

2013 Notable Children's Books

Each year a committee of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) identifies the best of the best in children's books. According to the Notables Criteria, "notable" is defined as: Worthy of note or notice, important, distinguished, outstanding. As applied to children's books, notable should be thought to include books of especially commendable quality, books that exhibit venturesome creativity, and books of fiction, information, poetry and pictures for all age levels (birth through age 14) that reflect and encourage children's interests in exemplary ways.

According to ALSC policy, the current year's Newbery, Caldecott, Belpré, Sibert, Geisel, and Batchelder Award and Honor books automatically are added to the Notable Children's Books list. Books that have also received other ALA awards, such as the Coretta Scott King Award, Michael L. Printz Award, Alex Award, and Schneider Family Book Award, are noted on this list.

Younger

And Then It's Spring. By Julie Fogliano. Illus. by Erin E. Stead. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter. A spare, lyrical narrative and delicate woodblock print and pencil illustrations capture the anticipation of spring. Accompanied by a coterie of animals, a boy plants seeds and waits expectantly for them to sprout.

Bear Has a Story to Tell. By Philip C. Stead. Illus. by Erin E. Stead. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter. Seasons change but friendship remains as Bear patiently awaits to tell his story in a world created through delicate illustrations and a strong message.

Black Dog. By Levi Pinfold. Illus. by the author. Candlewick/Templar. Here's a story that demonstrates that even the smallest family member has the courage to save everyone. Both the illustrations and the text move from scary to comforting with a satisfying ending.

Charley's First Night. By Amy Hest. Illus. by Helen Oxenbury. Candlewick. An adorable puppy is comforted his first night in a new home by a young boy who cares for Charley throughout the long hours. Pastel watercolors infuse the story with warmth and intimacy.

Creepy Carrots! By Aaron Reynolds. Illus. by Peter Brown. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. Jasper Rabbit loves carrots until he notices they are everywhere and becomes convinced that they're coming for him! (A 2013 Caldecott Honor Book)

Demolition. By Sally Sutton. Illus. by Brian Lovelock. Candlewick. Through a mix of rhyming text, sounds, and onomatopoeia, and large gritty illustrations, children are introduced to what machines do at a construction site.

Dogs on Duty. By Dorothy Hinshaw Patent. Walker. Brave, loyal dogs are hard to resist, especially those trained to serve on difficult military missions. Easy-to-read blocks of text are paired with photos to walk readers through the history of these hero hounds.

Dreaming Up: A Celebration of Building. By Christy Hale. Illus. by the author. Lee & Low. Poetry combined with images illustrates how children's play influences the creative process as it pertains to the buildings we inhabit and will inspire readers to dream big.

Extra Yarn. By Mac Barnett. Illus. by Jon Klassen. HarperCollins/Balzer and Bray. A selfish archduke threatens to halt a little girl's transformation of a colorless town and steal her box of magical yarn. (A 2013 Caldecott Honor Book)

Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors. By Hena Khan. Illus. by Mehrdokht

Amini. Chronicle. A look at Muslim life through the eyes of a child, sharing family experiences; the warm illustrations and cultural details remind us how similar we are.

Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs. By Mo Willems. Illus. by the author. HarperCollins/Balzer and Bray. A humorously fractured fairy tale tells the story of Goldilocks. Sly humor underlies significant changes to the expected script and setting.

Green. By Laura Vaccaro Seeger. Illus. by the author. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter. Seeger engages all the senses with her fresh approach to the multiple meanings of "green" in this highly original concept book. (A 2013 Caldecott Honor Book)

Hippoposites. By Janik Coat. Appleseed. A hippo demonstrates a clever variety of opposites in this oversized board book designed to amuse and instruct the youngest readers.

Infinity and Me. By Kate Hosford. Illus. by Gabi Swiatkowska. Lerner/Carolrhoda. Children will relate to Uma's experience of feeling small as she considers the universe and her place in it. Idiosyncratic illustrations contrast with the warm relationship between Uma and her grandmother. Finally, infinity in terms Uma can understand.

Just Ducks. By Nicola Davies. Illus. by Salvatore Rubbino. Candlewick. A young girl observes mallard ducks as they eat, swim, and dive. Appealing watercolors draw readers into the informative but gentle narrative.

