

**Recent Non-fiction Books for**  
**Children Aged 3-5**  
**State Library of Iowa**  
**Compiled by Merri M. Monks, Youth Services Consultant**

**Biography**

Amoroso, Cynthia and Noyed, Robert B. *Charles Schulz*. Mankato, Minn.: Child's World, 2010. ISBN: 9781602533400.

The Basic Biographies series gets off to a good start with this well-chosen biography of a timeless figure in children's entertainment. The book follows the familiar format of left-side text, right-side photograph. The historical photographs are evocative, and the captions are succinct. (*Booklist*).

\*Brown, Monica. *My Name Is Gabito: The Life of Gabriel García Márquez/Me llamo Gabito: La vida de Gabriel García Márquez*. Illus. by Raúl Colón. Llanham, Maryland: Luna Rising, 2007. ISBN: 9780873589086.

Evocative, tropical illustrations pull the eye into Gabriel García Márquez's imaginative world, introducing children to the early life of the celebrated Colombian author. A **2008 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book**.

Engle, Margarita. *Summer Birds: The Butterflies of Maria Merian*. Illus. by Julie Paschkis. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2010. ISBN: 9780805089370

It's not often that someone is born both a great scientist and a great artist, especially if that someone is a girl in the middle of the 17th century. But Maria Sibylla Merian was. In a time when people thought that butterflies (then called "summer birds") came from the soil magically, Maria studied these creatures in secret, lest she be accused of witchcraft. Engle and Paschkis tell Merian's story with emotion and passion, capturing the spare voice of the 13-year-old narrator. (Picture book/biography. 4-9) (*Kirkus Reviews*)

Hill, Laban Carrick . *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave*. Illus. by Bryan Collier. New York: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2010. ISBN: 9780316107310; 031610731X.

The life of an astonishingly prolific and skilled potter who lived and died a slave in 19th-century South Carolina is related in simple, powerful sentences that outline the making of a pot. The movements of Dave's hands are described using familiar, solid verbs: pulling, pinching, squeezing, pounding. Rural imagery—a robin's puffed breast, a carnival wheel—remind readers of Dave's surroundings. (*Booklist*).

Napoli, Donna Jo. *Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai and the Trees of Kenya*. Illus. by Kadir Nelson. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010. ISBN: 9781416935056; 1416935053

Luminous illustrations are the highlight of this third recent picture-book biography of Wangari Maathai, the Kenyan environmental activist who received the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. In brief, poetic lines that have a folktale tone, Napoli describes how “wise Wangari” helped Kenyan village women solve problems from hunger to dirty water with the same solution: “Plant a tree.” Eventually, Maathai’s Green Belt movement became a worldwide mission. (*Horn Book*).

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sojourner Truth’s Step-Stomp-Stride*. Illus. by Brian Pinkney. New York: Jump at the Sun/Disney, 2009. ISBN: 9780786807673.

Husband-and-wife team Andrea and Brian Pinkney not only bring Sojourner Truth to life but turn her into a legendary, almost tall-tale figure while still keeping to historical facts. (*Horn Book*).

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Before John Was a Jazz Giant: A Song of John Coltrane*. Illus. by Sean Qualls. New York: Henry Holt, 2008. ISBN: 9780805079944.

John Coltrane’s childhood echoed with sounds. The formative experiences of the legendary musician and composer are portrayed in rhythmic language and stylized, mixed media illustrations in blues, browns and white. (2009 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book)

## Concepts

Baker, Keith. *LMNO Peas*. San Diego: Beach Lane Books, 2010. ISBN: 9781416991410

A passel of industrious peas narrates inventive, alphabetically arranged avocations: "We are peas—alphabet peas!/We work and play in the ABCs." This high-energy romp invites repeat visits by young browsers—there's plenty to pore over and giggle about. (*Kirkus Reviews*)

Blexbolex. *Seasons*. Illus. by the author. Brooklyn, NY: Enchanted Lion: 2010. ISBN: 9781592700950.

This thick volume is both beautiful and intriguing—artist’s portfolio, concept book and word book rolled into one. The poster-style images range from minimalist to expansive. Like Tana Hoban’s meticulously composed photographs, these sophisticated images are sure to stimulate creative thought. (*Horn Book*).

Bullard, Lisa. *Busy Animals: Learning About Animals in Autumn*. Mankato, Minnesota: Picture Window Books, 2010. **ISBN 978-1-4048-6014-8.**

Bullard, Lisa. *Leaves Fall Down: Learning About Autumn Leaves*. Mankato, Minnesota: Picture Window Books, 2010. **ISBN: 978-1-4048-6013-1.**

Koontz, Robin. *Apples, Apples Everywhere!: Learning About Apple Harvests*. Mankato, Minnesota: Picture Window Books, 2010. **ISBN: 978-1-4048-6012-4.**

Koontz, Robin. *Pick a Perfect Pumpkin: Learning About Pumpkin Harvests*. Mankato, Minnesota: Picture Window Books, 2010. **ISBN 978-1-4048-6011-7.**

All illustrated by Nadine Takvorian. These four books are intended to give children basic scientific information about the featured topic. The double-page illustrations depicting the flora and fauna of the books' settings are rich and warm. (*School Library Journal*).

