



2021

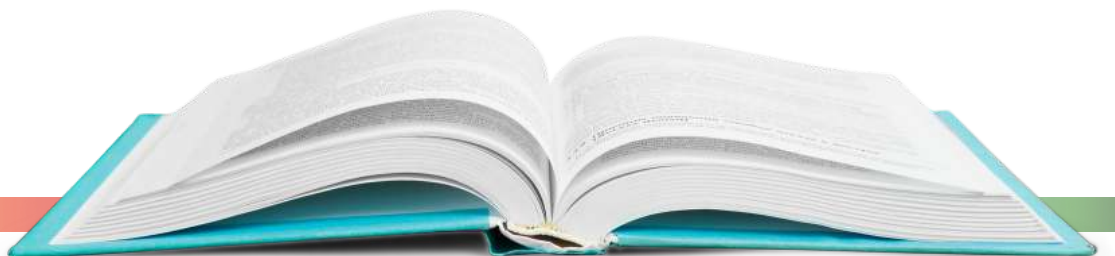


A YEAR OF

Sparks

# February

- ***The Magic in Changing Your Stars***  
by Leah Henderson
- ***We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices***  
edited by Wade Hudson & Cheryl Willis Hudson
- ***How to Build a Hug***  
by Amy Guglielmo
- ***Firebird***  
by Misty Copeland



# CATCH a spark!

Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



## The Magic in Changing Your Stars

Written by Leah Henderson

304 pages / Ages 8-12

A magical, fast-paced time travel novel that takes readers back to 1939 Harlem, celebrating the arts by weaving together magic and historical fiction, recognizing special family relationships and sharing a powerful message about the importance of believing in yourself.

### C

#### Context

##### Black Excellence

Over 40 African American people and places are cited in the novel.

Character names and places are all inspired by prominent figures throughout history, with an index included to cite them all and give very brief background.

Character personalities align with the personalities of the original figure as you read about them in the index.

### A

#### Arts

**Tap dancing** is front and center. Students will inevitably want to give it a try and learn more about it.

The ease and natural rhythm of **rap** music - writing it and performing it.

Character names inspired by prominent African American artists will inspire conversation.

### T

#### Themes

Believing in yourself

Grit

Potential and possibility

Having the power to change your own fate.

### C

#### Create

Write your own rap to inspire and motivate yourself. Use Chapters 23 and 31 as examples.

Interview a special family member about an event in their past they would redo if they had the chance. Write that story.

Research a figure or place highlighted in the novel.

### H

#### Heart Words

pg 42: "Never is a word I should never use...because it limits my possibilities"

pg 46: "Know your history...so you can know yourself"

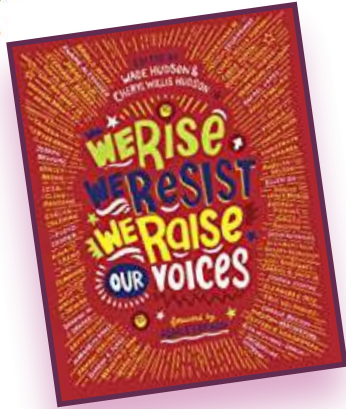
pg 64-65 "It's grit that keeps you going. It won't let nothin' stop you or stand in your way....Point is, you can't give up when you get knocked down"





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices

Edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson

96 pages / Grades 2 - 8

Every classroom should have a copy of this book in which 50 prevalent and diverse children's authors and illustrators share their unique voices to bring hope and promise to today's children through original prose, poetry and illustration with the intent of building better tomorrows.

#### C

##### Context

This book was inspired in 2016 by a 7 year old girl who expressed great concern at the state of the world and the ways in which people treated each other.

The book was created to ensure she knew that even during dark and bleak times, there is a sense of hope, love and resilience in the world. Issues of **diversity, kindness, and respect** are faced head on through **current events** expressed through **prose, poetry, lyrics** and illustration, with each page a different written style.

#### A

##### Arts

There is an abundance of **illustration styles**. As you are reading, create a master list of styles and techniques.

Why do you think each style was paired with its writing?

Look at each set of pages. Consider the **color scheme** provided. How is it all connected? Do the main colors of each set of pages seem to align with what the words are saying? What do you think were determining factors in the **page layout**? How colors determined? What draws **focus** in each illustration?

#### T

##### Themes

Hope

Resilience

Community Spirit

Adults who have lived through similar times can offer advice to today's children.

Challenges come and go, but you cannot lose your sense of direction.

Endurance

Kindness

Be brave

#### C

##### Create

Choose a question that begins each page and write your own response.

Read one page of text to students, without showing illustrations. Have each student create a visual representation (in any style) to go with the piece.

Compare their work to their peers, and to the original picture.

Consider a current event. Discuss which piece seems to align best with that event.

Write a song to sing to their future children about today's world. Use page 65 for guiding thoughts.

#### H

##### Heart Words

pg 14: "Our lives have created a map you can always follow."

pg 30: "What do we do with the worry, the hurt, the rage? We turn it into something bigger than us. We turn it into change."

pg 47: "Have a day of small things."

pg 53 "So tuck in, stay close, grow strong, We're here. Your wind. And you? You're our coming storm."

pg 59: "Any dream can happen, the world is yours to win."





