

New Book Reviews for Kids

Below are staff reviews of select new books in the Youth Services Department.
For a list of all the new and forthcoming Youth books, [click here](#).

New Book Reviews

Reading Level:

Babies Preschoolers Kindergarteners 1st Grade 2nd Grade 3rd Grade 4th Grade 5th Grade 6th Grade 7th Grade 8th Grade High Schoolers Adults

Genre:

Adventure Animals--Real Animals--Talking Award Winners Biographies Books for Boys Books for Girls Chick Lit Crime and Punishment Don't Miss These Dystopias Family Fantasy Folktales Friends Historical Fiction The Holocaust Horror Humor In Other Lands LGBT Misfits Mysteries Mythological Non-Fiction Non-Prose Phonetic Read-Alikes Read-Alouds Realistic Fiction Rebus Relationships School Science Fiction Self Image Short Stories Social Issues Spies Sports Supernatural Survival Time Travel Vampires Werewolves

Collection:

J Fiction J Graphic Novels J Non-Fiction J Series JP Fiction JP Non-Fiction JP Series JY Fiction JY Graphic Novels JY Non-Fiction Picture Books Spanish Picturebook

Reviewer:

The Gerbils SJS SHRRPCHGEFDJCHJLJSMBLWKFAB

The Star Maker

by Laurence Yep

Reading Level: Grades 2-4

When Artie promises his mean cousin that he will give *everyone* firecrackers on the next Chinese

New Year celebration, he immediately regrets it. How will he ever come up with enough money to buy all those firecrackers? Sympathetic to Artie's problem is Uncle Chester - a fun loving everyman who is wildly popular in Chinatown where Artie's family lives. Uncle Chester promises Artie that he will help - but when Uncle Chester's seemingly endless money starts to run out, Artie begins to worry.

[Check availability of this book](#)

[More books by Laurence Yep](#)

Similar books you might like:

[The Skirt by Gary Soto](#)

[The Year of the Dog by Grace Lin](#)

[Being Teddy Roosevelt by Claudia Mills](#)

Reading Level: [2nd Grade](#),[3rd Grade](#),[4th Grade](#) Subjects: [Family](#) Location: [J Fiction](#)

Reviewer:

[EF](#)

The Buddy Files: The Case of the Lost Boy

by Dori Hillestad Butler

Reading Level: Grades 1-3

King, a golden retriever, is in the *p-o-u-n-d* and he doesn't know why! His family, Dad and Kayla (Mom is in the National Guard and not at home) went on vacation to Grandma's house and they *never* came home!

But now that King is in the pound, other families are looking at him and he is **ADOPTED!!!!** His new family calls him Buddy! How can King be adopted when Kayla and Dad are missing and he needs to find them?

Buddy/King likes his new family - Conor and Mom are great and have lots of liver treats, plus they live near Kayla's house, so Buddy/King can get clues about his first family's disappearance.

Then *Conor* goes missing, and Buddy/King has TWO missing families to find. Can he do it?

This series is great for beginning readers looking for longer but not too much more advanced chapter books with good but not scary mysteries! This reviewer has read the first four so far and is anxiously awaiting the fifth!

[Check availability of this book](#)

More books by Dori Hillestad Butler

Illustrator: Jeremy Tugeau Reading Level: 1st Grade,2nd Grade,3rd Grade Subjects: Adventure, Animals--Talking, Books for Boys, Family, Friends, Humor, Mysteries Location: J Fiction

Reviewer:

EF

Because of Mr. Terupt

by Rob Buyea

Reading Level: 3rd-6th

New teacher Mr. Terupt has a handful this year in his fifth grade class - but his abnormal teaching methods are a good fit for helping the students grow and work together. The school year is going great, until the accident. Then everything changes.

A heartwarming book about the profound influence of Mr. Terupt, this is a tale for students of all ages.

