

Introduction to Writing for Children: The Child as an Audience

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Introduction to Writing for Children: The Child as an Audience

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Introduction

The Creative Writing Concentration at Boston College is rich in faculty talent as well as in a variety of disciplines in which to focus one's writing. There are courses for fiction, poetry, nonfiction, business writing, magazine writing, food writing – most disciplines that a student could imagine, with one glaring exception: children's literature. This absence was one of which I took note and lamented early on in my experience with the program. When it came time to choose a topic for a final senior project, I strove to find something to unite my degree in English with my minor in General Education and future graduate work concentrating in Early Childhood Education. The project that I decided to pursue was the development of a syllabus for a Children's Literature Creative Writing Workshop class. A need for this type of workshop was made evident not only in my own experiences at Boston College but also through research regarding which other universities offer courses similar to the one proposed. I decided to complete an environmental scan of schools of a similar caliber and demographic with Boston College and determine, which, if any, offered courses similar to the one I have developed. The findings of this research are reported below.

Armed with the environmental scan findings, I began to create something to fill the void I had found. This was done by researching methods for reading and writing children's literature. I researched not only various methods of writing children's literature but additionally the different themes and ways in which they affect children. I sifted through the various genres and forms of children's literature and read many books and articles on the subject in order to learn from others who have studied similar topics. Once this was complete, I began the process of choosing which of these texts would be

appropriate to include as assigned reading in the course. A complete bibliography of the research is included, as well as an annotated list of the pieces that were chosen for the final syllabus. From there I also read and chose corresponding examples of existing children's literature. A final appendix offers locations to find additional materials – the intention behind this being that as the years pass, it is important that the examples of works be kept current.

Concurrently with all of this, I took two courses during the fall semester as additional research: Studies in Children's Literature in The College of Arts & Sciences with Professor Bonnie Rudner and Children's Literature in The Lynch School of Education with Professor Margaret Cohen. Though neither of these were writing courses, they provided insight into the genre as well as discussion with my peers that enabled me to get a better sense of what type of students would enroll in my course and why they would choose to do so (from academic interest to pleasure, to a combination of the two). These courses have been invaluable to expanding my horizons in terms of this project.

The culmination of this work is presented in the form of a course syllabus below. It is a course that I believe would be beneficial to students pursuing English and Education degrees as well as those who still find meaning in the works of literature that they loved in childhood. I believe that universities such as Boston College would benefit as a result of offering such a course as it would contribute to a well-rounded set of options for both electives and degree courses.

Environmental Scan

The necessity to perform an environmental scan of the courses offered in this topic was two-fold. First, it was important to see whether or not courses of this nature existed to determine interest as well as need. Second, in an essay written by Francelia Butler in 1980, she claims that English departments as a whole “totally ignore the field of children’s literature” (Butler 37). She goes on to claim that such departments “sneer” at the field for three reasons: “children’s literature is regarded as shallow and silly, unworthy of serious investigation,” “it is associated with women,” and “not only scholars but other adults have subconscious resentment of those who will succeed them” (Butler 38). While some of these claims are clearly outdated – those that discredit it for reasons of gender inequality – it was important to see just how much of the lack of respect for children’s literature within English departments still remains today. Butler claims that “literature which appeals to this dual audience [adults and children alike] rises to a higher sophistication in its absolute simplicity,” (Butler 40). It was hoped that the results of this scan would support this final claim by Butler but show that university English departments have come a long way in terms of gender equality and appreciation of the wide range of genres and fields since she discussed the topic in 1980.

While Butler made said claims in the 1980s, an article written in 2014 by Seth Lerer, former Dean of Arts and Humanities at University of California at San Diego and Distinguished Professor of Literature, entitled “For Grown Ups Too” gives hope to the fact that the picture Butler painted is no longer the case. Though Lerer acknowledges “for a long time what was not literature was the ephemeral, the popular, the feminine, the childish” and supports the past state of things as described in the older article, he

emphasizes that this view is partially – and on it’s way to being completely – in the past (Lerer 40). He establishes his reasoning for the importance of children’s literature as not those books written for children but rather “consist[ing] of those read, regardless of original intent, by children” (Lerer 38). This distinction is important in refuting the idea of children’s literature as lesser, because, as Lerer says, much of it is ‘for grown ups too.’

Christina M. Desai, current education and children’s literature professor at the University of New Mexico, personally describes children’s literature as “comfort food wrapped in nostalgia” as well as a field of great value (Desai 144). However, she seems to partly agree with the world described by Butler. In an article Desai wrote in the *College and Research Libraries News* journal in 2014, she pointed out that “outside of pediatrics, most jobs involving kids are low paying, low status,” (Desai 144). She acknowledged that though this is the case, present day status of children’s literature is certainly improved from the past, as “civil rights and feminist research opened our eyes to the way children’s literature reflected and perpetuated inequalities in our society” (Desai 144). This view represents a realistic combination of the differences between the societies presented by Lerer and Butler. Desai shows that many of the observations made by Butler are a product of the time period in which she wrote, however the slightly idealistic attitude of Lerer is not yet a reality. The future is promising in terms of the strides that have been made since the 1980s as described by both Lerer and Desai. With distinguished scholars such as these working relentlessly, continued progress in the field is inevitable.

In this preliminary environmental scan, I contacted the following eight schools from US News and World Report’s list of best liberal arts schools in the country. I sent

detailed emails to the departmental administrative assistants in the schools' English departments and then, in some cases, was able to further investigate through emails to specific professors and department heads whose contacts I received from the initial emails. The purpose of this research was to determine what, if any, courses of this nature exist already in peer institutions of Boston College.

Williams College and Bowdoin College both replied and politely informed me that no, they did not offer a course focusing solely on the writing of children's literature. Both referred to their fiction writing courses, which could be used to develop many different kinds of literature at the student's discretion.

There was no response from the administrative assistants at Amherst College, Ponomia College, and Carleton College. However, upon perusal of their websites and online course catalogs it can be assumed that they do not offer a creative writing children's literature workshop since none of their course descriptions resemble the one intended.

Swarthmore College offers a course entitled "Creative Writing Outreach" that couples with their education program and focuses on areas such as creativity in curriculum but not specifically writing for children.

Out of the eight colleges surveyed, only two have courses truly similar in purpose and design to the one that I intend to develop: Middlebury College and Wellesley College. Middlebury offers a course entitled "Writing for Children and Young Adults." Professor Claudia Cooper leads the students in a weekly class session in which they discuss "model short fiction and novels" and one another's writing (Cooper). The course pays "particular attention to the demands of writing for a young audience," (Cooper).

Likewise, Wellesley College's Susan Meyer leads her students in a course entitled "Writing for Children," (Meyer). Similar to Cooper's course, this meets weekly and requires students to read various works of children's literature, as well as that of their peers (Meyer). At the end of the semester they are required to turn in a polished portfolio of writings for children that has gone through revisions via classroom workshops (Meyer).