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### How to Build a Hug

Written by Amy Guglielmo / Illustrated by Giselle Potter  
96 pages / Grades 2 - 5

All grade levels will take something away from this real story about Temple Grandin, a celebrated scientist and autism advocate who inspires others to acknowledge and embrace what makes each person different and unique.

### C

#### Context

Temple Grandin is known around the world for her work and advocacy for awareness of autism. Being a person with autism herself, Temple has learned how to use her own experiences to **celebrate** and **acknowledge** the ways in which she is **different from others**, a skill we could all learn from.

It is through seeing what other people enjoy and wanting a similar experience that Temple uses her own creativity and **design thinking** capabilities to create her own comforts.

### A

#### Arts

Giselle Potter is a celebrated children's author, having illustrated numerous books. Her **style** is uniquely her own - a bit of folk art, a bit childlike and whimsical, yet always captivating. What is it about this artist, whose work is a bit different, that aligns so nicely with the story of Temple Grandin?

Temple Grandin **thinks in pictures**. What would that be like. Discuss creativity. How do students think? Do some see words in their head? Pictures? Both?

### T

#### Themes

Embracing your unique self.

Finding ways to solve problems that work for you / alternate solutions.

Accepting and tolerating other's different learning and living styles.

Creative thinking

Understanding others

Being self-sufficient

### C

#### Create

Think about something you do not like that everyone else you know does like. Try to recognize WHY you don't like it.

Can you create/ design/build something to let you experience it in a way that would work for you? Celebrate this part of you - don't hide it!

Think of an abstract concept (like a hug). Create a list of "definitions" for it as you try to understand what it really means. Turn this into a poem. Uses pages 12-13 as examples.

### H

#### Heart Words

Author's Note: *"I use my mind to solve problems and invent things - Temple Grandin"*

Last page: *"I'm into hugging people now."*

pgs 30-31: *"It's a snuggle apparatus... It's a hug machine."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Firebird

Written by Misty Copeland / Illustrated by Christopher Myers  
96 pages / Grades K- 5

Acclaimed ballerina Misty Copeland speaks to a young dancer lacking in confidence and shows her the importance of confidence, hard work and determination. Told through vivid and unique illustrations combined with lyrical prose, Misty's signature role of the Firebird becomes a symbol of hope and perseverance.

### C

#### Context

In 2015, **Misty Copeland** became the **first African American woman to become a principal ballerina** for the American Ballet Theatre, where her first leading role was in *Firebird*. Misty's path to success was not an easy one personally or professionally as she regularly faced issues of **diversity**. She has been featured in many documentaries, news segments and magazines, becoming an advocate and mentor for children and an author of three books.

### A

#### Arts

Award winning illustrator Christopher Myers creates **bold, vivid, purposeful illustrations**.

Discuss **artistic choices**. How does layering and **collage** amplify the words on each page? What **techniques** do you notice?

Myers is also a clothing designer. Does this skill affect the illustrations? Do you notice a sense of **texture**?

**Ballet** is front and center. What do students know about ballet? Discuss the years of dedication and focus required.

### T

#### Themes

Beauty of dance, beauty of you.

Beauty of art is found within yourself.

Feeling empowered to be whatever you wish to be.

There are no limits, but only endless possibilities.

Movement can shed fear.

Self-confidence will lead you wherever you wish to go

Importance of hard working dedication.

### C

#### Create

Write about who is Misty is speaking to. Why do you think so? How can you support your thinking?

Choose a page of text and create your own illustration for it.

Choose a page of text. Let those lines be a story starter for your own creative writing piece.

Play the music "Firebird". Does the music align with the message of the story? Does it align with the illustrations?

Can you design a movement for each page?

### H

#### Heart Words

*"the space between you and me is longer than forever"*

*"your beginning's just begun"*

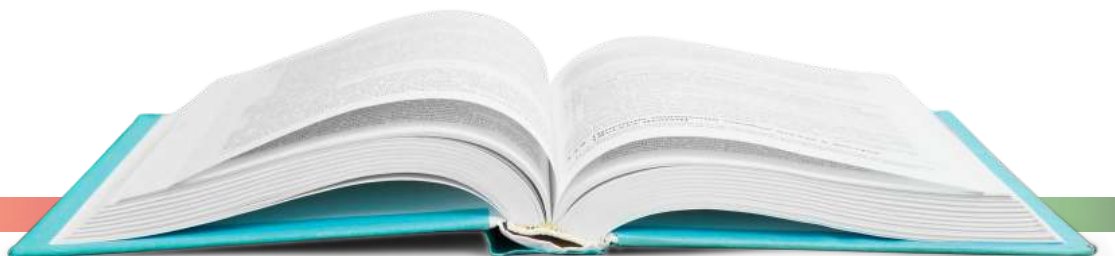
*"we will wrap our hearts careful as ribbons on pointe shoes."*

*Author's Note: "I hope to pave a more definitive path than then that was there for me but was just a little too hidden."*