Geisert, Arthur. *Country Road ABC*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 2010. **ISBN: 9780547194691.**

Arthur Geisert creates a stunning paean to the bustling Bernard, Iowa, community he calls home. A continuous panorama that runs along the bottom of the spreads is 45-feet long, 3-inches high, spanning all four seasons. In a starred review, *Kirkus* called this "a simply glorious barn and farm opus."

Gonyea, Mark. *A Book about Color: A Clear and Simple Guide for Young Artists*. Illus. by the author. New York: Henry Holt, 2010. **ISBN: 080509055X; 9780805090550.**

The third book in this series (*A Book About Design; Another Book About Design*) turns to the basics of color. Gonyea's square format, generous use of space, and breezy, informal style all work well with this topic. (*Horn Book*).

Gravett, Emily. *Orange Pear Apple Bear*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007. **ISBN: 9781416939993.**

Combining the four words in the title, this early concept book about shape, color and sequence introduces language play as well as punctuation in soft hued watercolor illustrations. (*Booklist*).

*Here's a Little Poem: A Very First Book of Poetry*. Ed. by Jane Yolen and Andrew Fusek Peters. Illus. by Polly Dunbar. Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick, 2007. **ISBN: 9780763631413.**

Over 60 short poems in English, collected from around the globe, appear in four copiously illustrated sections that represent central interests of young children: me, my house, outside, and bedtime. (*Booklist*).

Henkes, Kevin. *Birds*. Illus. by Laura Dronzek. New York: Greenwillow/HarperCollins, 2009. **ISBN: 9780061363047.**

A young unseen narrator explores colors, shapes, and sizes as she watches red, blue, yellow and green birds outside her window. Perfect for the youngest children. (*Booklist*).

Hills, Tad. *What's Up, Duck? A Book of Opposites*. Illus. by the author. New York: Random House/Schwartz & Wade, 2008. **ISBN: 9780375847387.**

Adapting Duck and Goose for the board book crowd, Hills whimsically presents concepts such as loud and quiet, far and near, and heavy and light in clear, child-appealing watercolors. (*Booklist*).

MacDonald, Suse. *Alphabet Animals: A Slide-and-Peek Adventure*. New York: Little Simon, 2008. **ISBN: 9781416950455; 1416950451.**

This is a very simple toy/movable book for very young readers. It's a guessing-game/puzzle book of animals, each representing, in the shape it assumes and the initial character of its name, an uppercase letter of the alphabet. Every graphic page is actually a pocket in which is concealed a sliding card revealing the letter hinted at by the animal, along with that creature's name. Although it's relatively sturdy, this striking book may not long endure the rigors of rough handling, but that shouldn't prevent librarians and educators from purchasing. Just know that curious little hands may not be able to resist investigating those pockets to learn what makes them work. (*Kirkus Reviews*).

McLimans, David. *Gone Wild: An Endangered Animal Alphabet*. illus. New York: Walker Books for Young Readers, 2006. **ISBN: 0-8027-9563-3.**

This black-and-white iconic alphabet book is sophisticated enough to intrigue and captivate readers of any age. A contemporary interpretation of an illuminated alphabet melds animals and letters into 26 unique and elegant graphic images. *Caldecott Honor Book*.

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *Black? White! Day? Night! A Book of Opposites*. illus. New York: Roaring Brook/Neal Porter, 2006. **ISBN: 1-59643-185-7.**

A delightfully interactive concept book presents children with pairs of opposites in die-cuts that lead them from one element to another in a parade of happy contradictions.

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *What If?* Illus. by the author. New York: Porter/Roaring Brook, 2010. **ISBN: 9781596433984; 1596433981.**

What if a pair of seals found a beach ball and began to toss it around? In her latest innovative concept book, Seeger takes this premise and using almost the same few words each time plays out three different scenarios with three different outcomes. For the very youngest child, it's a straightforward exploration of the age-appropriate concept of

sharing. But Seeger builds in room to stretch, so that children ready for more complicated concepts will find them here. (*Horn Book*, starred review).

Sidman, Joyce. *Red Sings from Treetops: A Year in Colors*. Illus. by Pamela Zagarenski. New York: Houghton, 2009. ISBN: 9780547014944.

Evocative poems celebrate color and enliven the senses as readers follow a woman and her dog surrounded by myriad intricately costumed and stylized figures through the seasons. (A 2010 Caldecott Honor Book.)

Sierra, Judy. *The Sleepy Little Alphabet: A Bedtime Story for Alphabet Town*. Illus. by Melissa Sweet. New York: Knopf, 2009. ISBN: 9780375840029 (trade); 0375840028 (trade); 9780375940026 (lib. bdg.); 0375940022 (lib. bdg.)

“k won’t give a kiss good night./ I cries, ‘Don’t turn off the light!’” Twenty-six children (the lowercase letters) try to avoid bedtime while adults (the uppercase) corral them toward the inevitable. (*Horn Book*—one of the *Horn Book*’s Best Books of 2009).

Swinburne, Stephen R. *Whose Shoes?: A Shoe for Every Job*. Honesdale, Penn.: Boyds Mills, 2010. ISBN: 9781590785690 (hardcover); 159078569X (hardcover).

The old adage, “take children from what they know to what they don’t know,” is reinforced by Swinburne’s concept book. Crisp, clear photographs show children with favorite shoes. Swinburne then turns his attention to special shoes for special jobs, first presenting youngsters with a photograph of shoes, posing the question, “Whose shoes?” and, with a page turn, providing the answer and a full image of the worker. (*Booklist*).

