**Plot:** A greedy boy is granted the ability to turn anything to chocolate which touches his lips, but he soon tires of the taste of chocolate and finds that the gift is more of a troublesome curse, especially after a kiss turns his mother to chocolate.

**Characters:**
John Midas--Instead of King Midas’s gold touch, John Midas has the chocolate touch. Like the Whites, John is greedy, ignoring his family and his doctor’s advice to eat more healthful things and less chocolate. John learns to appreciate their advice.

**Subject:** The negative effects brought about by greed.

**Theme:** Like The Monkey’s Paw, The Chocolate Touch is a cautionary tale with the same warning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Old Man and the Sea</th>
<th>Hatchet</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by Ernest Hemingway</td>
<td>by Gary Paulsen</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Plot:** An old fisherman battles a great fish and wins in this classic man vs. nature conflict. While on this journey with the fish, Santiago uses basic survival techniques, relying on skill and instinct to win his battle with nature.

**Characters:**
Santiago--To prove his manhood, Santiago feels he must conquer a great fish. He is a man with great skill and powerful instinct who reveres nature.

**Subject:** Man’s need to conquer his environment.

**Plot:** A young man whose parents have recently divorced must survive alone in the wilderness after his plane crashes, relying on instinct and developing new survival skills until help arrives. Like Santiago, Brian catches his own food and shelters himself from the elements with whatever is available. This novel could be *The Young Man and the Wilderness*.

**Characters:**
Brian Robeson--Although at first he feels sorry for himself, Brian learns to respect his surroundings and develops great skill in relying on it for his needs. By the time he is rescued, he is quite self-sufficient.

**Subject:** A young man’s joy at discovering that he can conquer his environment.
| **O Pioneers!**  
by Willa Cather | **Dandelions**  
by Eve Bunting |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> A family of Swedish immigrants settle in Nebraska, working through hardships to create a successful, prospering farm.</td>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> Zoe’s family travels to Nebraska in a wagon to settle, knowing that they will face many hardships in the years to come.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Characters:**  
All of Cather’s immigrant characters possess remarkable determination and strong will. Alexandra, in particular, shows herself to be even more of a risk taker than some, experimenting with new crops and farming methods when others commit only to what is already known to succeed. | **Characters:**  
Zoe’s family and the Svensons, like Cather’s characters, possess determination and are willing to risk everything to begin their new life as settlers in the Midwest. Mama’s statement that she is willing to wait indicates the family’s knowledge that it will take time to make the farm a success—it will require much patience. |
| **Setting:** Nebraska during its pioneer days | **Setting:** Nebraska during its pioneer days |
| **Subject:** The hard work and difficult life of early immigrant settlers in the midwest. | **Subject:** The hard work and difficult life of early immigrant settlers in the midwest. |
| **The Pearl**  
| **by John Steinbeck**  
|  
| **Plot:** A poor fisherman finds a valuable pearl, hoping it will change his life, but it brings only trouble as it makes him the target of thieves, costs him his home, which burns down, and leads to his son's death. He then throws the pearl back into the sea.  
|  
| **Characters:**  
| **Kino**—An honest hardworking man, Kino naturally wants to provide a better life to his wife and son, especially after his poverty prevents his son from receiving medical treatment. Too late he learns to be content with what he has, only after he has lost everything of real value to him.  
|  
| **Symbol:**  
| **The pearl**—For Kino the pearl represents the ability to provide for his family in a way he has never been able to. It represents power, the kind of power displayed by the rich doctor who refused to treat Coyotito, a power he would like to experience from the other side of the door. It becomes for him, however, the “pearl of great price”—not the pearl which brings a great price, but rather the pearl which *costs* him a great price.  
|  
| **Theme:** Steinbeck’s unflattering portrayal of the wealthy, in this case those who live in town, walled off from the poor, along with the trouble which follows Kino’s acquisition of the pearl, indicates that those things of real value have nothing to do with wealth. Kino’s son, his home, and the respect of his wife, all of which he loses, were worth more than any price the pearl could bring.  
| |  
| **The Pearl**  
| **by Helme Heine**  
|  
| **Plot:** When a beaver finds a freshwater pearl mussel, he imagines what the pearl will do for him, including causing him great trouble, and so he throws the mussel back into the lake unopened. As actually occurs in Steinbeck’s story, Beaver imagines the pearl indirectly causing his home to burn.  
|  
| **Characters:**  
| **Beaver**—Like Kino, Beaver hopes that owning something so valuable will benefit him, but he averts disaster by anticipating the drawbacks and decides he is content with what he has, including his friends.  
|  
| **Symbol:**  
| As for Kino, the pearl for Beaver represents possibilities, but unlike Kino, Beaver realizes that not all the possible effects are positive.  
|  
| **Theme:** In Heine’s version of *The Pearl*, too, the protagonist is better off to be content with what he has, which is not worth losing for economic wealth.  
<p>| |
| |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Romeo and Juliet</strong></th>
<th><strong>Aida</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>by William Shakespeare</td>
<td>by Leontyne Price</td>
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**Plot:** Two young lovers whose families are feuding marry secretly, but when the girl's plan to escape to be with her husband fails, unwilling to live without each other, the couple take their lives, dying in each other's arms.