Let's Go for a Drive! By Mo Willems. Illus. by the author. Hyperion. Good friends Elephant and Piggie's best plans in preparing to take a drive go awry when they realize they have no car. (A 2013 Geisel Honor Book)

Machines Go to Work in the City. By William Low. Illus. by the author. Holt. Elegant illustrations portray a variety of gritty, urban machines in all their burly glory as they work under, through, and above the city.

Magritte's Marvelous Hat : A Picture Book. By D. B. (Donald B.) Johnson. Illus. by the author. Houghton. An imaginatively-constructed picture book captures the essence of creativity and play while also introducing the paintings of the unique artist, René Magritte.

Martin de Porres: The Rose in the Desert. By Gary D. Schmidt, Illus. by David Diaz. Clarion/Houghton. This illustrated biography of the first African-heritage saint of the Américas captures both historical fact and legend. (The 2013 Belpre Illustrator Medal Book)

More. By I. C. Springman. Illus. by Brian Lies. Houghton. Illustrations stunningly juxtaposed against a simple story show what happens when Magpie's greed leads to trouble.

Nighttime Ninja. By Barbara DaCosta. Illus. by Ed Young. Little, Brown. A ninja stealthily goes about his mission until his mother catches him and puts him to bed. A dark palette of cut paper and mixed-media illustrations intensify the story's intrigue.

Oh, No! By Candace Fleming. Illus. by Eric Rohmann. Random/Schwartz & Wade. With exuberant rhythmic phrases and jungle colored illustrations, five animals are disturbed by a grinning tiger and fall into a hole, one by one. This suspenseful cumulative tale is an engaging read-aloud.

One Cool Friend. By Toni Buzzeo. Illus. by David Small. Dial/Penguin. Energetic line and dizzying perspective combine for a rollicking tale of Father, Elliot, and a highly improbable pet (or two). (A 2013 Caldecott Honor Book)

One Special Day: A Story for Big Brothers and Sisters. By Lola M. Schaefer. Illus. by Jessica Meserve. Disney/Hyperion. Spencer undergoes a remarkable transformation from a wild and raucous boy to a gentle big brother in a joyful, tender story sweetly illustrated for "big brothers and sisters."

Penny and Her Doll. By Kevin Henkes. Illus. by the author. Greenwillow. Softly rendered illustrations in this beginning reader reveal Penny's determination to find the perfect name for her doll.

Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons. By Eric Litwin. Illus. by James Dean. HarperCollins.

A blue mellow-eyed feline keeps losing his groovy buttons. But does he cry? Goodness no! For after all, it's all good! (A 2013 Geisel Honor Book)

Rabbit and Robot: The Sleepover. By Cece Bell. Illus. by the author. Candlewick. Rabbit and Robot disagree about everything on Rabbit's "To Do" list at their sleepover, including Robot's insistence for pizza toppings of nuts, bolts, and screws. And everything comes to a halt when Robot's batteries run low. (A 2013 Geisel Honor Book)

Sleep Like a Tiger. By Mary Logue. Illus. by Pamela Zagarenski. Houghton. Parents coax their young child to bed in a whimsical bedtime story with universal appeal. (A 2013 Caldecott Honor Book)

This Is Not My Hat. By Jon Klassen. Illus. by the author. Candlewick. In this darkly humorous tale, a tiny fish knows it's wrong to steal a hat, but it fits him just right. And the big fish wants his hat back. (The 2013 Caldecott Medal Book)

This Moose Belongs to Me. By Oliver Jeffers. Illus. by the author. Philomel/Penguin. Wilfred thinks he owns a moose, but the moose has other ideas. This offbeat tale is humorously illustrated using an incongruous mix of stick figures and painterly landscapes.

Up, Tall, and High! By Ethan Long. Illus. by the author. Putnam/Penguin. A bevy of birds performs a play in three acts, while teaching the concepts of up, tall, and high. Children will delight in reading additional words hidden beneath thick flaps. (The 2013 Geisel Medal Book)

Z Is for Moose. By Kelly Bingham. Illus. by Paul O. Zelinsky. Greenwillow. An unconventional alphabet book features best friends, Moose and Zebra, wreaking A-Z laugh-out-loud havoc. Their zany actions are highlighted in cartoon mixed-media illustrations.