\*Weill, Cynthia. *Opuestos: Mexican Folk Art Opposites in English and Spanish*; illus. with photographs by Sergio A. Gomez. El Paso, Texas: Cinco Puntos, 2009. ISBN: 1 933693568 (alk. paper); 9781933693569 (alk. paper).

This triple-faceted gem shines as a concept book, a bilingual vocabulary primer, and an appealing introduction to Oaxacan folk art. Each double-page spread features a plain background with a bright paint-on-plaster texture against which cut-out photos of the featured objects appear. The English and Spanish words for each set of opposites are positioned near the bottom of the page. (*The Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books*, recommended).

## **Mathematics, Science and Technology**

Askew, Amanda. *Mighty Machines Series*. Tonawanda, New York: Firefly, 2010.

*Bulldozers*. ISBN: 9781554077038.

*Cranes*. ISBN: 9781554077045.

*Diggers*. ISBN: 9781554077052.

*Loaders*. ISBN: 9781554077069.

With huge, clear color photos of machines at work, the Mighty Machines series is an exciting way to connect books with kids' vrooming play and with what they see on the road, construction sites, and farms. (*Booklist*).

Bang, Molly and Chisholm, Penny. *Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the Earth to Life*. Illus. by Molly Bang. New York: Scholastic/Blue Sky, 2009. ISBN: 9780545044226.

From the molecular level all the way to sweeping personal and planetary concerns, the process of photosynthesis has never been made clearer or more invigorating. (*Booklist*).

Barry, Frances. *Let's Save the Animals: A Flip-the-Flap Book*. Illustrated by the author. New York: Candlewick, 2010. ISBN: 9780763645014.

Although there are plenty of children's books about animals and wildlife conservation, Barry's engaging entry brings young children into the conversation without sacrificing kid appeal. This primer presents 10 endangered species in their natural habitats. (*Booklist*).

Bauer, Marion Dane. *The Cutest Critter*. Illus. by Stan Tekiela. Cambridge, Minn.: Adventure Publications, 2010. ISBN: 9781591932536.

Simple rhyming text pairs with sharp, full-color photos on each double-page spread in this picture book that spotlights wild animal parents nurturing their young. (*Booklist*).

Bennett, Artie. *The Butt Book*. Illus. by Mike Lester. Bloomsbury, 2009. ISBN: 9781599903118; 1599903113; 9781599904566 (reinforced bdg.).

A genial red-haired boy with an enquiring mind guides us through this good-natured hymn of praise to rear ends in all their variety. (*Horn Book*).

Bodden, Valerie. *Grand Canyon*. Mankato, Minn.: Creative Education, 2010. **ISBN: 9781583418154.**

Everything about the Big Outdoors series is big—the pictures, the fonts, the captions. The concepts communicated are very simple. With short, declarative sentences, Bodden gathers just enough stats and information to get imaginations working on the photographs. There are two levels of captions—one very large, one smaller—allowing readers to engage at various levels. (*Booklist*).

Callery, Sean. *Hide and Seek in the Jungle*. Illus. by Rebecca Robinson. London: Macmillan/Kingfisher, 2010. **ISBN: 9780753463925.**

Gorillas, tigers, crocodiles, and parrots hide amid jungle foliage in this lift-the-flap board book. The final spread features photos and facts about other rain-forest animals and provides a worthy introduction to this diverse ecosystem. (*Booklist*).

Campbell, Sarah C. *Wolfsnail: A Backyard Predator*. Photos by Sarah C. and Richard P. Campbell. Honesdale, Penn.: Boyds Mills Press. **ISBN: 9781590785546.**

Magnified photographs and informative text provide a nonfiction look at the carnivorous wolfsnail trapping and devouring its victim. This science book will amaze and attract readers. (2009 Geisel Honor Book) (*Booklist*).

Cassino, Mark with Jon Nelson. *The Story of Snow: The Science of Winter's Wonder*. Illus. by Nora Aoyagi. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2009. **ISBN: 9780811868662** (hardcover); **0811868664** (hardcover).

This account harnesses our everyday delight in snowflake shapes to draw us into the scientific explanations for their formation and variety. Numerous beautiful photographs of snow crystals show the differences in crystallization. (*Horn Book*).

Chin, Jason. *Redwoods*. Illus. by the author. New York: Roaring Brook/Neal Porter, 2009. **ISBN: 9781596434301.**

Straightforward nonfiction text combines with fantastical illustrations that highlight the awe-inspiring facts as well as the importance of preserving redwood forests. (*Booklist*).

Dillon, Leo and Diane Dillon. *Mother Goose Numbers on the Loose*. illus. New York: Harcourt, 2007. **ISBN: 9780152056766.**

A series of animal and human characters, many with masks, illustrate 24 traditional rhymes that leap off the pages in this mathematical pageant for toddlers. (*Booklist*).

Dodd, Emma. *I Love Bugs!* Illus. by the author. New York: Holiday House, 2010. **ISBN: 9780823422807**(hardcover); **0823422801** (hardcover).

The title pretty much says it all. The text is lively, and the subject naturally draws attention, both positive and negative. Though there are no notes identifying the creepy crawlies, they look zoologically correct, yet they also fit decoratively into the compositions. (*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*—recommended).

Dylan, Bob. *Man Gave Names to All the Animals*. New York: Sterling, 2010. Illustrated by Jim Arnosky. **ISBN: 9781402768583**.