Unfortunately, neither of these courses had syllabi that were in the public domain. As a result of this privacy and the lack of courses of this nature at other schools, the 'best practice' aspect of designing the intended course will come from researching academic studies, articles, and findings, as opposed to a study of actual courses that are currently in place. Though the syllabi would have been enlightening, the mere existence of even a few courses such as this shows that the universities may have improved – even marginally – since criticized by Butler in 1980. According to Lerer in 2014, "The history of reading is also the history of teaching and children's literature is an academic discipline" and thus "to understand the history of children's literature is to understand the history of all of our forms of literary existence" (Lerer 40, 41). This is reflected in the fact that at least some, if not many, universities have begun, at least marginally, to give the genre its due. However, rather than be detrimental, the absence of a wealth of information validates the continuation of this project – as children's literature is an important genre and should be represented as such in undergraduate creative writing programs across the country.

Introduction to Writing for Children: The Child as an Audience

“*Oedipus Rex* is a masterpiece. But so is *Mother Goose*. Both are true to human nature.”
– Clifton Fadiman

“I am almost inclined to set it up as canon that a children’s story which is enjoyed only
by children is a bad children’s story.” – C.S. Lewis

What is children’s literature? Why write for children? In this course we will be exploring the definition of the genre as well as our own personal reasons for interest in writing and studying it. We will discuss Lewis’ opinion regarding audience for children’s stories and begin to form our own. In addition to touching on setting, character, and other structural elements of writing for children, there will be study of genres such as historical fiction, folktales, and contemporary realistic fiction. The course will finish with an in-depth look at the difficulties faced by those who write for children – from censorship to sensitive topics. The only prerequisites for this course are a love of children’s literature and a desire to learn – the writing will develop out of that and will not be graded on creativity or skill but rather on effort and willingness to revise and use criticism constructively.

Required Texts

Kiefer, Barbara, Helper Susan, and Hickman Janet. *Charlotte Huck's Children's Literature*. 9th ed. McGraw Hill, 2007.
ISBN: 978-0-07-325350-3

Paterson, Katherine. *A Sense of Wonder: On reading and writing books for children*.
Plume, 1995.
ISBN: 0-452-27476-1

Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature. New York: American Library
Association,
1983.
ISBN: 0-8389-0372-X

**You will be responsible for selected portions of these texts as well as various PDFs and current articles to be provided in the course management system, Canvas. Reading assignments are due on the date that they are listed on the syllabus schedule. There will be periodic reading quizzes to assess your understanding of the material. I highly recommend that you also look at one or two of the examples of children’s literature listed for each theme prior to class. **

Writing Assignments

You will be asked to complete a writing assignment each week based on the theme discussed in class. These assignments are to be handed in via Canvas each Sunday

by 7 pm. Most papers will likely be around 3-5 pages but lengths will vary and I will not set a rigid requirement but rather ask that you write enough to capture the assignment topic. Most such assignments are very open ended, don't hesitate to contact me with any questions. You will be responsible for reading the work of some of your peers each week prior to coming to class. We will devise a schedule for these workshops on the first day.

You will be asked to turn in portfolios of your work twice during the course of the semester: once at the halfway point and once at the end. Each portfolio must consist of three revised and polished pieces. They can be new or those written for weekly assignments and then edited.

Grading

Weekly Writing Assignments: 20%

Reading Quizzes: 10%

Midterm Portfolio: 20%

Final Portfolio: 30%

Attendance/Participation: 20%

Week 1: Introduction: What is Children's Literature?

Readings: In *Signposts*: "Definition: Perpetual Exception" (3-6), "A Wholly Pragmatic Definition" (19-20); On Canvas: "The Origins and History of American Children's Literature"

Assignment: Write an example of what a piece of writing for children means to you. It can take any form and may address any subject.

Week 2: Why Children's Literature?

Readings: In *A Sense of Wonder*: "Creativity Limited" (41-49), "A Song of Innocence and Experience" (53-62), "Why?" (215-224); In *Signposts*: "The Case for a Children's Literature" (7-18), "Status: In and Out of the Literary Sandbox" (21-26)

Assignment: In a one-page reflection, explore why you have chosen this course and children's literature as a genre.

Week 3: Character

Readings: In *Charlotte Huck's Children's Literature*: "Chapter 1: Knowing Children's Literature: Characterization" (17-19); On Canvas: "From Hero to Character"; In *A Sense of Wonder*: "People I Have Known" (230-236)

Examples: *The View From Saturday* (E.L. Konigsburg), *Pippi Longstocking* (Astrid Lindgren), *Officer Buckle and Gloria* (Peggy Rathmann)

Assignment: Pick a children’s story – either from the list above or one of your own choosing – and rewrite it changing the species of the protagonist. If the characters are animals, make them human; if they are human, try a family of animals. How does this change the way the story is told? Or does it at all? I suspect different topic choices will lead to different answers.

Week 4: Setting

Readings: In *A Sense of Wonder*: “In Search of a Story: The Setting as a Source” (92-99); On Canvas: Selection from *A Critical Handbook of Children’s Literature* “Chapter 7: Setting” (167-187); In *Charlotte Huck’s Children’s Literature*: “Chapter 1: Knowing Children’s Literature: Setting” (16)

Examples: *Out of the Dust* (Karen Hesse), *Stealing Freedom* (Elisa Carbone), *Jazmin’s Notebook* (Nikki Grimes)

Assignment: After reading the pieces assigned for this week, pick a favorite work of children’s literature (either current or from your own childhood) and analyze the ways in which the setting impacts the characters, actions, mood, authenticity, and credibility in a two-page paper. Look to the readings for assistance in analyzing. As not every bit of criteria will be found in your piece, work with how that particular setting functions.

Week 5: Picture Books/Illustrations

Readings: On Canvas: “Do illustrations enhance preschoolers’ memories for stories?”; In *Signposts*: “Picture Books” (149-151), “There’s Much More to the Picture than Meets the Eye” (156-161)

Examples: *This is Not My Hat* (Jon Klassen), *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale* (Mo Willems), *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend* (Dan Santat)

Assignment: As a writer of picture books, it is important to have the ability to share a visualization of your story beyond the words you write on paper – even (and especially) if you lack the artistic ability to illustrate your own work. Write a short story or poem that necessitates picture accompaniment and use either descriptive or visual explanation to convey the visual concept to your potential illustrators.

Week 6: Historical Fiction

Readings: In *Signposts*: “Problems of the Historical Storyteller” (269-272), “What Shall We Tell the Children?” (273-276); On Canvas: “Fiction Versus History: History’s Ghosts”

Examples: *Mississippi Morning* (Ruth Van Der Zee), *Catherine Called Birdy* (Karen Cushman), *Dead End in Norvelt* (Jack Gantos)

Assignment: There is no new assignment for this week. Continue revising and editing pieces for your midterm portfolio.

