

Oh, the Things You Can Think

Children's Book Week, Then and Now



To celebrate Children's Book Week this year, we're reflecting on some of the favorite books we read as kids. We may not remember all the details of stories read decades ago, but there are images, passages, and feelings that have stuck with us through the years. Interesting to note that many of the titles we chose as our favorite childhood reads, are books that were first published before we were born. So who turned us on to these memorable stories? A parent? A teacher? A librarian? Do you find any of your childhood favorites among the ones we feature here?



My Side of the Mountain initially interested me because I always loved nature and animals. While reading it, I remember feeling empowered and inspired to imagine that I, just a child, could live in the wilderness on my own. ? Kathy

Harriet in ***Harriet the Spy*** seemed real to me - not as chirpily cheerful or melodramatically tragic as many other child characters in books I was reading. She didn't always say or do the right thing, and she was nosy and selfish - but she mostly redeemed herself in the end. I could relate to her imperfections! ? Ellen

I loved the ***Little House*** series because of Laura Ingalls Wilder's descriptions of pioneer life and the warmth of her family. My grandparents lived on a rustic farm with cows, pigs, chickens, and a protective border collie named Shep. The Little House books kept me connected to my grandparents on that farm, even though I lived in a city far away. - Mary

As a young girl who loved animals, but especially horses, ***Black Beauty*** became one of my all-time favorite books. A fictional autobiographical memoir told from the point of view of a horse, the story describes Black Beauty's difficulties and experiences with humans, who often failed to recognize the unconditional love and loyalty that he was so willing to share. This book gave me a sense of responsibility, respect and compassion for all living creatures. I found it sad, hopeful, and in the end, comforting. ? Janet

Ballet Shoes was an oasis for me as a young ballet student. Each of the young protagonists (Pauline, Petrova, and Posy) were able to follow their passions, with the support of a collection of knowledgeable and caring adults who understood the importance of having Big Dreams. The urban London setting was thrilling - and the European characters inhabiting the book made me eager to reach out and explore the world. I can't help but think this book planted the seed for all the wonderful experiences I've had in life, thus far. I've travelled overseas, performed professionally in the theater, and now support the Big Dreams of my own children (which currently include being superhero millionaires who do charity work)! ? Christina

As a child, I loved camping with my family and spending time by the water. The idea of suddenly finding myself alone on an island was both thrilling and terrifying. I admired Karana's courage and tenacity and wondered if I could have managed to survive on my own as she had. **Island of the Blue Dolphins** also gives a personal perspective on living in and out of sync with the ebb and flow of nature. As an adult, I have experienced several island camping adventures, satisfying my desire to enjoy time by the water. But I was content that I did not have to hunt any further than my backpack to find my own food. ? Lisa

Watership Down is a mixture of the best elements from The Wind in the Willows and The Odyssey. Since reading it at age 11, I haven't been able to look at hedges, meadows or overgrown alleyways without wondering what sort of tiny, cosmic dramas are unfolding beyond our vision. Truly inspiring. (Because of Watership Down, I got a cool looking rabbit on my arm as my first tattoo when I was 21.) ? Josh

I read **Little Women** several times between the ages of 9 -11 . Growing up with lots of cousins, most of whom were female, I found it easy to identify with Jo March and her family. Plus, the story has some sadness, romance and drama! This book made me an avid reader. ? Pat.

I think the idea of private spaces with little adult interference, like the ones in **The Secret Garden** or The Boxcar Children, is super appealing to kids. I was lucky enough to grow up in a house in the country with lots of land and tree cover perfect for creating little hideouts. So the idea of discovering and cultivating a secret garden was both relatable and compelling to me. ? Aubrey

Posted by Lisa C. on May 14, 2014

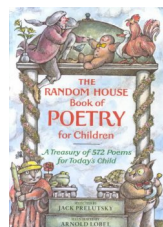
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Give Children Words to Love...