With lush, realistic pencil and acrylics, Arnosky depicts animals in the wild. While only six creatures are named in the song, Arnosky features more than 170 in various groupings. Ninety-six of the creatures are listed at the back of the book with a challenge to find them on the pages. A CD of Dylan's original recording is nicely tucked away inside the back cover. (*Booklist*).

Elliott, David. *In the Wild*. Illus. by Holly Meade. New York: Candlewick, 2010. **ISBN: 9780763644970; 0763644978**.

Meade's woodcut-print and-watercolor illustrations fill page after page with striking images of each featured animal in its habitat. Every page spread is saturated with vivid colors and shapes, simultaneously drawing attention to the boldly rendered animal at its heart and making space for a poem, printed in large, clear type that pays further tribute to the creature pictured. The poems, though they employ some sophisticated vocabulary, are short and direct, a feature that will demonstrate to young readers that poetry can be powerful and pleasurable without being too complicated or threatening. (*Kirkus*)

Fox, Karen C. *Older Than the Stars*. Illus. by Nancy Davis. Watertown, Mass.: Charlesbridge Publishing, 2010. **ISBN: 9781570917875** (reinforced for library use); **1570917876** (reinforced for library use).

An amazingly simple explanation for children of cosmology and the Big Bang Theory about the creation of the universe. (*Booklist*).

French, Vivian. *Yucky Worms*. Illus. by Jessica Ahlberg. New York: Candlewick, 2010. **ISBN: 9780763644468; 0763644463**.

Drawn by the slimy appeal of worms, preschoolers and elementary students alike will be fascinated by this fictional story filled with scientific facts about how these slithery creatures move, eat, and help the environment. (*Booklist*).

Karas, G. Brian. *On Earth*. illus. New York: Puffin, 2008. **ISBN:0-399-24025-X**.

This large format nonfiction picture book simply explains the science of the Earth's revolution around the Sun, the tilt of its axis, and its gravitational pull. Stunning artwork visually represents each concept. (*Booklist*).



Kim, Sue. *How Does a Seed Grow?* Illus. by Tilde. New York: Simon & Schuster/Little Simon, 2010. ISBN: 9781416994350.

From seed to sprout to finished fruit, plants spring to life in this inventive book that folds out into four scenes on every spread. This offers a basic introduction to plant science. (Booklist).

\**Me gustan los animales = I Like Animals*. Vero Beach, Fla.: Rourke, 2010. ISBN: 9781615901135.

From the publisher's extensive Bilingual Board Books series, this little volume features exceptionally clear, colorful photos of animals. Each picture appears on a single page or double-page spread, accompanied by a brief sentence in Spanish and in English. (Booklist).

Mayer, Lynne. *Newton and Me*. Illus. by Sherry Rogers. Mount Pleasant, S.C.: Sylvan Dell, 2010. ISBN: 9781607180678.

Newton's laws of gravity and motion are at the center of this rhyming picture book that brings physics to a young audience in a lively story about a boy playing with his dog. (Booklist).

Muldraw, Diane. *We Planted a Tree*. Illus. by Bob Staake. New York: Random/Golden Books, 2010. ISBN: 9780375864322 (alk. paper); 0375864326 (alk. paper); 9780375964329 (gibraltar library binding : alk. paper).

A family in Brooklyn plants a tree in their small backyard; turn the page and a Kenyan family plants a tree on the bare African savannah. Then in Paris, Tokyo, and more places across the globe, each newly planted tree grows up, as the children in the family do. Muldraw weaves some science into the lines: "Sunshine went into the leaves / And brought food to the tree," and through the seasons, the trees grow beautiful pink blossoms, green leaves that help clean the air, and fruit, while their roots keep the soil from blowing away and provide a place for families to plant food. Illustrating the simple poetry are clean-lined digital illustrations that show the botany details and celebrate the connections between plants and people, present and long-term, across time and space, as each generation continues the conservation efforts and helps "heal the earth." (Booklist).

Page, Robin. *How to Clean a Hippopotamus: A Look at Unusual Animal Partnerships*. Illus. by Steve Jenkins. New York: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children ISBN: 9780547245157 (reinforced); 0547245157 (reinforced).

This book introduces readers to symbiosis, focusing on relationships in which each partner benefits from the collaboration. The book concludes with a relationship that will be familiar to many readers—that of humans and dogs. The book is formatted in a block, comic-book style and is written at a level that is accessible to young browsers. (*School Library Journal*, starred review).

Piper, Sophie. *Ready, Steady, Grow!* Chicago: IPG/Lion, 2010. ISBN: 9780745961606.

“Do you dream of growing taller?” begins this child-centered picture book. The pages that follow offer sound recommendations, such as eat vegetables in all sorts of colors, choose outdoor clothes appropriate for the weather, and get plenty of sleep. (*Booklist*).

Rockwell, Anne; illustrated by Frané Lessac. *Clouds*. New York: Collins, 2008.  
ISBN: 9780064452205 (pbk. bdg.); 0064452204 (pbk. bdg.); 9780060291013 (trade bdg.); 006029101X (trade bdg.).

This entry to the Let’s-Read-and-Find-Out Science Stage 1 series gives basic information about clouds in the easy-to-read picture-book format that is typical for the series. General information is covered, followed by more specific details about the 10 types of clouds and the kind of weather that each type portends. Double-page spreads portray panoramic scenes of children in various outdoor activities with the clouds (one type per page) hovering over them. The unique qualities of each type of cloud are given in two to three sentences of text. Two pages of back matter feature a few additional facts about clouds and simple instructions for making a cloud of your own. The open and uncluttered illustrations suit the topic well. All in all, this is a successful entry in the series. (*Booklist*).