Check availability of this book

More books by Rob Buyea

A few similar books:

The View from Saturday by E. L. Konigsburg

The Thing About Georgie by Lisa Graff

Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper

Operation Yes by Sara Holmes

Reading Level: 3rd Grade,4th Grade,5th Grade,6th Grade Subjects: Books for Boys, Books for Girls, Don't Miss These, Friends, Read-Alouds, Realistic Fiction, School, Social Issues Location: J Fiction

Reviewer:

EF

Happy Pig Day!

by Mo Willems

Reading Level: Everyone!

Piggie is excited to celebrate Pig Day, and Gerald is sad because, well, he *isn't* a pig... so how can he possibly celebrate Pig Day with his very best friend?

[Check availability of this book](#)

[More books by Mo Willems](#)

Reading Level: [Kindergarteners,1st Grade,2nd Grade](#) Subjects: [Animals--Talking](#), [Friends](#), [Humor](#), [Read-Alouds](#) Location: [JP Fiction](#)

Reviewer:

[EF](#)

Melvin and the Boy

by Lauren Castillo

Reading Level: PreK- Grade 2

When a young boy sees a turtle basking at the park one day, he knows it will be the PERFECT pet.

But when he gets Melvin home, the turtle doesn't seem to be enjoying himself at all.

How can Melvin be the perfect pet if he isn't happy?

[Check availability of this book](#)

[More books by Lauren Castillo](#)

Reading Level: [Preschoolers,Kindergarteners,1st Grade](#) Subjects: [Animals--Real](#), [Friends](#), [Read-Alouds](#), [Realistic Fiction](#) Location: [Picture Books](#)

Reviewer:

[EF](#)

The Abandoned Lighthouse

by Albert Lamb

Grades K-2

When a bear falls asleep in a rowboat and the tide comes in, the boat floats out to sea, landing at a lighthouse.

A boy loses his ball in the same rowboat, and floats out to sea with his little dog, landing at the lighthouse - where the lonely bear is happy to see them.

The three new friends go fishing to catch their dinner - but then a storm comes and the little dog, boy, and bear are frightened; they turn on the lighthouse light and stop a ship from crashing into the lighthouse island.

A short adventure of three new friends and the power of a lighthouse, Lamb's story will make a fantastic, day-dreamy read-aloud.

[Check availability of this book](#)

[More books by Albert Lamb](#)

[More books by David McPhail](#)

Illustrator: David McPhail Reading Level: [Kindergarteners,1st Grade,2nd Grade](#) Subjects: [Adventure](#), [Animals--Real](#), [Books for Boys](#), [Friends](#), [Read-Alouds](#) Location: [JP Fiction](#)

Reviewer:

[EF](#)

Amelia Bedelia Bakes Off

by Herman Parish

Grades K-2

Amelia Bedelia is back again... and this time she's in a baking contest! What silly antics will she get up to this time? Who knows... but they're bound to be delicious.

[Check availability of this book](#)

[More books by Herman Parish](#)

[More Amelia Bedelia books](#)

Illustrator: Lynn Sweat Reading Level: [Kindergarteners,1st Grade,2nd Grade](#) Subjects: [Books for Girls](#), [Friends](#), [Humor](#), [Misfits](#), [Read-Alouds](#) Location: [JP Fiction](#)

Reviewer:

[EF](#)

Bluefish

by Pat Schmatz

Grades 5+

You probably learned to read in kindergarten or first grade, maybe even sooner. Maybe it's a little hard for you, maybe it got easier as you read more and more, maybe you can't stop reading.

But you *did* learn to read - good at it or not, loving it or not.

For Travis, that never happened. From kindergarten until seventh grade, he never let anyone see that he couldn't read - and no one knew - not even his teachers. When Travis and his grandpa move to a new town, and he begins at a new school, Travis isn't worried that he'll have trouble hiding his secret - until he gets his schedule.

Fourth period. Reading class. Room 134. Mr. McQueen.