Week 7: Midterm Portfolio Presentation

Come prepared to share a selection of your portfolio with the class.

Week 8: Traditional Literature: The Fairy Tale

Readings: On Canvas: “We Said Feminist Fairytales, Not Fractured Fairytales!”; In *Charlotte Huck’s Children’s Literature*: “Chapter 6: Traditional Literature” (274-291 and 322-326); In *Signposts*: “Why Folk Tales and Fairy Stories Live Forever”

Examples: *Granite Baby* (Lynne Bertrand), *Ella Enchanted* (Gail Carson Levine), *Lon Po Po: A Red Riding Hood Story from China* (Ed Young)

Assignment: Take a classic fairytale or folktale and rewrite it modernizing a single element. You may choose one that is known by all or one that is obscure, but be sure to include the original text for reference. You may change the characters, setting, magic – anything that you believe will make the story more applicable and more engaging for today’s children. (Fun fact: It was a college creative writing assignment such as this that led to the writing of the movie *Snow White and the Huntsman*.)

Week 9: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Readings: In *A Sense of Wonder*: “The Perilous Realm of Realism” (78-88); On Canvas: Selection from *A Critical Handbook of Children’s Literature* “Contemporary Realism” (90-93); In *Charlotte Huck’s Children’s Literature*: “Chapter 3: The Changing Word of Children’s Books: Contemporary Realistic Fiction” (102-104)

Examples: *After Tupac and D Foster* (Jacqueline Woodson), *The Recess Queen* (Alexis O’Neil), *My Pal Victor* (Diane Bertrand)

Assignment: In keeping with the theme of the previous week’s assignment: take another (or the same) classic folk or fairytale and rewrite it as a piece of contemporary realistic fiction, that is, remove the magic, the mystical, and the impossible and shape what you have left into its own story.

Week 10: Multiculturalism in Children’s Literature

Readings: On Canvas: "Multicultural Children's Literature and Teacher Candidates' Awareness and Attitudes Toward Cultural Diversity," "I Didn't Know There Were Black Cowboys," "Heritage"

Examples: *Each Kindness* (Jacqueline Woodson), *One Crazy Summer* (Rita Williams-Garcia), *Dad, Jackie, and Me* (Myron Uhlberg)

Assignment: When dealing with literature that is considered to be multicultural, it is important to consider what claim or belonging the author has over the culture being addressed. Are they from a specific place? Or did they move there? Is their family or are their ancestors from there? Or did they simply research a culture they found interesting? For this assignment, I want you to write about a culture that YOU believe yourself to be an authority on. It does not matter if others would say you belong to that culture, but rather how YOU identify as a person. This assignment can take many forms from poetry to short stories, don't hesitate to email me if you have any questions.

Week 11: Censorship and Criticism in Children's Literature

Readings: In *Signposts*: "Three Fallacies About Children's Books" (54-59); On Canvas: "The Most Frequently Banned or Challenged Books: 1996-2000: The *Harry Potter* Books," "Voices of Banned Authors: Judy Blume"

Examples: *The Kite Runner* (Khaled Hosseini), *And Tango Makes Three* (Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson), *In the Night Kitchen* (Maurice Sendak)

Assignment: Pick any children's or young adult book that has been criticized, banned, challenged, or censored and write an argumentative letter defending it. Explain why you believe that the aspects in question are important or simply just defend free speech. Pick something you are passionate about and it will shine through your letter. For suggestions see the list of books on Canvas or visit the American Library Association Website (www.ala.org/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks).

Week 12: Sensitive Topics

Readings: On Canvas: "Modern Family: Adoption and Foster Care in Children's Literature," "Summer's End and Sad Goodbyes," "Special Needs"

Examples: *Belle Prater's Boy* (Ruth White), *Love Ruby Lavender* (Deborah Wiles), *Saying Goodbye to Lulu* (Corinne Demas)

Assignment: Bring in a piece of revised work that you intend to include in your final portfolio for peer input. Keep in mind: Revision is never simply the fixing of grammar mistakes, dig deeper.

Week 13: Choice Week: We will discuss and choose as a class a genre or aspect of children's literature on which we have not yet touched and about which you would like to learn more. Possible examples include nonfiction, graphic novels, or poetry.

Readings: TBA

Examples: TBA

Assignment: Final portfolio editing for presentation.

Week 14: Course Wrap Up and Final Portfolio Presentations

Come prepared to share part of your final portfolio with the class.

Annotated Bibliography

Week 1: What is Children's Literature?

“Definition: Perpetual Exception.” *Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature*. Ed.

Robert Bator. New York: American Library Association, 1983. 3-6. Print.

This section of Robert Bator's book establishes the difficulty in defining literature and its subtypes. One Victorian definition by exception states that literature is anything that doesn't "either directly or indirectly promote any worldly or practical use." This discussion of definition addresses the distinction between books written with the intention that they be read by children and books that children choose to adopt regardless of intention. This is a good introductory article for the course because it expresses the ambiguity of definition of the genre and shows the flexibility it affords.

Townsend, John Rowe. "A Wholly Pragmatic Definition." *Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature*. Ed. Robert Bator. New York: American Library Association, 1983. 19-20. Print.

This short essay delves deeper into the idea of defining this genre, stating that it is possible that there is no such thing as children's literature but rather just literature with different audiences. This is an interesting point of view to consider in this course about children's literature. Are we writing and studying children's literature or simply literature that children enjoy?

Tunnell, Michael O., and James S. Jacobs. "The Origins and History of American Children's Literature." *Reading Teacher* 67.2 (2013): 80-6. Print.

This brief history of children's literature is important in terms of defining the field. The authors begin by saying "Before the 17th century children's books did not exist because children had not yet been invented." This statement is then backed by the description of societies view of children and childhood as time progressed. It is then shown how children's literature developed to suit and serve the attitude that society had towards children at any given time. The authors provide prime examples of pieces of children's literature that emerged as the first of their kind in given time periods (Beatrix Potter's works as the first picture story books in the first half of the 20th century, for example). This article is important to this course because it is important to understand the origins of the field before one can study it and attempt to participate in it. Just as science students learn not only laws, but about the scientists and experiments that led to their discovery – just so, aspiring children's authors must learn about those who came before them on whose shoulders they now stand.

Week 2: Why Children's Literature?

Fadiman, Clifton. "The Case for a Children's Literature." *Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature*. Ed. Robert Bator. New York: American Library Association, 1983. 7-18. Print.

Fadiman sets out to defend children's literature against critics who may believe that it is inferior to other writings. Though it does not have a lengthy history (about 300 years) – many noteworthy works have been produced. A clear argument is made here for the worth of the genre beyond simple childish

entertainment. This argument is important to the course as it validates and justifies its existence.