Middle Readers

Abraham Lincoln & Frederick Douglass: The Story behind an American Friendship. By Russell Freedman. illus. Clarion/Houghton. Though one was born a free man and the other a slave, Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass had much in common. In this dynamic study, Freedman explains how their influential lives intersected and benefitted a nation.

The Beetle Book. By Steve Jenkins. Illus. by the author. Houghton. With jewel-like collage art, this oversized edition examines different beetle species and their distinctive characteristics.

A Black Hole Is Not a Hole. By Carolyn Cinami DeCristofano. Illus. by Michael Carroll. Charlesbridge. Using analogies within a child's experience, this deceptively clear, engaging introduction to black holes describes, explains, excites, and sparks a sense of wonder.

Bomb: The Race to Build—and Steal—the World's Most Dangerous Weapon. By Steve Sheinkin. illus. Roaring BrookFlash Point. This riveting historical nonfiction drama explores the complex series of events that led to the creation of the ultimate weapon and introduces many memorable personalities involved in the pursuit. (A 2013 Newbery Honor Book, The Sibert Medal Book, and the YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults)

Brothers at Bat: The True Story of an Amazing All-Brother Baseball Team. By Audrey Vernick. Illus. by Steven Salerno. Clarion/Houghton. The Acerra family had twelve sons who all played baseball together from the time they were children, through World War II, and into adulthood. The story of their camaraderie and positive family attitude is as inspiring as their baseball records. Retro illustrations take

readers back to the 1930s and 1940s.

Chuck Close: Face Book. By Chuck Close. illus. Abrams. Playful and jam-packed with information in text and images, including an unusually effective "mix 'n match" insert of self-portraits, this is an inspiring, hands-on profile of the artist.

Each Kindness. By Jacqueline Woodson. Illus. by E. B. Lewis. Penguin/Nancy Paulsen. A story of disconnections and regret when a child misses an opportunity of being a friend; while the illustrations reflect a beautiful outside world, the personal world shows isolation and loneliness. (A 2013 Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book)

Electric Ben: The Amazing Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin. By Robert Byrd. Illus. by the author. Dial/Penguin. Renaissance man and American founding father, Benjamin Franklin, surges to life in this electrifying informational book. (A 2013 Sibert Honor Book)

George Bellows: Painter with a Punch! By Robert Burleigh. Illus. by George Bellows. Abrams. Illustrated with Bellows' paintings, this biography captures the essence of the painter's life and art -- his early years, training, and his passion for the gritty underbelly of New York City.

Helen's Big World: The Life of Helen Keller. By Doreen Rappaport. Illus. by Matt Tavares. Disney/Hyperion. Elegant text, direct quotes and big, beautiful illustrations express how Helen Keller's world became larger once she found a way to identify and give voice to her experiences.

Iceberg, Right Ahead!: The Tragedy of the Titanic. By Stephanie Sammartino McPherson. illus. Lerner/Twenty-First Century. Drawing from official documents, logs, and diaries and illustrated with plentiful photographs, this well-organized, gripping chronicle records the tragic story, from the original design and construction to the discovery of the ship's remains and motion picture recreations.

In a Glass Grimly. By Adam Gidwitz. illus. Dutton/Penguin. Inspired by the tales of Grimm and Andersen, Gidwitz leads Jack and Jill on a quest full of adventure and fantastical creatures. Wit and wisdom packaged as fun.

Island: A Story of the Galápagos. By Jason Chin. Illus. by the author. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter. Vivid illustrations and brief text explain the evolution of one Galápagos island and its animal inhabitants. Back matter adds weight to the information and prompts further research.

Liar & Spy. By Rebecca Stead. Random/Wendy Lamb. What's real and what's deception? This subtle story, with unlikely friendships and secrets to be revealed, will intrigue readers and encourage a second reading.

Lulu and the Duck in the Park. By Hilary McKay. Illus. by Priscilla Lamont. Albert Whitman. Despite her teacher's stern warning, tender-hearted Lulu inadvertently and unexpectedly adds a new animal to the classroom in a laugh-out-loud transitional story.

