What Is the Teachers’ Choices Project?

The Teachers’ Choices logo that Chris Van Allsburg created (see below) illuminates the idea that good books reach out and tap us on the shoulder to get our attention. Each year since 1989, the International Reading Association’s Teachers’ Choices project has identified outstanding trade books, published for children and adolescents, that teachers find exceptional for curriculum use. Parents, also, will find here books good for reading aloud and for help answering questions prompted by tours to a farm, aquarium, or museum or by other shared family activities such as television viewing.

See page 7 for the Teachers’ Choices 2014 Reading List bookmark!
America the Beautiful: Together We Stand

The words to “America the Beautiful” are accompanied by the artwork of 10 well-known children’s book illustrators. Endnotes explain more about the landmarks and symbols featured in the text and illustrations.

The Bears Go to School

Two curious bear cubs leave their natural habitat and explore a nearby school.

Best Foot Forward: Exploring Feet, Flippers, and Claws

Up-close photographs showcase different types of animals’ feet while the text describes the unique traits that enable feet to walk, climb, swim, dig, or jump.

The Day the Crayons Quit

Duncan finds a stack of letters in his desk, each written by a different crayon explaining how they are overused, underused, or abused by Duncan’s drawing habits.
**Exclamation Mark**  
Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld. Scholastic.  
Follow the self-discovery of Exclamation Mark as he learns that what makes him different also makes him special.

**Frog Song**  
Travel to biomes around the world to meet each region’s frogs and learn what makes them unique.

**The Invisible Boy**  
Brian, a quiet boy, feels almost invisible among his classmates until a new student arrives. Endnotes offer additional resources for teachers.

**Lifetime: The Amazing Numbers in Animal Lives**  
Animal behaviors, features, and environments are described in terms of numbers. Author’s notes explain more about each animal and challenge readers to think about animals through math.

**The Snatchabook: Who’s Stealing All the Stories?**  
The animal families who live in the woods are puzzled when their bedtime stories start disappearing.

**Xander’s Panda Party**  
Xander, a panda bear at a zoo, realizes his birthday party will not have many guests if he sticks to his original plan of inviting only bears. Endnotes extend readers’ understanding of animal classification.
The Animal Book: A Collection of the Fastest, Fiercest, Toughest, Cleverest, Shyest—and Most Surprising—Animals

Intricate collages supplement this compendium of animal facts and figures. Back matter contains more facts and an explanation of the book-making process.

As Fast as Words Could Fly

Set in the 1960's in Greenville, North Carolina, and based on real events in the author’s family, this story tells how one boy used a typewriter to help break down racial barriers.

Barbed Wire Baseball

In spite of his small stature and internment in a Japanese relocation camp during World War II, Kenichi “Zeni” Zenimura realizes his dream of becoming a professional baseball player. An afterword includes additional references.

The Blessing Cup

This autobiographical story tells how one precious teacup holds a family’s memories as it is passed through the generations from Russia to the United States.
The Cart That Carried Martin
Eve Bunting. Ill. Don Tate. Charlesbridge.

During the funeral procession, the body of Martin Luther King, Jr. was carried not in a fancy hearse, but rather in a humble and borrowed wooden cart.

Follow Follow: A Book of Reverso Poems

“Reverso” poems present new perspectives on classic folk tales.

Locomotive

Step aboard and travel across the country on the newly completed Transcontinental Railroad. Illustrations, text, and extensive endnotes make this a complete study of the locomotives of the time period.

The Matchbox Diary

A young girl visiting her grandfather discovers a cigar box filled with mementos and the story of the family’s emigration from Italy to America.

Parrots Over Puerto Rico

The calendar-style layout of this book focuses on the history of Puerto Rico and the parrots that live there. An afterword features more information about parrots, their habitats, and the efforts to save them.

You Never Heard of Willie Mays?

This picture book biography showcases Willie Mays, both as a person and as a baseball standout. Sidebars and endnotes share baseball statistics and a glossary of terms.
Advanced Readers

Grades 6–8, Ages 11–14

Becoming Ben Franklin: How a Candle-Maker’s Son Helped Light the Flame of Liberty

Period photographs and other primary source documents supplement the story of Ben Franklin’s transformation from penniless runaway to one of our nation’s most influential leaders.

The Boy on the Wooden Box: How the Impossible Became Possible on Schindler’s List
Leon Leyson. Atheneum.

Leon Leyson, the youngest person on Schindler’s list, presents a memoir of his experiences during the Holocaust.

Breakfast on Mars and 37 Other Delectable Essays
Edited by Rebecca Stern and Brad Wolfe. Roaring Brook.

Thirty-seven authors attack the “essay assignment,” providing wonderful models for aspiring young writers.

Counting by 7s
Holly Goldberg Sloan. Dial.

Twelve-year-old Willow Chance must make a new life for herself after her parents are killed in a car accident.

Courage Has No Color: The True Story of the Triple Nickles, America’s First Black Paratroopers
Tanya Lee Stone. Candlewick.

The 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, known as the Triple Nickles, overcame racism and discrimination in their quest to serve the United States as its first black paratrooper unit during World War II.
**Etched in Clay: The Life of Dave, Enslaved Potter and Poet**

David Drake quietly etched his life story in the pots he made while living on a plantation in South Carolina prior to the Civil War. Author’s notes include additional resources.

**Gone Fishing: A Novel in Verse**

Nine-year-old Sam is not pleased when his younger sister tags along on a fishing trip with their dad. Endnotes define different poetic structures and terminology.

**Paperboy**
Vince Vawter. Delacorte.

The segregated South provides the setting for the coming-of-age story about a boy who learns to communicate with others in spite of his stuttering problem.

**Romeo & Juliet**
William Shakespeare. Adapted and Illustrated by Gareth Hinds. Candlewick.

This graphic novel adaptation of the classic text makes the timeless story accessible to a more contemporary audience.

**Soldier Dog**
Sam Angus. Feiwel and Friends.

Set in World War I, this novel introduces readers to the role Great Danes played as messengers and soldier’s helpers. Endnotes and additional resources extend the historical content.


Advanced Readers: Grades 6–8, Ages 11–14


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Counting by 7s. Holly Goldberg Sloan. Dial.


Soldier Dog. Sam Angus. Feiwel and Friends.

For over 50 years, the International Reading Association has been the trusted provider of ongoing professional development for teachers. IRA is committed to advancing worldwide literacy by improving reading instruction, disseminating research and information about reading, and encouraging the lifetime reading habit. Additional information about IRA can be found at www.reading.org.

More About Teachers’ Choices

Thank you to the 2013–2014 IRA Teachers’ Choices Committee and review teams. The committee members were Joyce Gulley (cochair) and April Wulber (cochair). Team Leaders in the field test were

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- Area 2—Tammy Everett
- Area 3—Joan Kindig
- Area 4—Jane Dewailly
- Area 5—Dina Evans, Heather Jones, Cecilia McCormick, & Susan Zolper

For more information on the Teachers’ Choices list or to learn how to become involved visit www.reading.org/resources/booklists/teacherschoices.aspx.