# March

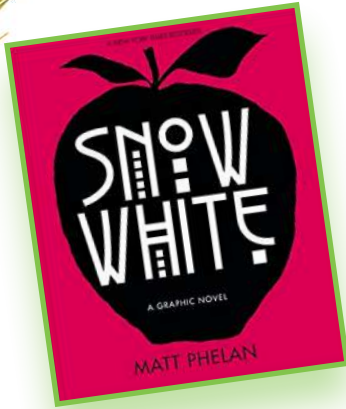
- ***Snow White: A Graphic Novel***  
by Matt Phelan
- ***The Only Woman in the Photo***  
by Kathleen Krull
- ***Lights, Camera, Alice!***  
by Mara Rockliff
- ***Becoming Bach***  
by Tom Leonard
- ***The Shape of the World: A Portrait of Frank Lloyd Wright***  
by K.L. Going
- ***One Time***  
by Sharon Creech





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Snow White: A Graphic Novel

Written and Illustrated by Matt Phelan

216 pages / Grades 4-8

Not your typical Snow White! This creative twist on a traditional favorite is set in New York City in the Roaring Twenties and will appeal to both readers and non-readers. Familiar characters are given a unique twist and create a book that reads like a film and few will see as a traditional fairy tale. History meets fantasy in a book that will allow you to delve into many layers of meaning.

### C

#### Context

Set in the **1920s**, the book brings strong recognition to the contrast between the glamour of the era and the darkness of the **Great Depression** and the **Stock Market Crash**. References are also made to Hooverville and the Rockefellers.

**Wordless picture books** as a genre. There is a great deal of **inferencing** throughout the novel and a reminder of the importance of really reading pictures.

Structure of graphic novels.

### A

#### Arts

Illustrations are a mix of **watercolor** and **pencil**, adding strong **atmospheric elements**. Aligns perfectly to the film noir feel of the book, with interesting minimal color **choices**. **Light and dark** become both literal and figurative features. The style lends itself to film noir, which also aligns to the way the book is structures.

The **history of Broadway and the arts** - from Ziegfeld and his costumes to the glitz of old Broadway to the treasured Macy's holiday windows.

### T

#### Themes

Perseverance

Good vs. Evil

Friendship and dedication

What motivates people to make certain choices?

Good always prevails

Light vs. Dark

### C

#### Create

Choose a historical era to place a different fairy tale in. Consider why this one worked so well in the 1920s. What makes a good fit with history and fairy tale? Can students align the fictional fairy tale characters with true historical characters?

Launch into a study of the style of Art Deco, using the cover as a launching point, along with the fashion in the book.

Study the history of Macy's Holiday windows. How have they aligned to world events and styles over the years?

### H

#### Heart Words

*"...her rise has been as stunning as it is meteoric"*

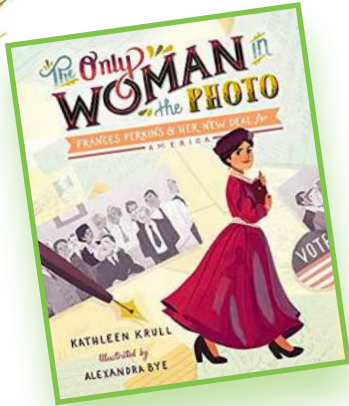
*"The city is beautiful too. It has it's own magic"*

A largely wordless graphic novel. Find an image, a box that speaks to you ahead of reading this with students. Construct your own story around it. Why does it speak to you?



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Only Woman in the Photo

Frances Perkins and Her New Deal for America

Written by Kathleen Krull / Illustrated by Alexandra Bye

48 pages / Grades 4-8

Few people likely know of Frances Perkins, the first woman to serve in a presidential cabinet and instrumental to The New Deal and creating safety for American Workers. A story rooted in a very black and white past, but told in a colorful way, shedding light and new perspective, while serving as inspiration to future change makers.

### C

#### Context

This book is a walk through history. Spanning and mentioning so many historical events from **1900 -1945**, including the **New Deal, FDR, Great Depression, Social Security**, and so much more.

### A

#### Arts

**Graphic arts:** Much of the book brings themes and words to life with lettering and graphic design. Discuss with students how layouts and artistic choices for words emphasize meaning.

The illustrations in the book lend themselves to the feel of original early animations, clearly **hand drawn illustration**. It is an interesting choice to pair fun and colorful with the darkness of such a historical time. Is this perhaps because of the color Frances herself brought to situations she was in?

### T

#### Themes

Grit and determination

Strength through quiet

Fighting for injustice

Making a difference and the power of doing so quietly

Finding your voice

Word choice

### C

#### Create

Find a famous historical photo from a given time period. Identify an unknown person in the photo, much the same way Frances was a quiet but strong presence. Research the person to find their true story, or create a story for them.

Frances fought for injustice and what she believed should be changed and made right. Align this to today's world events. What do you see happening that is worth fighting for?