Sayre, April Pulley. *Meet the Howlers!* Illus. by Woody Miller. Watertown, Mass.: Charlesbridge, 2010. ISBN: 9781570917332.

Eye-catching artwork, scientific facts, and playful rhymes make a fun combination in this lively picture book that introduces young children to howler monkeys. (*Booklist*).

Sayre, April Pulley. *Stars Beneath Your Bed: The Surprising Story of Dust*. Illus. by Ann Jonas. New York: Greenwillow. ISBN: 0-06-057189-6.

What could be more surprising than the fact that that ordinary dust is made up of bits of stars and dinosaurs and seals’ eyelashes? This beautiful picture book makes the most of the essential grandeur of dust. (*Booklist*).

Serafini, Frank. *Looking Closely in the Rain Forest*. Illus. by the author. Toronto, Ontario: Kids Can, 2010. ISBN: 9781553375432.

In a guessing game that pairs close-up details with large images on the following page, this title in the Looking Closely series spotlights life in the tropical rain forest. The crisp photos and the interactive text will draw kids into the interactive fun and scientific facts. (*Booklist*).

Sheppard, Kate. *Animal I Spy: What Can You Spot?* Illus. by the author. London: Kingfisher, 2010. ISBN: 9780753463956.

This attractive and diverting board book features six spying games, most of which are surprisingly challenging. Photo elements make up the backdrop, and drawings depict the animals. (*Booklist*).

Siddals, Mary McKenna. *Compost Stew*. Illus. by Ashley Wolff. New York: Tricycle Press, 2010. ISBN: 9781582463162 (hardcover : alk. paper); 1582463166 (hardcover : alk. paper); 9781582463414 (lib. bdg.); 1582463417 (lib. bdg.).

“Environmental chefs, / here’s a recipe for you / . . . to mix a batch / of Compost Stew.” With bouncing, rhyming lines, this cheerful title uses the alphabet to introduce children to ingredients that make great compost, from apple cores to zinnias “whose blooming days are through.” The text includes some creative solutions for typically challenging letters (“Xmas tree needles”), and kids will have fun chanting along with the refrain: “Just add to the pot / and let it all rot / into Compost Stew.” A short supplementary note about what compost is and why it is beneficial is included, along with an explanation for a few obscure ingredients, such as “quarry dust.” This title highlights a subject rarely covered in youth books and provides a lighthearted introduction to an earth- and kid-friendly activity. The brightly patterned collage artwork featuring a cast of multicultural kids working together will easily draw a young audience. (*Booklist*).

Sidman, Joyce. *Red Sings from Treetops: A Year in Colors*. Illus. by Pamela Zagarenski. New York: Houghton, 2009. ISBN: 9780547014944.

In a unique take on a familiar topic, this picture book explores each season in terms of color. (*Booklist*).

Siminovich, Lorenea. *I Like Bugs*. Illus. by the author. Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick/Templar, 2010. ISBN: 9780763648022.

The little ones for whom this is intended may or may not like bugs, or may not even know what a “bug” is – but they will like this book. The insects are presented on thick colorful boards with art executed in sprightly collages. Use this as a counting book, an introduction to insects, or a fun look-and-touch book that will withstand many readings. (*Booklist*).

Tang, Greg; illustrated by Taia Morley *Math Fables TOO: Making Science Count*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2007. ISBN: 9780439783514; 0439783518.

Counting is the first step and encounter of young children with math. This animal counting book takes the child several steps further. She will learn not only about numbers 1--10, but how a single countable group can be broken up into smaller groupings. For example, the child will read about and follow five pilot whales, which separate to swim safely out to sea, but before they succeed, they will group and regroup into all possible combinations that add up to five. With each number, a child will encounter a new group of animals and move smoothly from counting to decomposing the number into smaller units and putting it back together again (*Children's Literature*).

Voake, Steve. *Insect Detective*. Illus. by Charlotte Voake. Somerville, Mass: Candlewick Press, 2010. **ISBN: 9780763644475** (reinforced); **0763644471** (reinforced); **9781406310511; 1406310514**.

Encouraging children to “open the door and step outside,” this large-format picture book talks about insects they may be able to find near their homes. Although the presentation of information seems unfocused, the encouragement for young children to observe insects is welcome, and the large-scale ink-and-watercolor illustrations are inviting as well as lovely. An appended double-page spread offers suggestions for young insect detectives. (*Booklist*).

Walsh, Ellen Stoll. *Balancing Act*. Illus. by the author. San Diego: Beach Lane/Simon, 2010. **ISBN: 9781442407572** (hardcover); **1442407573** (hardcover).

Two mice find a stick and, with a large rock serving as fulcrum, make a teeter-totter. With one mouse on each end, it balances perfectly. But along comes a salamander, which throws the balance off until another salamander hops on the other end. With consummate skill, Walsh tells a taut and dynamic story while introducing some basic physical science to preschoolers. (*Booklist*).

Wheeler, Lisa. *Mammoths on the Move*. Illus. by Kurt Cyrus. New York: Harcourt, 2006. **ISBN: 0-15-204700-X**.