[Check availability of this book](#)

[More books by Pat Schmatz](#)

Reading Level: [5th Grade](#),[6th Grade](#),[7th Grade](#),[8th Grade](#),[High Schoolers](#) Subjects: [Books for Boys](#), [Don't Miss These](#), [Family](#), [Friends](#), [Misfits](#), [Read-Alouds](#), [Realistic Fiction](#), [Relationships](#), [School](#), [Self Image](#), [Social Issues](#) Location: [JY Fiction](#)

Reviewer:

[EF](#)

A Monster Calls: Inspired from an Idea by Siobhan Dowd

by Patrick Ness

Grades 5+

Have you ever read a book that made you cry? Ever read a book that, once you were finished, you just sat with and held for a while, letting the words sink into you, not wanting to have finished it? Ever read a book that you couldn't stop thinking about after you finished? Ever read a book that was so true and real you experienced the whole thing in your mind as you read? This is one of those books.

Hauntingly, chillingly written with formidable illustration, *A Monster Calls* tells the story of a boy named Conor. Conor has terrible, monstrous nightmares; one day he looks out his bedroom

window to see a monster looking back at him - but *not* the one from his nightmares. This monster wants something of Conor, but before it gets it, it will tell Conor three stories.

When the three stories are finished, it will be Conor's turn. And he will have to tell *his* story.

The truth.

If you read one book this year, this reviewer hopes it's this one.

[Check availability of this book*](#)

[More books by Patrick Ness](#)

[Books by Siobhan Dowd](#)

Siobhan Dowd, children's and young adult author, passed away from breast cancer in 2007. Among the things left behind was the idea for *A Monster Calls*, which Patrick Ness has written in her memory.

*Title also owned on [My Media Mall](#)

Illustrator: Jim Kay Reading Level: [5th Grade](#),[6th Grade](#),[7th Grade](#),[8th Grade](#),[High Schoolers](#),[Adults](#) Subjects: [Books for Boys](#), [Crime and Punishment](#), [Don't Miss These](#), [Family](#), [Fantasy](#), [Friends](#), [In Other Lands](#), [Misfits](#), [Read-Alouds](#), [School](#), [Self Image](#), [Social Issues](#), [Supernatural](#), [Survival](#) Location: [JY Fiction](#)

Reviewer:

[EF](#)

[Jefferson's Sons](#)

by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

Grades 5-9

Third U.S. President Thomas Jefferson lived at the plantation Monticello and kept slaves to work in his fields, farm and home. One of his slaves was a woman named Sally Hemings, mother to four of Jefferson's children - Beverly, Harriet, Maddy, and Eston. Though slaves, the children and their mother were given special treatment by Jefferson because of his discreet relationship to them - but nevertheless, slaves they remained.

Master Jefferson promises freedom to all four of his slave children upon their twenty-first birthdays, but Beverly, the eldest, cannot imagine leaving his mother, sister, brothers - but especially his father. Light-skinned and longing for a father figure, Beverly struggles with the secrecy of Jefferson's nonpublic identity as his father, especially when Jefferson presents him and his brothers with a kit violin and lessons. He and his siblings imagine a life where his mother, siblings and father could live openly together as a real family; a life that did not involve waiting on Master Jefferson's real children, especially the snippy Miss Martha.

Based on true events at Monticello during the early 1800s, *Jefferson's Sons* is a slave tale of a different order, exploring slavery and racial issues from the fresh perspective of Jefferson's slave children. The novel is a welcome look into one aspect of post-revolutionary slave life in Virginia that explores the bonds of family and friendship.

[Check availability of this book](#)

[More books by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley](#)

Reading Level: [5th Grade](#), [6th Grade](#), [7th Grade](#), [8th Grade](#), [High Schoolers](#) Subjects: [Books for Boys](#), [Don't Miss These](#), [Family](#), [Friends](#), [Historical Fiction](#), [Realistic Fiction](#), [Self Image](#), [Social Issues](#) Location: [JY Fiction](#)

Reviewer:

EF

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