Create a graphic design of a powerful personal phrase.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"It was sort of up to me."*

*"When someone opens a door you go forward."*

*"I felt the satisfaction of someone who told the truth."*

*"I had accomplished what I had come to do."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

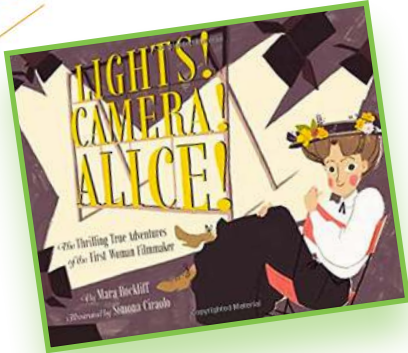
### Lights! Camera! Alice!

#### The Thrilling True Adventures of the First Woman Filmmaker

Written by Mara Rockcliff / Illustrated by Simona Ciraolo

60 pages / Grades K-4

It's time to meet Alice Guy-Blaché, a filmmaker who had ideas no one else had and new ways to look at stories. She developed her passion for stories and her work has become an inspiration to many though she remains largely unknown. Illustrations mirror the Alice's story and bring her work to life. Students of all ages will want to become filmmakers in their own right!



### C

#### Context

The **role of women** and their struggle to find a place in industry at the **turn of the 20th century in America**.

The **science and technology** behind the **development of filmmaking**.

**Segmenting stories** through text and pictures.

The power and importance of good **storytelling**.

### A

#### Arts

##### Film!

An opportunity to study the early roots of films, from silent films, to talking pictures to the development of movie theatres.

The book is also **designed** as an early film would be, with title pages and minimal words on those pages to set the stage. The **illustrations** also allow a glimpse into the simplicity of special effects of early films.

### T

#### Themes

Grit and determination

Being an outlier and forging your own path

Imagination can take you places

Stories are important

### C

#### Create

After studying about early filmmaking, connect the process to stop motion animation. Ask students to turn a fictional story they have written into a stop motion film.

Connect media arts by creating scene titles in the format of early films. This can be done in a movie, stop motion films, or illustrated versions of their own stories.

Ask students to think of a "special effect" kind of scene, and challenge them to film it using only the materials and resources they have.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Alice's movies came alive with color."*

*"Only the very best would do."*

*"She had one last story to tell."*

*"She couldn't wait to see what happened next."*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Becoming Bach

Written and Illustrated by Tom Leonard  
40 pages / K-3

An introduction to one of the world's greatest composers, through his life as a boy and the way he saw music. A lyrical connection to math and color, this book provides us a visual representation of music and the notion that some people are simply drawn to their passion, without even realizing it.



### C

#### Context

##### Patterns!

As a boy, Bach sees patterns everywhere.

Students will see patterns through his eyes and then branch out finding their own, particularly as they become stronger observers and truly look around them.

Attaching **feelings and words** to what we often may not, such as music. An access point to building a **vocabulary** and word bank of **adjectives**.

### A

#### Arts

The connections between **music** and **colors**. Play music for students and ask them to see it as well as hear it. What colors do they attach to it?

**Power of color:** Can students attach colors to patterns and feelings as often done in the illustration? What is their reasoning for their choices?

**Classical music** as a genre. Play Bach in the classroom throughout the day, drawing attention to patterns they notice in the music, the instruments they hear, the colors they see.

### T

#### Themes

Patterns are everywhere

Finding your path in life

Listening to your heart and inner voice

### C

#### Create

Use the last page as an inspiration, ask students what it means to "become a (their last name)" This could launch a family study, a creative or narrative writing piece.

All music, as Bach mentions, is comprised of just seven notes. Have students collect 7 items and see what they can create with it. How many different things can they create with the same 7 tools? Is your creation something you can communicate with as Bach did through his music?

### H

#### Heart Words

*"There was always music."*

*"I needed to say things but words weren't enough."*



# CATCH a spark!

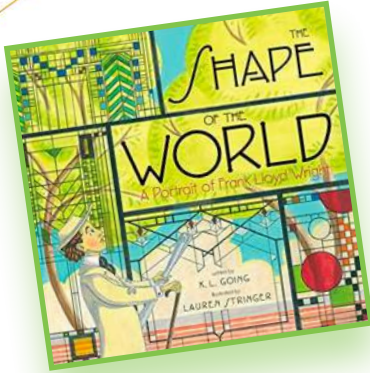
## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### The Shape of the World: A Portrait of Frank Lloyd Wright

Written by K.L. Going / Illustrated by Lauren Stringer

40 pages / K-5

An introduction to one of the America's greatest architects, told in the style of the man himself - in shapes. What presents itself as a simple picture book, told in simple sentences and words, actually presents many layers and launching points for students to begin working with and seeing shapes in new ways. Build observational and creative skills while introducing students to a one of a kind designer.



### C

#### Context

##### Geometry!

So many layers to connect to in the story - organic shapes, two-dimensional shapes, three dimensional shapes, congruency, patterns, lines, classification, symmetry.

**Architecture** as a career and the scientific aspects of it as well as the genius of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Attaching **feelings and adjectives** to the **mood** of shapes.