Paterson, Katherine. "Creativity Limited." *A Sense of Wonder: On reading and writing books for children*. Plume, 1995. 41-49. Print.

In this piece, popular and decorated children's author Katherine Paterson dispels the common misconception that writing children's literature puts uncomfortable and difficult bonds on the creativity of the writer. She argues the opposite, saying that not only does a writer choose their medium and thus should not feel limited by what they have chosen, but also that so many so-called limits of children's literature (from length to subject to vocabulary) have so many exceptions that they can hardly be considered limits at all. Using her own books as an example, she states that her novels include bastard children, brothels, love affairs, plague, accidental death, and suicide. She then asserts that the only complaints she has every received were about profanity – no one takes exception to her use of this subject matter in the field. It is important to recognize that in terms of limitation in writing for children "you will be able to cite a gate for every fence."

Paterson, Katherine. "A Song of Innocence and Experience." *A Sense of Wonder: On reading and writing books for children*. Plume, 1995. 53-62. Print.

In this piece, Paterson defends what is often considered a fallacy of children's literature: the statement "I do not write for children, I write for myself." She does so in a way that establishes her intended reader as herself in child form. The way in which books can change their readers over the course of the pages is

striking, yet Paterson does not write to change other people's children, but rather the child she was. Whether or not this writing then speaks to other children, those bothered by the same things that bothered Paterson as a child, is where her success lies. The hope that this can give even one child is what makes writing for children worth pursuing. Though critics have traction in their claim that writer's should write for their intended audience, Paterson's view is important to consider. As undergraduate students in the course, no one will be an expert on child growth and development, thus Paterson's point of view is an important one to consider.

Paterson, Katherine. "Why?" *A Sense of Wonder: On reading and writing books for children*. Plume, 1995. 215-224. Print.

In this essay, Paterson addresses the claim that no one will take a writer of children's literature seriously. She quite plainly states that the reason for this is easy: we do not take children seriously. "That's why we call a school lunch program a frill and weapons, necessities." She makes a stunning point with this statement about the priorities in today's society. Paterson is right in that there is not a lot of glamour in writing for children, with the exception of a selected few authors (J.K. Rowling, Stephanie Meyer, Suzanne Collins). However, young readers have a "passionate heart" that too often fades before adult hood. These readers are capable of feeling more fiercely than any others and it is for precisely this reason that courses such as this are important.

"Status: In and out of the Literary Sandbox." *Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature*. Ed. Robert Bator. New York: American Library Association, 1983. 21-26. Print.

In following suit with Fadiman's piece, this essay discusses the importance of children's literature as a genre and the limitations of it as such. Bator references authors such as C.S. Lewis, from whom the quotation "I am almost inclined to set it up as a canon that a children's story which is enjoyed only by children is a bad children's story," comes. While this may not be entirely true today, it is a good start in the assertion that children's literature is not just for children and thus can be enjoyed by all – take, for example Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. Lewis' limits of children's literature include simpler vocabulary, less reflection, less erotic love, and short chapters. However, in present day, these limits are not cut and dry and defying them as such is a method that has produced many impressive works enjoyed by children and adults. This is important to the course as a guideline for rules to follow as well as to aspire to break.

Week 3: Character

Kiefer, Barbara, Susan Helper, and Janet Hickman. "Chapter One: Knowing Children's Literature: Characterization." *Charlotte Huck's Children's Literature*. 9th ed. McGraw Hill, 2007. 17-19. Print.

This brief section of Kiefer's textbook gives the reader an overview of the importance of realistic characters in children's literature, characters that children learn about through their actions rather than from what the author directly states about them. Kiefer details different types of characters, from one-dimensional stock characters to those that are more complex, and in which genres of children's literature each type is most likely to be found. This is an important background text to read before moving into the more specified pieces assigned this week.

Nikolajeva, Maria. "From Hero to Character." *The rhetoric of character in children's literature*. Scarecrow Press, 2002. 26-48. Print.

This article shows the reader the sophistication of characterization in children's literature as elevated above what is typically thought of children's literature characters by those uneducated on the subject – that they are inferior to that of characters created for adults, flat, and stereotypical. This piece goes through the different types and uses for characters, from those that serve as ideological role models for children, to those that are classic heroes in the romantic sense, to those that intentionally alienate the reader. The author additionally addresses the different forms of female stereotypes and archetypes in children's literature. This is important of which to be aware when creating characters. While much of this theory may be above the introductory level, at which the students of this course are creating children's characters, it is important exposure, whether or not they are aspiring children's authors.

Paterson, Katherine. "People I Have Known." *A Sense of Wonder: On reading and writing books for children*. Plume, 1995. 230-236. Print.

In terms of character, Paterson takes an interesting approach in this piece. She talks about characterization in terms of getting to know her characters as opposed to "building" them. This type of process takes time. She describes knowing one detail about a character and thus in trying to reconcile it, discovering more until she has created a person that she feels as if she truly knows and would love to meet. This process of characterization can be painstaking but rewarding,

as it has so much in terms of authenticity and thus appeal over simply sitting down and choosing the first five traits and background facts that seem to work.

Week 4: Setting

Kiefer, Barbara, Susan Helper, and Janet Hickman. "Chapter One: Knowing Children's Literature: Setting." *Charlotte Huck's Children's Literature*. 9th ed. McGraw Hill, 2007. 16. Print.

This concise description of the importance of setting in a piece emphasizes the fact that the setting of a story is important in "creating mood, authenticity, and credibility." The authors also establish that "Both the time and the place of the story should affect the action, the characters, and the theme." Both of these qualifications for setting are important and it is essential for the students to be aware of how their choices in placing their characters should and will affect not only the outcome of the characters' actions but also the readers' perceptions of them.

Paterson, Katherine. "In Search of a Story: The Setting as a Source." *A Sense of Wonder: On reading and writing books for children*. Plume, 1995. 92-99. Print.

This reading will be even more important later in the course in terms of historical fiction, however it makes a good introduction to the importance of setting as well. In this piece, Paterson discusses the journey she took from being inspired by a setting to travelling there and researching to create her historical fiction novel to revolve around that place. Sometimes the setting is an important detail, but other times the setting gives birth to the entirety of the story. This is important for the course because the students need to realize setting matters. One

cannot just write a piece and pick a location in which to insert after the fact, but rather the actions and the lives of the characters are determined by where they live – or in some cases where they do not live.

Smith, Jacquelin J., Cynthia Miller Coffel, and Rebecca J. Lukens. “Chapter Seven: Setting.” *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature*. 9th ed. Boston: Pearson, 2013. 167-187. Print.