May B. , By Caroline Starr Rose. Random/Schwartz & Wade. In this verse novel, dyslexic May B. is sent to help a couple in a soddy on the Kansas plains. Suddenly, May B. must fend for herself as winter approaches. A girttier story for Little House fans.

The Mighty Mars Rovers: The Incredible Adventures of Spirit and Opportunity. By Elizabeth Rusch. illus. Houghton. Follows the creation and launch of the first two Mars rovers in 2004, their explorations of the Red Planet for the following six years, and the challenges that faced the scientists who built and guided them.

Moonbird : A Year on the Wind with the Great Survivor B95. By Phillip M. Hoose. illus. Macmillan/Farrar. B95, a four-ounce shorebird, is the subject of this fast-paced tale of endurance. (A 2013 Sibert Honor Book and a YALSA Finalist for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults)

The One and Only Ivan. By Katherine Applegate. Illus. by Patricia Castelao. HarperCollins/Harper. This unique gorilla's-eye-view of the world delivers wry humor, deep emotion, and thought-provoking insights into the nature of friendship, hope, and humanity. (The 2013 Newbery Medal Book)

See You at Harry's. By Jo Knowles. Candlewick. Fern's family life revolves around her family's restaurant and upbeat-three-year-old Charlie until tragedy strikes. A surprisingly funny book about a family coming together as they grieve.

Splendors and Glooms. By Laura Amy Schlitz. Candlewick. Lizzie Rose, Parsefall, and Clara are caught in the clutches of a wicked puppeteer and a powerful witch in this deliciously dark and complex good-versus-evil tale set in Dickensian England. (A 2013 Newbery Honor Book)

Starry River of the Sky. By Grace Lin. Illus. by the author. Little, Brown. Rendi, a runaway, finds work at a small inn. A mysterious guest shares mystical stories, helping Rendi discover truths about himself and the world. Lovely Chinese-style illustrations make the complete package.

Three Times Lucky. By Sheila Turnage. Dial/Penguin. Rising sixth-grader Mo LoBeau leads eccentric residents of Tupelo Landing, North Carolina, on a rollicking journey of mystery and adventure as she investigates a murder and searches for her long-lost mother. (A 2013 Newbery Honor Book)

Titanic: Voices from the Disaster. By Deborah Hopkinson. illus. Scholastic Press/Scholastic. This story of the ill-fated ship is told in compelling detail, offering a gripping account through the voices of survivors. (A 2013 Sibert Honor Book and a YALSA Finalist for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults)

Twelve Kinds of Ice. By Ellen Bryan Obed. Illus. by Barbara McClintock. Houghton. In a nostalgic look back to childhood winters with her close-knit family and neighbors, Obed describes the pleasures of playing and skating on the ice.

Unspoken: A Story from the Underground Railroad. By Henry Cole. Illus. by the author. Scholastic Press/Scholastic. In a wordless, yet eloquent, picture book, a courageous farmgirl secretly provides food to a runaway slave. Evocative, monochromatic pencil drawings capture the story's drama.

Wonder. By R. J. Palacio. Knopf. Born with facial deformities, August chooses to attend "regular" school for the first time. Told from many perspectives, this is a powerful novel about friendship and acceptance.

Zombie Makers: True Stories of Nature's Undead. By Rebecca L. Johnson. illus. Lerner/Millbrook. Illustrated with amazing photographs, this shivery introduction to some of the fungi, parasites and viruses that invade bugs, mammals and sometimes humans, examines how they control the hosts' behavior to ensure their own survival.

Older Readers

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe. By Benjamin Alire Sáenz. Simon & Schuster. This truly universal novel about the friendship of two boys on the edge of manhood addresses issues of identity, friendship, family, and love. (The 2013 Belpré Author Medal Book, a Printz Honor Book, and the Stonewall Award Book)

Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust. By Doreen Rappaport. illus. Candlewick. Faces draw us into history. Filled with abundant photographs and stirring personal accounts, this inspiring, well-researched history reveals and recognizes courageous Jews and righteous Gentiles who fought back during the Holocaust.