“Stepping, stomping, marching, tromping. Watch out, woolly mammoths!” The rhyming text sings as the dramatic scratchboard-and-watercolor paintings portray the migratory journey of these fascinating prehistoric creatures. (*Booklist*).

Williams, Treat. *Air Show!* Illus. by Robert Neubecker. New York: Disney-Hyperion, 2010. **ISBN: 1423111850; 978-1423111856**.

Ellie and her brother Gill head to an air show in a plane flown by Dad and his copilot Carl. Stunning spreads show Williams’s text in eye-catching arrangements, but the book’s highlight is its illustrations. Young airplane enthusiasts will zip through this handsome book. (*Booklist*).

## **Social Studies**

\*Baker, Jeannie. *Mirror*. Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick, 2010. ISBN: 9780763648480; 0763648485.

This entirely original book is two books in one. Open the "books" simultaneously, in English from left to right and in Arabic from right to left. Scan the pictures and compare family life and global interdependence as the panorama of urban and rural scenes from two very different countries unfolds. Wordless, except for an introduction and an illustrator's afterword in English and Arabic, the pictures allow readers to meet an Australian boy and a Moroccan boy whose lives become interconnected. The Moroccan boy and his father sell a rug woven in their rural home, and it ends up in Sydney, in a small house that is being renovated by an Australian family. As the boy in Australia draws a picture of his new "flying carpet," the Moroccan boy sets up his computer, bought with profits from the rug. Baker's entrancing collages, packed with visual information and created with fabric, sand, vegetation and other unusual materials, have the power to bring back child and adult viewers for infinite "readings." (*Kirkus Reviews*)

\*Barner, Bob. *The Day of the Dead/El Dia de Los Muertos*. Illus. by the author. Trans. By Teresa Mlawer. New York: Holiday, 2010. ISBN: 9780823422142.

This picture-book overview of the Latin American holiday follows a traditional nuclear family, in rhyming English text, through their preparations and practices. The unforced, unrhymed Spanish translation accompanies the text on each page. (*Booklist*)

Bildner, Phil and John Holyfield. *The Hallelujah Flight*. New York: Putnam Juvenile, 2010. ISBN: 9780399247897; 0399247890.

In 1932, James Banning was the first African American to complete a transcontinental flight. Told from the viewpoint of his young copilot and mechanic, Thomas Allen, this dramatic picture book relates of their historic journey, in which they flew in a small plane from Los Angeles to New York in 21 days. Unframed, double-page paintings show the pair close-up in the cramped cockpit as they fly over the Grand Canyon and head into storms, the propeller whirring, while the ground passes not too far below. Some locals help, showing the kindness of family and friends, but the dramatic pictures also reveal the prejudice the pilots encountered when they are refused use of washrooms and restaurants. Finally, they reach New York and receive a hero's welcome in Harlem. Along with the drama of the pioneer flight, kids will also enjoy the irreverent fun of the Flying Hoboes in their flying jalopy. The story of the pilots' bonding is as memorable as the breakthrough flight. An introductory author's note offers cultural and historical context. (*Booklist*).

Burningham, John and Helen Oxenbury. *There's Going To Be a Baby*. Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick, 2010. ISBN: **9780763649074** (hc); **0763649074** (hc); **9780744549966**; **0744549965**.

Burningham and Oxenbury team for a poignant treatment of a preschooler's ambivalence about a forthcoming new sibling. The dialogue couples Mommy's benign suggestions about the baby's future exploits with her son's far less equivocal, here-and-now replies. Heavy paper, generous trim, amusing endpapers and, above all, beautifully evoked relationships combine for a winning package. (*Kirkus Reviews*)

Cooper, Elisha. *Farm*. Illus. by the author. New York: Orchard/Scholastic, 2010. ISBN: **9780545070751**; **0545070759**.

In his neat spot art, Cooper lays out everything that makes up a farm—the buildings, machines and equipment, farmhands and animals. Art and text work in tandem. It's as thorough and pleasing an introduction to a farm as one could ask of a picture book. (*Horn Book*, starred review).

Dickmann, Nancy. *Chinese New Year*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann Educational Books, 2010. ISBN **978-1-4329-4050-8**.

Dickmann, Nancy. *Diwali*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann Educational Books, 2011. ISBN: **978-1-4329-4051-5**

Dickmann, Nancy. *Ramadan and Id-ul-Fitr*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann Educational Books, 2010. ISBN **978-1-4329-4049-2**.

Basic texts and colorful pictures are the hallmarks of these age-appropriate introductions to different cultures. The first book looks at when Chinese New Year is observed, the types of celebrations, and typical gifts that are exchanged. The second title explains why Hindu and Sikh families light candles and decorate their doorsteps, and other ways that people observe Diwali. The third volume shows how Muslim families pray, fast, and then celebrate at the end of Ramadan. The texts are full of sight words in simply constructed sentences. The pictures are rich in color and show the vibrant diversity of each culture and the children who participate in the festivities. Each book has a “look and see” page and a picture glossary. (*School Library Journal*)

Fleming, Denise. *Sleepy, Oh So Sleepy*. Illus. by the author. New York: Holt, 2010. ISBN: **9780805081268** (hc : alk. paper); **0805081267** (hc : alk. paper).

Fleming's sumptuous illustrations and lullaby-like text, include twelve different animal babies slumbering peacefully in close-up portraits. Each baby's parent is reassuringly part of the picture. The book ends with a sleepy human child being tucked into bed. (*Horn Book*, starred review).