This chapter on setting provides a comprehensive explanation of not only the types of settings, but also the most likely setting combinations in various genres of children’s literature. The authors first describe the difference between integral setting, one that influences the actions and characters, and a backdrop setting, more ambiguous and unspecified, but sometimes important nonetheless. The different functions of a setting are then discussed from providing historical background, to being an antagonist, to creating mood. This chapter is a fantastic example of a comprehensive guide to setting in children’s literature and the subsections within will be great places to reference, if the students have trouble with setting identification or development within their stories.

Week 5: Picture Books/Illustrations

Lent, Blair. “There’s Much More to the Picture than Meets the Eye.” *Signposts to Criticism of Children's literature*. Ed. Robert Bator. New York: American Library Association, 1983. 156-161. Print.

This essay details the complexities of the relationship and method used between the author and illustrator in a book. It clearly states that books are created much differently if two separate people are creating the words and pictures as

opposed to one person crafting the entire story. In the former situation, it is very important for the two to strike a balance in which the author clarifies and the artist does not request to change too much of the original work. The nuances of this are important for a writer penning children's picture books of which to be aware and thus the students will read this before illustrating their own drafts.

Greenhoot, Andrea Follmer, and Patricia A. Semb. "Do Illustrations Enhance Preschoolers' Memories for Stories? Age-Related Change in the Picture Facilitation Effect." *Journal of experimental child psychology* 99.4 (2008): 271-87. Print.

This article is different from other readings in this course because it takes a very scientific approach in terms of children's literature. I believe it is important for the course because it shows the results and method of a study that tested the effects (and thus the importance) of illustrations in children's literature. The study shows that as children get older, they are able to better recall story information if the accompanying pictures also depict the same information. Thus, it shows the importance of integrating the illustrations into picture books as a creator of children's stories and is an important concept for this course.

Italiano, Graciela and Matthias, Margaret. "Louder than a Thousand Words." *Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature*. Ed. Robert Bator. New York: American Library Association, 1983. 161-165. Print.

This piece discusses the importance of literary devices such as character development, plot progression, setting, and conflict as they pertain to children's picture books. This is important to consider because in a situation in which words

are few and pages are short, every inch of the page counts in order to fulfill these developments and genuinely tell a meaningful story. The authors offer quality examples of picture books that do this successfully such as pieces by Ezra Jack Keats and Eric Carle. Though these examples may be dated by today's standards, the technicalities of the authors' point stand and their 'examples' have indeed stood the test of time.

"Picture Books." *Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature*. Ed. Robert Bator. New York: American Library Association, 1983. 149-151. Print.

This editor's introduction to the section on picture books makes the very important distinction between "an illustrated book" and "a picture book." The "illustrated book" simply contains images in which the artist has reproduced the details found in the text. On the other hand, "picture books" are so much more. They contain images that work with the text to create a complete story. This introduction is important to this week in particular for the students to understand the necessity of pictures in their work and the best ways in which to express their ideas and visions to potential artists.

Week 6: Historical Fiction

Cohen, Mark. "What Shall We Tell the Children?" *Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature*. Ed. Robert Bator. New York: American Library Association, 1983. 273-276. Print.

This piece lays out the difficulties in writing for children in their inquisitiveness in regards to what is "real," in the problems of chronology and the importance (or lack thereof) that children will place on it, and in the authentic

language that may be too mature for children but is what is historically accurate. Cohen refers to this last obstacle as “the strain between authenticity and comprehensibility.” He stresses the importance of authenticity and research, something that students in this course must learn goes hand in hand with successful historical fiction, however, he also concedes the importance of “real people no matter how imaginary” in their captivation of children’s interest.

Thaler, Danielle. “Fiction Versus History: History’s Ghosts.” *The Presence of the Past in Children's Literature*. No. 120. Ed. Ann Lawson Lucas. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003. 3-10. Print.

This article addresses the importance of historical fiction for young people in terms of the fact that in history, children were often considered incredibly insignificant. Authors of historical fiction have to balance the difficulty of the lack of children in history and the fact that young people identify better with characters of their own age. The author then touches on the different possibilities of encounters from those that *could* have happened or those that the author facilitates as an “after the fact” moment, made possible by some bending of rules (whether it be time travel or something else out of the realm of actual possibility). No matter which way the author chooses to address this, there must be an understanding that the reader will allow certain improbabilities with a suspension of disbelief. The students can explore different approaches that they can take in writing historical fiction.

Trease, Geoffrey. “Problems of the Historical Storyteller.” *Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature*. Ed. Robert Bator. New York: American Library

Association, 1983. 269-272. Print.

This piece examines the fine line in historical fiction writing between keeping everything factual and falsifying or fictionalizing enough pieces of information to engage and enthrall a child, in order to combat the misconception of history as ‘boring,’ which is unfortunately too often the result of early schooling on the matter. As an untested subject, there is often little effort put forth to inspire children to want to delve deeper and learn more. As an author, Trease concedes that it is a personal choice as to how to “work against the rooted prejudices of the young reader” and that as a writer of historical fiction, it is difficult to do so. In writing such a genre for young people, it is important for students to recognize the challenges and respond accordingly with a decision to continue into the genre with their own views and opinions or not.

Week 8: Traditional Literature – The Fairy Tale

Kiefer, Barbara, Susan Helper, and Janet Hickman. "Chapter Six: Traditional Literature." *Charlotte Huck's Children's Literature*. 9th ed. McGraw Hill, 2007. 274-291, 322-326. Print.

The selections from this chapter of Kiefer’s book serve as a perfect introduction and overview of traditional literature for children. Kiefer introduces the concept and origins of children’s literature and its value. She then details the characteristics, types, motifs, and themes found in various forms of traditional children’s literature such as folktales, fables, and myths. Certain sections were chosen over others in order to ensure a wide yet thorough overview that would have been detracted from if the students were required to read the entire chapter

with too much depth. This provides the students with a solid basis and understanding for their study of traditional literature and their writing assignment to change it.

Kuykendall, Leslee Farish, and Brian W. Sturn. "We Said Feminist Fairy Tales, Not Fractured Fairy Tales!" *Children & Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children* 5.3 (2007): 38-41. Print.

This article focuses on the fact that fairytales are often a child's first introduction to the cultural and gender norms of their society. Unfortunately, these norms are often old-fashioned and thus outdated, as most fairytales originate in the oral cultures of long ago. However, the authors point out that in simply reversing gender roles to create new and "modern" fairytales, today's writers are not creating tales of equality but rather characters to which children do not relate or emulate. There is a middle and realistic ground between the original gender stereotypes and roles and the reversal of such. This article is important to alert students to the dangers of traditional literature, as well as the dangers of attempting to modernize it in ineffective ways.

Storr, Catherine. "Why Folk Tales and Fairy Stories Live Forever." *Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature*. Ed. Robert Bator. New York: American Library Association, 1983. 177-184. Print.