**Characters:**
- **Juliet**—The daughter of a prominent family in Verona, Juliet loves the son of her family's only enemy.
- **Romeo**—The son of Verona's other most prominent family, Romeo loves the daughter of his family's only enemy.

**Subject:** Forbidden love between children of warring families

**Theme:** The prince's speech at Romeo and Juliet's funeral places the blame with the parents, whose ancient grudges cost them their children. The couple are star-crossed lovers, victims of fate and circumstance; nevertheless, had their families made peace earlier, the children would have lived.

**Plot:** A princess and a soldier from warring countries fall in love, but when their plan to escape to her home together is discovered, the young man is sentenced to die for treason. Rather than live without him, the princess waits for him in the vault, where they die in each other's arms.

**Characters:**
- **Aida**—An Ethiopian princess who loves the captain of the army of the country with which her country is at war.
- **Radames**—Captain of the Egyptian army, he dares to love the daughter of his country's enemy.

**Subject:** Forbidden love between children of warring families

**Theme:** Unlike Romeo and Juliet, Aida does not place blame with the families, but rather with the jealous princess Amneris. Aida is more about the eternal power of great love and the great lengths that devoted lovers will go to be together than it is about the destructive effects of warring families.
| **A Separate Peace**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>by John Knowles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> A young man commits a malicious act which eventually leads to his best friend’s death.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Characters:**  
| Gene—A serious, intellectual young man, Gene surrenders to the dark side of human nature, intentionally hurting his friend out of jealousy. |
| **Subject:** The opposing forces of good and evil which are present in human nature |
| **Symbol:** The tree from which the boys jump into the river becomes for Gene the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It represents that potential in each of us for both good and evil. |
| **Theme:** Gene’s actions demonstrate that evil is intentional— it is a conscious choice which changes forever the personal who makes the choice. |

| **Tunes for Bears to Dance to**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>by Robert Cormier</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> At the urging of his employer, a young man commits a racially motivated act of evil against a Holocaust survivor by destroying the man’s artwork.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Characters:**  
<p>| Henry Cassavant—A serious eleven-year-old whose family depends upon his financial contributions, Henry recognizes his own capacity for both good and evil, and after destroying Mr. Levine’s village, he consciously turns from it, refusing to benefit from Mr. Levine’s loss. Although both Cormier’s Henry and Gene in <em>Separate Peace</em> make the same discovery about human nature, only Henry finds atonement for his act. |
| <strong>Subject:</strong> The opposing forces of good and evil which are both present in human nature |
| <strong>Symbol:</strong> Whereas the tree in Knowles’s novel represents the presence of both good and evil in all of us, in Cormier’s story George, the arts center director, states that Mr. Levine’s village is a symbol of the fact that good <em>can overcome</em> evil (p. 64). |
| <strong>Theme:</strong> Henry demonstrates that although evil is a conscious choice, it may be overcome and atonement is possible. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>To Kill a Mockingbird</strong> by Harper Lee</th>
<th><strong>Mississippi Bridge</strong> by Mildred D. Taylor</th>
<th><strong>Dear Willie Rudd</strong> by Libba Moore Gray</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting:</strong> <em>To Kill a Mockingbird</em> is set in Alabama in the 1930's, a time characterized by economic depression and racial prejudice which went unchecked.</td>
<td><strong>Setting:</strong> Like <em>To Kill a Mockingbird</em>, <em>Mississippi Bridge</em> takes place during the post-depression years in the South.</td>
<td><strong>Setting:</strong> Although the specific year and place are not given in <em>Dear Willie Rudd</em>, the magnolia trees and abelia bushes indicate that the place is probably somewhere in the South, and Miss Elizabeth's mention of Willie Rudd's sitting at the back of the bus, eating alone in the kitchen and using the back door indicate a time before the Civil Rights Movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character:</strong> Scout Finch—Scout is a six-year-old caucasian child who witnesses racially motivated crimes against African Americans in her community. The daughter of a lawyer defending a black man accused of raping a white woman, Scout attempts to make sense of the prejudice she observes during the trial, which directly contradicts the inclusive unbiased attitudes embraced by her own immediate family.</td>
<td><strong>Character:</strong> Jeremy Simms—Ten-year-old caucasian Jeremy rejects the prejudice he sees in other caucasians and values people for their character.</td>
<td><strong>Character:</strong> Miss Elizabeth—Miss Elizabeth is a caucasian woman who regrets not having expressed her love and gratitude to the African American woman who cared for her as a child. Like the other two books in this set, <em>Dear Willie Rudd</em>’s flashbacks feature a caucasian child witnessing discriminatory acts against African Americans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Robinson—Although he has endured discrimination by caucasians, African American Tom goes out of his way to help a white woman. She repays his kindness by accusing him of raping her.</td>
<td>Josias Williams—Like Tom Robinson, Josias helps some white people, even though he has just been ejected from a bus to make room for them.</td>
<td><strong>Point of View:</strong> As in <em>To Kill a Mockingbird</em>, <em>Mississippi Bridge</em>’s narrator is a caucasian child witnessing and questioning racial discrimination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Point of View:</strong> The narrator is an adult Scout looking back at events of her childhood. The perspective is that of a caucasian child puzzled and disturbed by the prejudice she observes. The point of view is significant in that it conveys the author’s horror at the injustice of the novel’s racially motivated acts.</td>
<td><strong>Point of View:</strong> As in <em>To Kill a Mockingbird</em>, <em>Mississippi Bridge</em>’s narrator is a caucasian child witnessing and questioning racial discrimination.</td>
<td><strong>Point of View:</strong> As in <em>To Kill a Mockingbird</em>, <em>Dear Willie Rudd</em> is narrated by an adult caucasian woman looking back on events involving racial prejudice she witnessed as a child. Again, the child’s perspective, absent of bigotry, underscores the injustice of the events she remembers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To Kill a Mockingbird</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mississippi Bridge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dear Willie Rudd</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme:</strong> The theme of racial prejudice and its injustices are evident in the novel's contrasts. Tom Robinson cannot receive a fair trial because of the color of his skin, and although he is guilty only of helping the girl he is accused of raping, he is presumed guilty. The girl's father, although a liar and an abusive drunk is believed only because he is white.</td>
<td><strong>Theme:</strong> The injustice of racial prejudice is the theme of <em>Mississippi Bridge</em> as well. Josias Williams and other black citizens are removed from the bus in preference to the white citizens, but when the very people who discriminated against him are in danger, Josias risks his life to save them.</td>
<td><strong>Theme:</strong> Again, the theme is the same, although in <em>Dear Willie Rudd</em> the narrator herself is apologetic for not acting against the prejudice she observes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Using children's literature in the secondary language arts curriculum has been deemed an effective practice by numerous educators such as Peggy A. Sharp, Peggy Ford, David Ludlam, and Judith Rovenger, to name a few. Using children's literature with older students helps to prepare them to select children's books for their own children, enhances secondary school speech programs, enhances writing instruction, is useful for teaching literary elements, and facilitates discussion of complex themes and concepts in literature.