Fuller, Rachel. *Waiting for Baby*. Wiltshire, G.B.: Child's Play, 2009. **ISBN: 1846432758, 978-1846432750.**

One of a four-book series designed to help the very young prepare for new siblings, this title presents a toddler-and-mother pair (the latter heavily pregnant) as they read about new babies, sort hand-me-downs, buy new toys, visit the obstetrician and the sonographer, speculate and wait. Fuller's jolly pictures present a biracial family that thoroughly enjoys every moment together.

The other titles in the New Baby series are *My New Baby* (ISBN: 978-1-84643-276-7), *Look at Me!* (ISBN: 978-1-84643-278-1) and *You and Me* (ISBN: 978-1-84643-277-4). (*Kirkus Reviews*).

The Global Fund for Children. *American Babies*. Illus. Watertown, Mass.: Charlesbridge, 2010. **ISBN: 9781580892803.**

A companion volume to *Global Babies*, this appealing board book offers 17 close-up photos of babies. The babies pictured are beyond early infancy and are accompanied by a brief text. (*Booklist*).

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Sky Boys: How They Built the Empire State Building*. Illus. by James E. Ransome. New York: Random/Schwartz & Wade. ISBN: 0-375-83610-1.

In 1931, near their Manhattan home, a boy and his dad keep a close watch as the world's tallest building is built in record time. Published in honor of the building's seventy-fifth anniversary. (*Booklist*).

\*Isadora, Rachel. *Say Hello!* New York: Putnam Juvenile, 2010. **ISBN: 0399252304; 978-0399252303.**

Today Carmelita visits her Abuela Rosa, but to get there she must walk. Down Ninth Avenue she strolls with her mother and dog. Colorful shops and congenial neighbors greet them along the way, and at each stop Carmelita says hello—in Spanish, Arabic, Hebrew and more. Her world is a vibrant community, where neighborliness, camaraderie and culture are celebrated. Isadora's collaged artwork, reminiscent of Ezra Jack Keats, contains lovely edges and imperfections, which abet the feeling of an urban environment. (*Kirkus Reviews*).

Kalman, Bobbie. *I Am Growing and Changing*. New York: Crabtree, 2010. **ISBN: 9780778794660** (pbk. : alk. paper); **0778794660** (pbk. : alk. paper); **9780778794226** (reinforced library binding : alk. paper); **0778794229** (reinforced library binding : alk. paper);

The My World series of leveled readers features eight groups of books for readers of increasing skill. This volume, from Level C, takes on the voices of various infants and children as each one declares where he or she is in life. The photographs of a multicultural cross-section of kids are bright against plain white backgrounds, and the text is big and clear.

Karas, G. Brian. *The Village Garage*. Illus. by the author. New York: Ottaviano/Holt, 2010. **ISBN: 9780805087161** (alk. paper); **0805087168** (alk. paper)

A cheery text and “truck-rific” illustrations welcome readers to the Village Garage, where a diverse crew of municipal workers happily tackle all sorts of jobs around town. Toddler truck fanatics will like the heavy-duty vehicles and big machines. The conversational narrative and friendly, nonmechanical art have appeal for those less enamored of trucks. (*Horn Book*, starred review).

Kerley, Barbara. *You and Me Together: Moms, Dads, and Kids Around the World*. illus. New York: National Geographic, 2010. **ISBN: 0-7922-8297-3**.

In this companion book to *A Cool Drink of Water*, Kerley takes children on a photographic journey to meet moms, dads, and kids all around the world. (*Booklist*).

Konrad, Marla Stewart. *World Vision Early Readers Series*. Tundra.

*Grand*, 2010. **ISBN: 9780887769979**.  
*I Like to Play*, 2010. **ISBN: 9780887769986**.

The World Vision Early Readers series is small—only four titles so far—but their simple, sharp aesthetic will capture the imaginations of many children. Each book is organized around a universal theme and uses crisp, clear photos of kids from across the globe to illustrate cultural similarities. *Grand* basks in all the good qualities of grandparents. *I Like to Play* features shots of various groups of children creating fun. (*Booklist*).

Lewin, Ted. *Stable*. New York: Flashpoint, 2010. **ISBN: 9781596434677**.

Kensington Stables, a relic from the days when horses provided necessary transportation, shelters 37 animals, large and small, with names like Lumpy, Marzipan and True. Tiny Chip gives pony rides at elementary schools; workhorse Fergus pulls the wedding carriage. A therapeutic riding program serves special-needs children every afternoon. The straightforward, present-tense prose conveys the central point that the horses are important to the community, and they should be preserved even as condos surround the little stable. (*Kirkus Reviews*)



MacLachlan, Patricia and Charest, Emily MacLachlan. *Once I Ate a Pie*. Illus. by Katy Schneider. New York: HarperCollins/Joanna Cotler, 2010. **ISBN: 0-06-073531-7.**

“I am not thin, but I am beautiful,” says Mr. Beefy, a self-satisfied pug. Oil portraits of various canine breeds are paired with brief, humorous, and poignant first-person poems. (*Booklist*).

McCully, Emily Arnold. *Wonder Horse: The True Story of the World's Smartest Horse*. New York: Henry Holt, 2010. **ISBN: 9780805087932** (reinforced); **0805087931** (reinforced).