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?Poetry is a rhythmical piece of writing that leaves the reader feeling that life is a little richer than before, a little more full of wonder, beauty, or just plain delight.?- Aileen Fisher [Read more](#)

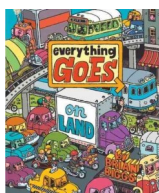
Posted by Lisa C. on April 26, 2014

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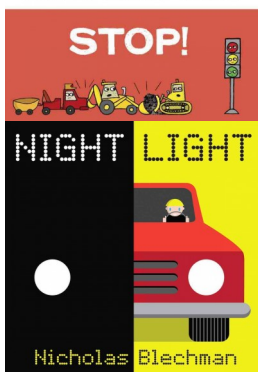
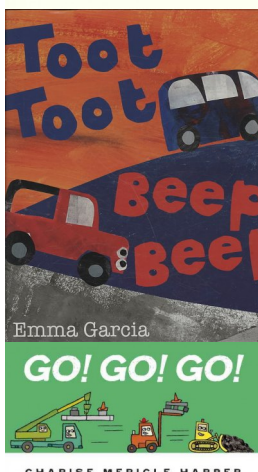
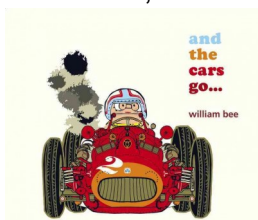
Things That Go

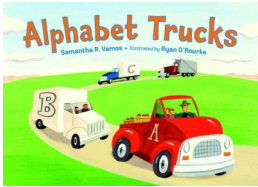


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I anticipated needing to learn many new things as a new parent, but when the time came, I was wholly unprepared to engage in "truck talk" with my toddler. Whether my inadequacy was due to having grown up in an area that did not have combines rolling down the highway, slowing traffic for miles, or the fact that my own interest in vehicles has never expanded much beyond whether it's green or blue? I needed to get up to speed fast to help satisfy my son's thirst for knowledge on all "things that go."

Fortunately, MCPL Children's Services offers a wonderful variety of books and DVDs to meet the demand for information on this topic. We can help you find the right nonfiction book the next time you need help distinguishing a bulldozer from a compactor (See **Cool Construction Vehicles** by Bobby Kalman), or want to satisfy curiosity about what's inside a fire truck. In the meantime, here are a few new picturebooks to share with your young fans of cars and trucks...





Posted by Lisa C. on March 27, 2014

[Everything goes on land](#)

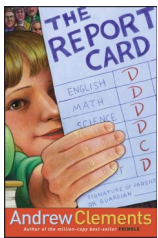
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Testing, Testing, Testing...



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It's test time again for Indiana students. Children in grades 3-8 are taking the *Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus (ISTEP+)* tests to measure student achievement in the subject areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science (Grades 4 and 6), and Social Studies (Grades 5 and 7). This seasonal event - and the recent news that [teachers and parents in Chicago decided to boycott the Illinois Standards Achievement Test](#), an annual test for Illinois students in third through eighth grade - brought to mind the book: *The Report Card* by Andrew Clements.

Clements is one of my favorite authors. He writes thoughtfully about school-age students, the issues they face, their relationships with each other and with their teachers. And many of his books pose a "what if?" question that make for marvelous discussion opportunities. In *The Report Card*, it's 5th grader Nora who ponders: what if students just all refused to take tests? What if they intentionally answered all the questions incorrectly? [Read more](#)

Posted by Lisa C. on March 5, 2014

[The report card](#)

[School](#)

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Build a stand, Spark a dream!



This year, the library is partnering with the Boys and Girls Club to help promote Lemonade Day Bloomington. Lemonade Day brings the community together to experience entrepreneurship, promote philanthropy, and celebrate the bright aspirations of our future leaders. [Read more](#)

Posted by Aubrey D. on March 3, 2014

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Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans



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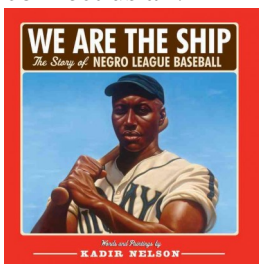
?Painting historical American subjects pushes me to learn more about who I am, where I

come from, and the role my ancestors played in helping form our country.? ? Kadir Nelson, author and illustrator of *Heart and Soul*.

Kadir Nelson?s work brings history alive for students today. In the Prologue to *Heart and Soul* he notes that young people won?t always have the chance to speak with the people who lived through the Civil Rights Movement, or who played baseball for a league that no longer exists. So he documents the stories from these people, vividly portrays them, so that they will be known and remembered, learned and absorbed by future generations.

"Heart and Soul is not only the story of my family, but an intimate introduction to American history that I hope will remind readers of our extraordinary story and inspire them to learn more about America as I have done ? by exploring their unique family stories and their connection to the American story."

Find *Heart and Soul* and other outstanding [books by Kadir Nelson](#) through the Library?s catalog. See [Kadir Nelson?s website](#) to learn more about him and his art. Visit the [African American History Month website from the Library of Congress](#) to discover more about the remarkable people and events that connect us all.



Posted by Lisa C. on February 18, 2014

[Heart and soul : the story of America and African Americans](#)

[African American](#)

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