In this article, Storr addresses what it is within a fairy story that recurs across retellings and spans generations – the universal essence. She looks to J.R.R. Tolkien for qualities of fairy stories as well as what she deems to be the most important element common among all: "The end is implicit in the

beginning.” This is not to say that every one must end with “happily ever after,” she clarifies. She goes on to disagree with Tolkien in his assertion that fairytales are “as much for adults as for children.” This particular debate is one for the students themselves to decide on which side they belong, however, Storr’s list of qualities (“readability,” “the promise of the granting of our heart’s desire,” and “humor,” to name a few) are certainly a start in terms of the understanding of classic traditional stories, as found in contemporary children’s literature.

Week 9: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Kiefer, Barbara, Susan Helper, and Janet Hickman. "Chapter Three: The Changing World of Children’s Books: Contemporary Realistic Fiction." *Charlotte Huck's Children's Literature*. 9th ed. McGraw Hill, 2007. 102-104. Print.

This text selection looks at the origins of realistic fiction as a genre, highlighting many works that the author points out would be considered historical fiction today. There is attention given to the fine line between contemporary realistic fiction and historical realistic fiction; much that is considered the latter today will one day be the former and much that is now the former was once the latter. This is important to consider in terms of being true to realism and the time period. Issues and themes presented in novels that were once considered realistic fiction can tell the reader much about that time period. The same will be true of works written today. This will give the students a perspective on the vast importance and uses of realistic fiction.

Paterson, Katherine. “The Perilous Realm of Realism.” *A Sense of Wonder: On reading and writing books for children*. Plume, 1995. 78-88. Print.

Here Paterson discusses the dangers of writing realistic fiction in terms of the difficulties in remaining true to the facts, both of the real and natural world and of history. What is real for one child may be a fantasy for another and thus the confines of a term such as “realistic” are somewhat misleading. The important thing to note, however, is that in realistic fiction, as in many other subgenres of children’s literature, some children will relate to the characters and some will not, but relating is not confined to the realistic. A child can relate to a character’s rebellious side, even if that character is a dog.

Smith, Jacquelin J., Cynthia Miller Coffel, and Rebecca J. Lukens. “Contemporary Realism.” *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature*. 9th ed. Boston: Pearson, 2013. 90-93. Print.

This short section on realistic fiction divides the subgenre into three main categories: romance, coming of age stories, and problem-centered stories. In addition to sharing quality examples of such stories, the authors emphasize the importance of believability of character as well as relatability. This breakdown of the subgenre, while abbreviated, is incredibly helpful to the students of the course because it frames the different types of realistic fiction they may encounter (or envision) in specific forms, though as creative writers, they must be aware that oftentimes art can reach beyond specified forms.

Week 10: Multiculturalism in Children’s Literature

Iwai, Yuko. "Multicultural Children's Literature and Teacher Candidates' Awareness and Attitudes Toward Cultural Diversity." *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education* 5.2 (2013): 185-97. Print.

This article addresses the importance of teachers' diversity awareness and their teaching of diversity in the classroom. It describes a study of multicultural literature and the awareness that teachers have for it. The researchers came to the conclusion that after being educated concerning multicultural literature, teachers were found to be more aware of multicultural needs and cultural diversity in their classrooms than they were beforehand. This article is important to show the students the impact of multicultural literature in the classroom and the importance of works that expose children to unfamiliar cultures or enable children to see themselves in their cultures in literature when they otherwise would not be able to.

McNair, Jonda C. "I Didn't Know there were Black Cowboys." *YC: Young Children* 69.1 (2014): 64-9. Print.

This article describes the author's desire to make multicultural literature available to children of color and their families. She details the importance of children being able to see themselves in the books that they read. As a result of this belief, she began the "I Never Knew..." family literacy program to acquaint African American families with picture books and other children's literature by African American authors, featuring African American children. She shares recommendations by grade and genre, as well as advice for using the literature in a classroom. This article is important in terms of realizing that all children deserve to see themselves in literature, but not in stereotypical roles: thus all those who write for children must be aware of BOTH of these things as they go to the page.

Rudman, Masha Kabakow. "Heritage." *Children's literature: An issues approach*. New

York: Longman, Inc. College Division, 1984. 219-237. Print.

Rudman verifies the importance of varied representation in literature for children, as a result of the fact that children often gravitate towards literature that depicts characters of their same heritage. She cautions writers to avoid stereotypes, whether positive or not, because they deny flexibility in human qualities. It is up to teachers and parents to emphasize the value of every person and of their differences to children, but it is up to writers to provide them with literature that can help them to do so. Rudman presents criteria that include the avoidance of generalizing (more specific than “Africa” and more descriptive than “Asian”), authenticity in language (while avoiding stereotype), and illustrations. She discusses various genres and quality examples of multicultural literature within them, including poetry, fiction, and fairy tales. It is important for students to recognize the importance of representing various heritages, but also the fine line between representation and generalization/stereotyping, especially when the writer does not share the heritage of the characters about which they are writing.

Week 11: Censorship and Criticism in Children’s Literature

Chambers, Aidan. “Three Fallacies About Children’s Books.” *Signposts to Criticism of Children’s Literature*. Ed. Robert Bator. New York: American Library Association, 1983. 54-59. Print.

A reference to this essay, which occurs in Paterson’s *A Sense of Wonder: On Reading and Writing Books for Children*, originally alerted me in my research to the *Signposts to Criticism of Children’s Literature* edited by Robert Bator. Chambers puts forth what he considers to be the three most erroneous, yet

commonly believed and espoused, facets of children's literature: "Children's books are the only books in which you find good story telling these days," "Didacticism is an old-fashioned literary weakness we have learned to expunge from children's books," and "I write for myself" (in reference to an answer children's authors often give). He refutes these criticisms one by one on the pretense that children's books are too important to be confined by these tenets. It is an important introduction to criticism of children's literature and opens the eyes to the students that there is no right answer and much depends on the belief of individual critics.

Foerstel, Herbert N. "The Most Frequently Banned or Challenged Books: 1996-2000:

The *Harry Potter* Books." *Banned in the USA: A reference guide to book censorship in schools and public libraries*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002. 179-188. Print.

This section of the book *Banned in the USA* is important to this course because while other sections may explain the legislative history of book banning and challenging in the United States, this one explains the pathway to censorship of a series beloved to children and young adults today, one to which many students in the course would certainly relate. Though this may need to be revised for future courses, *Harry Potter* is currently considered to be relevant and timeless across many generations. This piece focuses on the first four books and the reasons that various groups of people took issue with them around the country. In addition to this, the end of the piece describes various specific instances of banning and censoring and their results. It is important for students to see how a

series that they would most likely never consider a problem, could be the center of so much censorial controversy.

Foerstel, Herbert N. "Voices of Banned Authors: Judy Blume." *Banned in the USA: A reference guide to book censorship in schools and public libraries*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002. 131-142. Print.