### A

#### Arts

Be sure to read the illustrator's note at the end to discover how she was influenced and inspired to create the illustrations. A true peek into a working **illustrator's process**.

The **art of architecture**. Look at it through an artistic eye. A perfect opportunity to pair photographs of the real buildings with the **elements of art** including form, space and line.

**Shapes as artistic tools** when looking closely at the illustrations.

### T

#### Themes

Visualization

Imagination

Finding and developing your passion.

### C

#### Create

Give students a transparent overlay and have them identify/trace all the shapes in a given illustration.

Analyze how shapes created illustrations and challenge them to do the same.

Go on a shape hunt, looking for "buried" shapes. Tie this into media arts and photography.

Using pages 5-6 as a guide, provide them with tangrams and see what they can create and build.

Analyze illustrations with photos of the real buildings as identified at the end.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"the shape of the world"*

*"When other architects chose walls, he chose windows."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### One Time

Written by Sharon Creech

272 pages / Grades 3-6

Eleven year old Gina has always been told she has an overactive imagination, which has always made her feel different. Enter a new boy in class, a new teacher and a new way of looking at things, and you have a recipe for a powerful story about acceptance and the possibilities that lie in front of everyone as they hope to find their niche in the world. A book with a strong but calm and quiet power that will leave students and teachers thoughtful and inspired.



### C

#### Context

The **process of writing** and discovering topics, finding a voice and inspiration in the simplest of ways.

The importance of collecting memories, images and stories, which can serve as connectors and access points to **creativity** and **critical thinking**.

**Recognizing and accepting differences** in everyone and that each person we connect with, in any way, leaves an imprint on us as we move forward.

### A

#### Arts

The power and acceptance of **imagination and visualization** is front and center throughout the book. As you are reading, ask students to consider times in their own lives they have been afraid to speak about their imagination, or a time when they viewed someone as "different" because of that person's imagination.

The **power and beauty of words and images** to serve as **inspiration** for your own **personal creativity**.

### T

#### Themes

Friendship

Acceptance

Finding your path and who you could be compared with who you are.

Being open to thinking in new ways and trying new things.

Observations - how do we really see things.

### C

#### Create

Using the chapters "First Lines", "Who Is It", "Swirls" and "Images" as inspiration, create a personal board of inspiration - words, images, favorite lines from books (like Heart Words) to use for your own creativity in writing.

Use the chapter "Fictional Trees" as a launching pad for doing the same activity - create a fictional family tree. Allow students their own thought process for doing this, but be sure they can explain their thinking.

### H

#### Heart Words

"Who are you?"  
"Who could you be?"

pg. 46 - "I think it matters how people look at you when they first see you, before they have a chance to rearrange their expression."

pg. 169 - "The silence was so noisy."

pg 182 - "When I was writing, I could follow the rhythms of my own mind..."

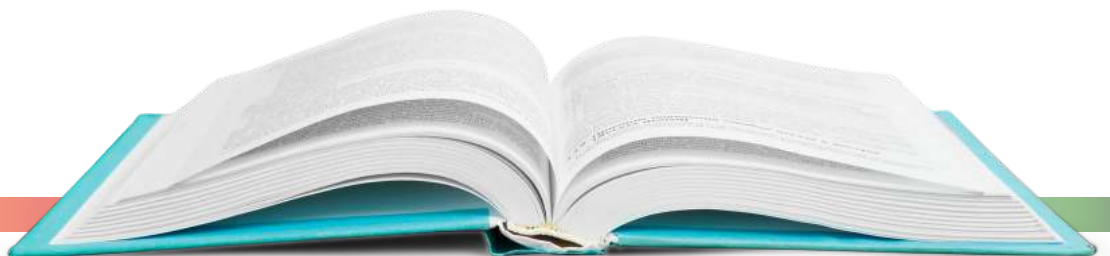
pg 247 - "I am learning that most of us have an intense need to communicate, but we do it in different ways."





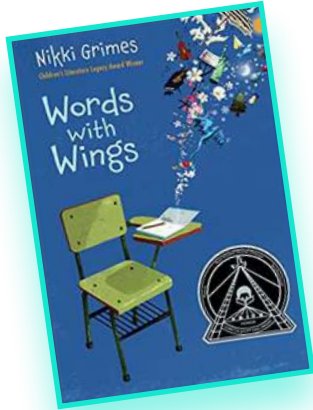
# April

- ***Words With Wings***  
by Nikki Grimes
- ***One Last Word***  
by Nikki Grimes
- ***Woke: A Young Poet's Call to Justice***  
by Mahogany L. Browne
- ***Mary Blair's Unique Flair: The Girl Who Became One of Disney's Legends***  
by Amy Novesky
- ***Pocket Full of Colors: The Magical World of Mary Blair, Disney Artist Extraordinaire***  
by Amy Guglielmo and Jaqueline Tourville
- ***Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats***  
by T.S. Eliot



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Words With Wings

by Nikki Grimes

83 pages / Grades 4-8

Gabby is a daydreamer. Say any word and her mind takes her to vivid, clear places. What started as an escape from reality has become her way of life. It hasn't always been a good thing for her, but when a special teacher connects with her through her imagination and the power of words, those daydreams open a door that give her confidence and will allow her to fly.