McCully celebrates the profound bond between humans and animals in this inspiring picture book based on the true story of Bill “Doc” Key and the “wonder horse” he taught to count and spell. Born into slavery in 1833, Key hurdled formidable obstacles for a black man of his time. Caldecott Medalist McCully's storytelling is as sensitive, engaging, and well paced as her brightly colored, expressive artwork, which highlights the period setting as well as the remarkable friendship between man and horse. (*Booklist*, starred review).

Mortenson, Greg and Roth, Susan L. *Listen to the Wind: The Story of Dr. Greg and Three Cups of Tea*. Collages by Susan L. Roth. New York: Dial, 2009. **ISBN: 9780803730588.**

Children of Korphe, Pakistan describe their world and how they worked with an American to build a school for their village. Stunning collages enhance the story. (*Booklist*).

Newman, Lesléa. *Mommy, Mama and Me..* Illus. by Carol Thompson. Berkeley, Calif.: Tricycle Press, 2009. **ISBN: 9781582462622.**

In this gentle board book two loving mothers share daily activities with their baby. (*Booklist*).

O’Connell, Rebecca. *Danny Is Done with Diapers: A Potty ABC*. Illus. by Amanda Gulliver. Park Ridge, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2010. **ISBN: 9780807514665.**

Using the alphabet as a frame, the authors offer a cute take on a child’s rite of passage. The snippets of text are just the right length. Even more than the text, the cheery artwork featuring a cast of multicultural kids working on the nitty-gritty of toilet training will grab kids’ attention. (*Booklist*).

\*Park, Linda Sue and Julia Durango. *Yum! Yuck! A Foldout Book of People Sounds*. Illus. by Sue Ramá. Watertown, Mass.: Charlesbridge, 2005. ISBN:1-57091-659-4.

Yum can be geshmak, leckah, nam-nam or bah-bah, depending upon the spoken language. Images of children enjoying treats open a nearly wordless story containing 22 languages with words for ha-ha, yikes, a-choo, yuck, boo-hoo, wow, and hurrah. (*Booklist*).

Portis, Antoinette. *Kindergarten Diary*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN: **9780061456916** (trade bdg.); **0061456918** (trade bdg.); **9780061456923** (lib. bdg.); **0061456926** (lib. bdg.).

Annalina, a new kindergartner, describes her worries in her own words. The usual anxieties of kindergarten are accompanied by microplots such as negotiating a three-way friendship, imaginative play involving the monkey bars, and a haircut. (*Booklist*).

Scanlon, Liz Garton. *All the World*. Illus. by Marla Frazee. San Diego: Beach Lane Books, 2009. ISBN: **9781416985808**.

The myriad joys of the world are reflected with warmth and affection in this look at a day in a small community near the ocean. (A 2010 Caldecott Honor Book.)

Tafolla, Carmen. *What Can You Do with a Rebozo?* Illus. by Amy Cordova. Berkeley, Calif.: Tricycle Press/Ten Speed Press, 2008. ISBN: **9781582462202**.

Rich, vibrant colors swirl and swoosh across full-page spreads, depicting the family home of an imaginative, young Mexican American girl who playfully invents modern-day uses for the traditional Mexican rebozo, or long scarf. (2009 Belpré Honor Book) (*Booklist*).

Thompson, Lauren. *Ballerina Dreams: A True Story*. Illus. by James Estrin. New York: Feiwel & Friends, 2007. ISBN: **9780312370299**.

This pink and purple princess photo-essay describes five young girls with muscle disorders, whose year of ballet class culminates in a recital with tutus, make-up, ballet shoes, and tiaras. (*Booklist*).

\*Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2010. ISBN: **9780810938724**; **0810938723**.

In a story based on the author's childhood experiences, two cousins exchange letters. Charlie lives in the United States; his primo Carlitos lives in Mexico. They both write about the friends, games, foods, fiestas and holidays they know, and they both wish to meet each other someday. Tonatiuh's outstanding full-page illustrations, Mayan blue and Indian red for the Mexican setting and a variety of grays, blacks and browns mixed with bright colors for the U.S. urban scenes, the varying typefaces used on each side of the story and the inclusion of Spanish terms in Carlitos's letter all contribute to differentiate both cultural experiences but make them at the same time positive, attractive and special. (*Kirkus Reviews*).

Vestergaard, Hope. *Potty Animals: What to Know When You've Gotta Go!* Illus. by Valeria Petrone. New York: Sterling, 2010. ISBN: 9781402759963.

Kids will learn the rules of toilet training in this cheerful, rhyming picture book that introduces a cast of “young beasties” who make mistakes in their preschool’s potty, until they realize how to handle all the aspects of hygiene, cleanliness, privacy, and finishing up. (*Booklist*).

Wheeler, Lisa. *Jazz Baby*. Illus. by R. Gregory Christie. New York: Harcourt, 2007. ISBN: 9780152025229.

Bebop rhyme and repeated stanzas are just the right rhythm for young readers in this nostalgic celebration of dancing, singing, and playing music. A *2008 Geisel Honor Book*. (*Booklist*).

Winter, Jeanette. *Biblioburro: A True Story from Columbia*. Illus. by the author. Simon & Schuster/Beach Lane, 2010. ISBN: 9781416997788.

This is a true and inspiring story about a non-traditional library. After amassing piles of books, Luis, a voracious reader, dreams up a way to share his collection with “faraway villages.” (*Booklist*, starred review).