This section provides a contrast to Foerstel's other on the banning of the *Harry Potter* series because of the reasons that Blume is often challenged. Her books address issues of real life to which people may be sensitive, such as puberty, menstruation, and masturbation, as opposed to those that are fantastical, such as witchcraft and demonization in Rowling's series. Blume's interview was chosen not only because the word censorship is almost synonymous with her name, but also because of a startling point that she made in the interview, stating "I frankly feel that it is my job to write the books, not to defend them. It is always the reader's job to defend the books, to ensure that they are available." This is the precise reason that those taking the course, not only aspiring children's literature authors but those that have a love for the genre, be familiar with and educated on censorship. This very clearly shows the reasoning for this weeks assignment – the book defense.

Week 12: Sensitive Topics

Meese, Ruth Lyn. "Modern Family: Adoption and Foster Care in Children's Literature." *Reading Teacher* 66.2 (2012): 129-37. Print.

This article is important in terms of addressing sensitive topics with children through literature. It details parts of children's stories that can be both

beneficial and detrimental to a teacher when trying to teach acceptance and open mindedness about various family group. The most helpful part of this article for the students occurs at the end, when the author discusses important aspects of literature containing adoption and foster care themes. She recommends avoiding stereotypes, such as children who are ‘difficult,’ as a result of their background and exaggerations, such as children who have to perform incredible feats to get a family.

Rudman, Masha Kabakow. “Special Needs.” *Children's literature: An issues approach*. New York: Longman Inc. College Division, 1984. 304-318. Print.

This section focuses on important criteria about children’s books related to special needs/disabilities and with characters that have special needs. Rudman recommends that authors of such books focus on what those with special needs can do, as opposed to what they cannot. It is also presented as important to avoid portraying a disability as something that can be “overcome,” because it implies that those afflicted by said conditions are the cause of their own pain/difficulty by not taking action concerning it. In trying to write a piece that encourages acceptance and inclusion, it is important for writers to portray actions and treatment as they should be, in order to set an example and a standard. Rudman clarifies the difference between many things that may fall under the special needs umbrella, from gifted children, to those with learning disabilities, to those with intellectual disabilities, etc. Her categories and criteria are incredibly helpful to students who may desire to write on this particular topic and she offers countless examples of quality children’s literature that exhibit the elements she espouses.

Wiseman, Angela. "Summer's End and Sad Goodbyes: Children's Picture books about Death and Dying." *Children's Literature in Education* 44.1 (2013): 1-14. Print.

This article, in conjunction with the others assigned for this week acquaints students with the idea of children's literature as a way to introduce and discuss sensitive topics with children, in this case, dying. Wiseman targets specific examples of books that do a good job of discussing the death of different important loved ones (a sibling, a grandmother, and a pet) and the ways in which the main character copes with the loss. This is one of many important, yet difficult topics for children to become familiar with. Like so much else, when a child can relate to a character and see an aspect of their life in the life of the character, it eases the feelings of being alone in that aspect and brings comfort to the unknown. Though students in the class may not write pieces about death or dying, as they may not feel ready, it is important for them to recognize that it is important for books on sensitive topics to be available to young children.

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Yu, Xinyu. "Levels of Meaning and Children: An Exploratory Study of Picture Books' Illustrations." *Library & Information Science Research* 31.4 (2009): 240-6. Print.

Appendix A: Chosen Examples

- Bertrand, Diane Gonzales. *My Pal, Victor*. Illus. Robert Sweetland. Trans. Eida de la Vega. Green Bay, Wis.: Raven Tree Press, 2004
 Educational Resource Center (ERC) Stacks PZ73 .B4446 2004
 Two Latino boys experience carefree camaraderie despite one boy's disability. Fun and friendship overpower physical limitations.
- Bertrand, Lynne. *Granite Baby*. Illus. Kevin Hawkes. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005
 ERC Stacks PZ7.B46358 Gr 2005
 Five talented New Hampshire sisters try to care for a baby that one of them has carved out of granite.
- Carbone, Elisa L. *Stealing Freedom*. New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1998
 ERC Stacks PZ7.C1865 Su 1998
 A novel based on the events in the life of a young slave girl from Maryland who endures all kinds of mistreatment and cruelty, including being separated from her family, but who eventually escapes to freedom in Canada.
- Cushman, Karen. *Catherine, Called Birdy*. New York: Clarion Books, 1994
 ERC Stacks PZ7.C962 Cat 1994
 The thirteen-year-old daughter of an English country knight keeps a journal in which she records the events of her life, particularly her longing for adventures beyond the usual role of women and her efforts to avoid being married off.
- Demas, Corinne. *Saying Goodbye to Lulu*. Illus. Ard Hoyt. Boston: Little, Brown, 2004
 ERC Stacks PZ7.D39145 Say 2004
 When her dog Lulu dies, a girl grieves but then continues with her life.
- Gantos, Jack. *Dead End in Norvelt*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2011
 ERC Stacks PZ7 .G15334 Dd 2011
 In the historic town of Norvelt, Pennsylvania, twelve-year-old Jack Gantos spends the summer of 1962 grounded for various offenses until he is assigned to help an elderly neighbor with a most unusual chore involving the newly dead, molten wax, twisted promises, Girl Scout cookies, underage driving, lessons from history, typewriting, and countless bloody noses.
- Glanzman, Louis S., and Astrid Lindgren. *Pippi Longstocking*. New York: Viking Press, 1985
 ERC Stacks PZ7.L6585 Pi 1985
 Escapades of a lucky little girl who lives with a horse and a monkey--but without any parents--at the edge of a Swedish village.

- Grimes, Nikki. *Jazmin's Notebook*. New York: Dial Books, 1998
 ERC Stacks PZ7 .G88429 Jaz 1998
 Jazmin, an Afro-American teenager who lives with her older sister in a small Harlem apartment in the 1960s, finds strength in writing poetry and keeping a record of the events in her sometimes difficult life.
- Hesse, Karen. *Out of the Dust*. New York: Scholastic Press, 1997
 ERC Stacks PZ7.H4364 Ou 1997
 In a series of poems, fifteen-year-old Billie Jo relates the hardships of living on her family's wheat farm in Oklahoma during the dust bowl years of the Depression.
- Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2004
 O'Neill Library Stacks PS3608.O832 K58 2004
 An epic tale of fathers and sons, of friendship and betrayal, that takes us from Afghanistan in the final days of the monarchy to the atrocities of the present. The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, *The Kite Runner* is a beautifully crafted novel set in a country that is in the process of being destroyed. It is about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption, and it is also about the power of fathers over sons-their love, their sacrifices, their lies.
- Huliska-Beith, Laura, and Alexis O'Neill. *The Recess Queen*. New York: Scholastic, 2002
 ERC Stacks PZ7.O5523 Re 2002
 Mean Jean is the biggest bully on the school playground until a new girl arrives and challenges Jean's status as the Recess Queen.
- Klassen, Jon. *This is Not My Hat*. Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 2012
 ERC Stacks PZ7.K6781446 Th 2012
 A little fish thinks he can get away with stealing a hat.
- Konigsburg, E. L. *The View from Saturday*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1996
 ERC Stacks PZ7.K8352 Vi 1996
 Four students, with their own individual stories, develop a special bond and attract the attention of their teacher, a paraplegic, who chooses them to represent their sixth-grade class in the Academic Bowl competition.
- Levine, Gail C. *Ella Enchanted*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997
 ERC Stacks PZ7 .L578345 El 1997
 In this novel based on the story of Cinderella, Ella struggles against the childhood curse that forces her to obey any order given to her.
- Parnell, Peter, and Justin Richardson. *And Tango Makes Three*. Illus. Henry Cole. 1st ed. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2005
 ERC Stacks PZ10.3 .R414 Tan 2005