Many experts on children's literature, including Linda Rief, Rudine Sims Bishop, and Janet Hickman, agree that children's books are no longer only for children; rather they are often complex works of art which may be understood and appreciated on many levels. By examining and enjoying quality children's books in secondary school, students are encouraged to become reading parents who will encourage their own children to be readers.

Significant parallels exist between some works of children's literature and some selections typically taught in secondary language arts curricula. The children's works selected for this research project deal with the same issues found in adult titles, and often the treatment of the topic is as multi-layered, poignant, and artistic as the adult selection, as in *Diary of a Young Girl, Number the Stars*, and *Rose Blanche*. 
Recommendations

In completing this research project, this researcher found that there are many children's selections which contain significant parallels with adult literary works. As newer intermediate and picture storybooks are published which contain significant parallels, and as the secondary language arts literary canon evolves, the teaching guide may be updated and expanded.

Several possible variations of this study could be conducted. One would be to increase the number of titles included in each reading level of the project, secondary, intermediate, and picture storybooks. Another variation would be to create teaching units for each of the matched sets of works, with recommended teaching strategies, discussion questions, and activities. Yet another variation would be to teach one or more of the sets together in a secondary language arts class and to analyze the benefits of teaching the works as parallel readings.

As access to children's literature in indeces is presently limited to subject access, indeces providing a more complex thematic access point would be useful for expanding the collection of matched works.

Summary

The 25 sets of matched parallel readings which make up this teaching guide are not the only sets possible. As new titles are published and as secondary language arts teachers define their own canon, sets may be added or revised. In this way, the teaching guide will
be useful for larger numbers of language arts teachers and the selections will remain relevant to the students who study them.
References


Appendix A

Selection Form

Bibliographic Information

Title
Author
Publisher
Date
Pages

Type/Level: Secondary, Intermediate, or Picture Storybook

Summary:

Points of Parallelism

Characters
Mood/Tone
Plot
Point of View
Setting
Subject
Symbols
Theme

Confirming Source

Tests or Teaching Guides
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Title</th>
<th>Intermediate Title</th>
<th>Picture Storybook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elements Emphasized:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Elements Emphasized:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Elements Emphasized:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix B
Analysis Instrument
Appendix C

Tests and Teaching Guides for Secondary Works in the Research Project