### C

#### Context

The entire story is told in **short verse**, with each page its own poem to advance the story.

**Word choice and intent.** This is a wonderful mentor text to discuss deliberate word choice and author's craft. Though the words are few on each page, we become connected and tied to characters in a very unique way, seeing deep inside of them.

**Author's craft** is front and center.

### A

#### Arts

The **art of language**. Not only is this a text that uses the power of words, it is a tool for discussing page **layout, font**, word placement.

**Visualization** and transferring artistic ideas to language.

The **art of the spoken word**. The short verse of each page aligns beautifully with the idea of spoken language. How can you orate the words to enhance meaning and interpretation?

### T

#### Themes

Loneliness

Survival

Friendship

Fragmented families

The power of words to both carry us away and comfort us

Imagination

Trust

### C

#### Create

Allow students to daydream and see what it inspires them to do! Give them creativity and freedom on this. Use the same concept Mr. Spicer gives his students on pg. 75.

Illustrate words, from the simple to the complex.

Ask students what their favorite words are and to think why. Does their reasoning have complex meaning? Challenge them to start really noticing words and thinking about them more deeply. Keep a word journal and collect them.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Whenever I described my daydreams it was like helping her see the rainbow"*

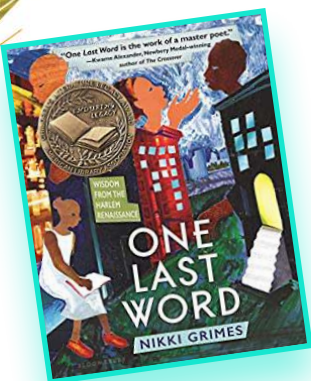
*"Words have wings that wake my daydreams."*

Due to the vivid writing in this book, the Heart Words are endless. Challenge students to find their own set of Heart Words in the book. What speaks the most to them and why?



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### One Last Word: Wisdom from the Harlem Renaissance

by Nikki Grimes

126 pages / Grades 5-8

A very special collection of poetry inspired from the Harlem Renaissance which showcase a unique method of writing poetry, "The Golden Shovel". Included with each new original poem is the poem which was the inspiration, from the world's master poets. With each poem is exceptional art from today's African American illustrators.

#### C

##### Context

The **Harlem Renaissance** in the early 20th century was considered to be a golden age of African American culture fostering masterful pieces of literature, music, performing arts and visual art.

**Golden Shovel Poetry** asks writers to take a line from another poem to create a new poem, using the words from the original as the last word of each line in the new poem. A challenge which fosters critical thinking and creativity! Directions are given on pg 6-7.

#### A

##### Arts

**Methods of illustration.** The illustrations throughout the book have a variety of styles, from media to pencil to collage and more. The 15 illustrators are all today's rising artists. Included in the book are artist biographies and a glimpse into their process.

A strong mentor text for discussing aligning illustration with text. Analyzing intent and the perspective of an audience/reader.

#### T

##### Themes

Defining ourselves.  
Grimes' original poems foster reflection, connection and conversation into important topics.

Setting a path in life

Survival

Positivity

Hope

Inspiration

Finding reasons to hope and dig deeply for strength inside ourselves

#### C

##### Create

Immerse students in poetry from the masters to upcoming poets of today. Ask students to collect their favorite lines. Challenge them to try the Golden Shovel method to create their own original piece.

After writing a poem, collaborate with a peer who will develop the art to go with it. Discuss the author's choices as well as the intended style of the artist. Foster collaborative conversations with students and showcase their final pairings in a gallery style show.

#### H

##### Heart Words

*"Life's stairway got dips, spirals."*

*"I'll just show you my heart."*

*"The past is a ladder that can help you keep climbing."*

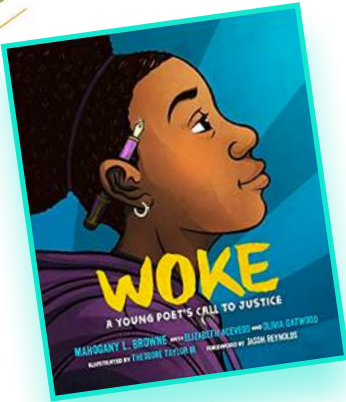
*"No matter what, don't let a few mean people shake you till your young dreams lose their feathers and fall."*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Woke: A Young Poet's Call to Justice

Written by Mahogany L. Browne, Illustrated by Theodore Taylor III

56 pages / Grades 5-8

New poems by women of color cover topics ranging from discrimination to speaking up and out, to activism and social justice. What may be heavy topics are paired with bright and targeted art, inspiring students to think about justice and expressing themselves.

#### C

##### Context

Relevant and important topics of the poems will foster deep and important conversations.

**Discrimination, racial justice, activism, determination, prejudice,** and so many more.

Using the **power of words** to share emotions, thoughts and feelings. Trace poets of the past to see how their work aligned with social happenings in the world at the time.

What it means to be "**woke**" and aware of the world around you.