At New York City's Central Park Zoo, two male penguins fall in love and start a family by taking turns sitting on an abandoned egg until it hatches.

Rathmann, Peggy. *Officer Buckle and Gloria*. New York: Putnam's, 1995

ERC Stacks PZ7.R1936 Of 1995

The children at Napville Elementary School always ignore Officer Buckle's safety tips, until a police dog named Gloria accompanies him when he gives his safety speeches.

Santat, Dan. *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend*. 2014

ERC Stacks PZ7.S23817 Adv 2014

An imaginary friend waits a long time to be imagined by a child and given a special name, and finally does the unimaginable--he sets out on a quest to find his perfect match in the real world.

Sendak, Maurice. *In the Night Kitchen*. 25th anniversary ed. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995

ERC Stacks PZ7 .S47 In 1995

A little boy's dream-fantasy in which he helps three fat bakers get milk for their cake batter.

Uhlberg, Myron. *Dad, Jackie, and Me*. Illus. Colin Bootman. Atlanta: Peachtree, 2005

ERC Stacks PZ7 .U3257 Dad 2005

In Brooklyn, New York, in 1947, a boy learns about discrimination and tolerance as he and his deaf father share their enthusiasm over baseball and the Dodgers' first baseman, Jackie Robinson.

Vander Zee, Ruth. *Mississippi Morning*. Illus. Floyd Cooper. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2004

ERC Stacks PZ7 .V285116 Mi 2004

Amidst the economic depression and the racial tension of the 1930s, a boy discovers a horrible secret of his father's involvement in the Ku Klux Klan.

White, Ruth. *Belle Prater's Boy*. 1st ed. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1996

ERC Stacks PZ7.W58446 Be 1996

When Woodrow's mother suddenly disappears, he moves to his grandparents' home in a small Virginia town where he befriends his cousin and together they find the strength to face the terrible losses and fears in their lives.

Wiles, Deborah. *Love, Ruby Lavender*. San Diego: Harcourt, 2001

ERC Stacks PZ7.W6474 Lo 2001

When her quirky grandmother goes to Hawaii for the summer, nine-year-old Ruby learns to survive on her own in Mississippi by writing letters, befriendng chickens as well as the new girl in town, and finally coping with her grandfather's death.

Willems, Mo. *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004

ERC Stacks PZ7 .W65535 Kn 2004

A trip to the laundromat leads to a momentous occasion when Trixie, too young to speak words, realizes that something important is missing and struggles to explain the problem to her father.

Williams-Garcia, Rita. *One Crazy Summer*. New York: Amistad, 2010

ERC Stacks PZ7 .W6713 On 2010

In the summer of 1968, after travelling from Brooklyn to Oakland, California, to spend a month with the mother they barely know, eleven-year-old Delphine and her two younger sisters arrive to a cold welcome as they discover that their mother, a dedicated poet and printer, is resentful of the intrusion of their visit and wants them to attend a nearby Black Panther summer camp.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *After Tupac & D Foster*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2008

ERC Stacks PZ7 .W868 Af 2008

In the New York City borough of Queens in 1996, three girls bond over their shared love of Tupac Shakur's music, as together they try to make sense of the unpredictable world in which they live.

---. *Each Kindness*. Illus. Earl B. Lewis. New York: Nancy Paulsen Books, 2012

ERC Stacks PZ7.W868 Ea 2012

When Ms. Albert teaches a lesson on kindness, Chloe realizes that she and her friends have been wrong in making fun of new student Maya's shabby clothes and refusing to play with her.

Young, Ed, et al. *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China*. Norwalk, CT:

Weston Woods, 2006

ERC Stacks PZ8.1 .Y84 Lo 2006b

In this Chinese version of the classic fairy tale, a mother leaves her three children home alone while she goes to visit their grandmother. When the children are visited by a wolf, pretending to be their Po Po, or granny, they let him in the house, but ultimately are not fooled by his deep voice and hairy face.

Appendix B: Additional Children's Literature Resources

The following will offer locations to access current lists of quality children's literature examples.

[American Indian Youth Literature Book Award](http://ailanet.org/activities/american-indian-youth-literature-award)

[<http://ailanet.org/activities/american-indian-youth-literature-award>]

This award is presented every two years to very best writing and illustrations by and about American Indians.

[Caldecott Medal](http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecottmedal)

[<http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecottmedal>]

The Caldecott Medal was named in honor of nineteenth-century English illustrator Randolph Caldecott. It is awarded annually by the American Library Association, to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.

[Coretta Scott King Award](http://www.ala.org/emiert/cskbookawards)

[<http://www.ala.org/emiert/cskbookawards>]

Recipients are authors and illustrators of African descent whose distinguished books for the young promote an understanding and appreciation of the American Dream.

[Newbery Medal](http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberyhonors/newberymedal)

[<http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberyhonors/newberymedal>]

The most distinguished book contribution to American literature for children published within the past year.

[Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children](http://www.ncte.org/awards/orbispictus)

[<http://www.ncte.org/awards/orbispictus>]

Established as an annual award for promoting and recognizing excellence in the writing of nonfiction for children.

[Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction](http://www.scottodell.com/pages/ScottO%27DellAwardforHistoricalFiction.aspx)

[<http://www.scottodell.com/pages/ScottO%27DellAwardforHistoricalFiction.aspx>]

Award goes to a meritorious book published in the previous year with a focus on historical fiction.

[Schneider Family Book Award](http://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/schneider-family-book-award)

[<http://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/schneider-family-book-award>]

This award honors an author or illustrator of a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for children and adolescent audiences.

Frequently Challenged Books

[<http://www.ala.org/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks>]

The American Library Association compiles a list of the most frequently challenged and censored books by year based on reports from their Office for Intellectual Freedom.