Drama. By Raina Telgemeier. Illus. by the author. Graphix/Scholastic. Callie's personal drama on the tech-crew -- unrequited crushes, a first kiss, middle-school cliques -- is a spot-on tribute to teamwork, strong friendships, and individuality. (A 2013 Stonewall Honor Book)

A Game for Swallows: To Die, to Leave, to Return. By Zeina Abirached. Illus. by the author. Lerner/Graphic Universe. This graphic novel memoir focuses on one night during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) during which the author, her brother, and neighbors huddle in the safest corner of their apartment sharing memories, food, and comfort. (A 2013 Batchelder Honor Book)

Invincible Microbe: Tuberculosis and the Never-Ending Search for a Cure. By Jim Murphy and Alison Blank. illus. Clarion/Houghton. This meticulously organized and thorough account of the disease tracks its ancient history, its treatments, and the ongoing pursuit of a cure.

My Family for the War. By Anne C. Voorhoeve. Trans. by Tammi Reichel. Dial/Penguin. When 10-year-old Ziska flees Nazi Germany via a secret kindertransport train, she joins an Orthodox Jewish household in London where she gains a new family for the war. (The 2013 Batchelder Award Book)

My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece. By Annabel Pitcher. Little, Brown. A painful, sometimes comic, but ultimately hopeful, story about a family coping with grief, while confronting their own biases against Muslims.

The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano. By Sonia Manzano. Scholastic Press/Scholastic. In 1969 Spanish Harlem, fourteen-year-old Evelyn Serrano is caught in a whirlwind of events led by the revolutionary Young Lords and learns to value her own culture and history. (A 2013 Belpré Author Honor Book)

Seraphina. By Rachel Hartman. Random. In Goredd, dragons and humans live in uneasy peace. Hartman pulls Seraphina, a half-human/half-dragon teen musician, into the intrigue at court. Internally logical, suspenseful with just a hint of romance. (The YALSA 2013 William C. Morris Award Book)

Son. By Lois Lowry. Houghton. The powerful conclusion of The Giver quartet, *Son* stands alone as a story of friendship, love, loss, and sacrifice.

Son of a Gun. By Anne de Graaf. Trans. by the author. Eerdmans. Told through the eyes of a young sister and brother caught up in the Liberian Civil War, this story depicts the lives of child soldiers. (A 2013 Batchelder Honor Book)

Steve Jobs: The Man Who Thought Different. By Karen Blumenthal. illus. Macmillan/Feiwel. From birth, early adoption, and early education through his failures and successes, this even-handed biography presents the enigmatic innovator in all his complexity for readers who have never known a world without computers. (A 2013 YALSA Finalist for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults)

Temple Grandin: How the Girl who Loved Cows Embraced Autism and Changed the World. By Sy Montgomery. illus. Houghton. Using interviews, blueprints, and accessible narrative, the author explains the workings of the autistic brain while introducing the life of Temple Grandin, an autistic woman famous for her animal rights advocacy.

We've Got a Job: The 1963 Birmingham Children's March. By Cynthia Y. Levinson. illus. Peachtree. Four children, who risked their lives in the momentous march, provide their personal accounts of that historic event. Beautifully designed and illustrated with archival photographs.

All Ages

Little Bird. By Germano Zullo. Illus. by Albertine. Enchanted Lion. The expressive, simple illustrations wordlessly show how a man's kindness is repaid by a grateful bird; a graphic depiction of "It's the little things that count."

National Geographic Book of Animal Poetry: 200 Poems with Photographs that Squeak, Soar, and Roar! Ed. by J. Patrick Lewis. illus. National Geographic. In a collection for all ages, Lewis pairs poems by classic and modern poets with breathtaking photos from the National Geographic archives that capture the amazing diversity of the animal world.

Step Gently Out. By Helen Frost. Illus. by Rick Lieder. Candlewick. Frost's poem, paired with Lieder's luminous photographs, invite readers to examine insects' lives as they soar through the air or somersault across a blade of grass.

The Year Comes Round : Haiku through the Seasons. By Sid Farrar. Illus. by Ilse Plume. Albert Whitman. A cycle of seasons is vividly described and lushly illustrated in this collection of haiku.

Water Sings Blue: Ocean Poems. By Kate Coombs. Illus. by Meilo So. Chronicle. Twenty-three poems illustrated in loosely-flowing watercolors include "songs" in praise of the ocean and the life within. A memorable sea excursion.