#### A

##### Arts

The style and purpose of **digital art**. How does it differ in its interpretation and usage from other forms of art?

The **art of language**. How is word choice in poetry purposeful and targeted in style compared to other forms of writing. How does it lend itself to being a mode of powerful communication?

#### T

##### Themes

Being aware

Fighting for what you believe in

Asking and discussing hard questions

Perspective

Justice

Empathy

#### C

##### Create

Foster conversations among students in about the topics they are "woke" about.

Following these talks, give students time to reflect in silence and express themselves using art, whether that is in the form of visual art or using words as art. Allow the next conversations to happen from their own work. Pair students with similar topics together. Can they find ways to align their visions and their words to create unified works and personal calls to justice?

#### H

##### Heart Words

*"...we must nourish and care for one another if we are to grow."*

*"...the lighthouse shining a path to a brighter possibility and it is up to us to follow the sharp beams of truth..."*

*"Say the names of your heroes and then say your own name too."*

*"...rock the boat with love and hope..."*

*"A silence can sound like many things..."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Mary Blair's Unique Flair: The Girl Who Became One of the Disney Legends

Written by Amy Novesky / Illustrated by Brittney Lee

40 pages / Grades K-4

From her earliest days, Mary Blair loved color and wanted to do nothing but create art. She collected color and saw the world through an eye of imagination. Don't we all envision a turquoise moon? Follow her from being an imaginative child to becoming a Disney Legend, an illustrator who shaped a world of fantasy.

#### C

##### Context

A brief historical look into the world of **Walt Disney** and so many of the films we have all come to love. A chance to share with students original designs for animated movies such as Cinderella and Dumbo, as well as beloved rides like "It's a Small World".

**Geography** - Mary collected colors from around the world. Her adventures allow an introduction to the world and locating places on a map, while also acknowledging the culture and contribution of each place.

#### A

##### Arts

**Color** - Mary didn't just see basic colors, she saw shades and hues. Color vocabulary is very rich and robust.

**Cut paper illustrations.** The illustrator used Mary's unique style and blended it with cut paper illustrations. There is a glimpse into the process at the end of the book.

The art of **whimsical design**. Mary found a way to blend imagination and magic with reality and that paired hand in hand with the work of Walt Disney.

#### T

##### Themes

Being a dreamer

Imagination

Magic

Believing

Following a passion

Breaking the rules

#### C

##### Create

Build a color dictionary. Collect colors and examples of colors from their own journeys.

Create a new color and name it. Challenge students to create a color a day. How do they choose their name?

After collecting and creating colors, ask students to break the rules and color their worlds differently. Close their eyes and just imagine the real world with magic thrown in. For older students, follow up with a written artist statement.

#### H

##### Heart Words

"....and her favorite color - blanco - the color of a blank piece of paper, of possibility."

"She painted colors you weren't supposed to paint together."

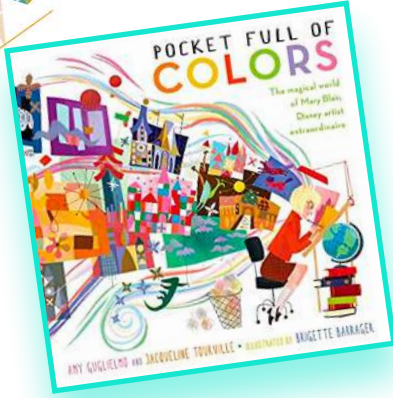
"It was a small world after all."

"...colorful happily ever afters."



# CATCH a spark!

Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



## Pocket Full of Colors: The Magical World of Mary Blair, Disney Artist Extraordinaire

Written by Amy Guglielmo and Jacqueline Tourville

Illustrated by Brigette Barrager

48 pages / Grades 2-5

Mary Blair lived her life in wild, vivid, imaginative colors which paved the way for her at a time when the job market was filled with men who saw the world in black and white - except for one.

### C

#### Context

Role of **women in the workforce**, particularly in the 1940s.

**Geography** - Mary's adventures foster using maps and globes, while also acknowledging the culture and contribution of each location.

The rise of **Walt Disney Studios** to becoming the institution we all know. Looking at perspective.

**Adjectives** are used richly throughout the story to help students visualize in the way Mary did.

### A

#### Arts

**Color names** - there is a treasure trove of color names throughout the book.

The **"rules" of color**. How do we traditionally see colors working together, what is a color palette in illustration and what happens when that changes?

The **Art of Walt Disney**. Use this as a launching point to dive into the unique world of imagination and illustration. Many will recognize Mary's work, but few will know her name.

### T

#### Themes

Perseverance

Trailblazing

Imagination

Whimsy

Breaking the rules

Standing strong to one's beliefs.

Finding a style

### C

#### Create

Collect colors and create your own. Let students go on a color word hunt in the book, many which they will not know. Ask them to decide what kind of color goes with each word and why. Then show the true colors.

Live and dream outside the lines. Be wild and vivid and look at the world differently. Take a picture of a place in your world, and then color it differently. A purple sky? Challenge students to not be random in their work, but to make deliberate, inspired choices.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Under a wide blue sky, on a red-dirt road, in a lemon-yellow house..."*

*"...she had new colors to collect."*

*"She kept those colors in her heart."*

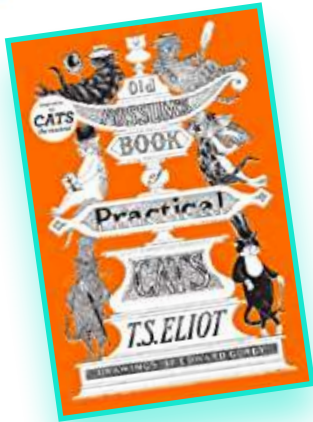
*"...a place for her colors to run and dance and play as they pleased."*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats

Written by T.S. Eliot, Illustrated by Edward Gorey  
56 pages / Grades 2-8

Originally written in the 1930s, this book of poetry served as the inspiration for Andrew Lloyd Weber's legendary musical, CATS. Incredibly rich in language, each poem creates rich characters with unique personalities, fostering visualization and creativity. A look into a classic piece of literature fostering imagination and whimsy.

#### C

##### Context

A rich look at **vocabulary**. Written in a style we don't often see anymore, Eliot blends rich vocabulary with unique word choice. A perfect mentor text to read slowly for meaning. Challenge students to consider why these poems work so well to foster imagination.

Each poem brings to life a cat with **strong character and strong personality traits**.

Students will learn much about each cat simply in one poem when considering tone author's craft.

The craft of **personification**.

#### A

##### Arts

What is **Musical Theatre** and how did Weber see this book lending itself so well to the craft? There are multiple videos easily accessible into the way the book was brought to life.

Using **dance** to create the artistry of personality. This piece of theatre is unique to musicals in that it is strictly told through dance and poetry. Why do these two art forms lend themselves so well to this piece?

#### T

##### Themes

Personality

Uniqueness

Artistry

Character

#### C

##### Create

Choose a "cat" to analyze deeply and then challenge students to bring that cat to life through music (tone/style), costume, dance style and voice. After doing so, share the artistic choices of that cat from the musical. Play the soundtrack to each poem and let the words come to life through song. (There are many videos of most of the cats on YouTube)

Using Eliot's style, have students create a poem about their own cat or dog, bringing them to life.

#### H

##### Heart Words

*"The naming of cats is a difficult matter...it isn't just one of your holiday games."*

After reading the various cats, students will naturally gravitate with one of the poems/cats. Within their chosen poem, have them identify their own heart words and explain their choice. It likely aligns with their reason for having that particular poems a favorite.

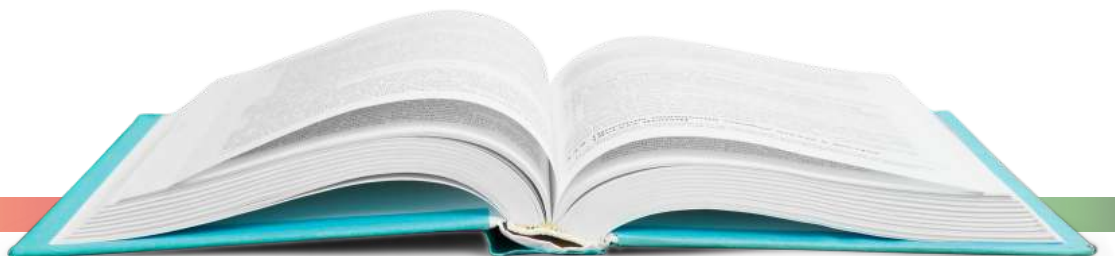
**Note:** For differentiation and younger readers, there are picture book versions of many of the single poems available. The titles of these books are the titles of the poems.





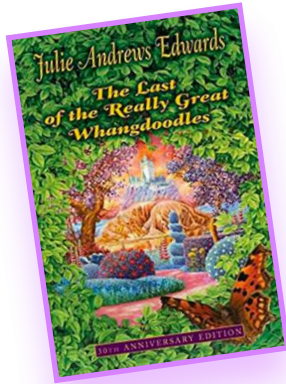
# May

- ***The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles***  
by Julie Andrews Edwards
- ***Mandy***  
by Julie Andrews Edwards
- ***The Very Fairy Princess***  
by Julie Andrews Edwards & Emma Walton Hamilton
- ***Simeon's Gift***  
by Julie Andrews Edwards & Emma Walton Hamilton
- ***The Great American Mousical***  
by Julie Andrews Edwards & Emma Walton Hamilton
- ***Little Bo: The Story of Bonnie Boadicea***  
by Julie Andrews Edwards



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles

Written by Julie Andrews Edwards

288 pages / Grades 2-7

A brilliant professor and three wonderful children search for the most extraordinary creature in the world, the Whangdoodle by venturing to Whangdoodleland while avoiding a scheming prime minister and relying on determination and skill. There is no better story for the imagination and to keep children rapt with attention. A whimsical story that all students - and teachers - will fall in love with while learning many life lessons.

#### C

##### Context

The book is very rich in **vocabulary**.

Superb mentor text for **descriptive writing** and **visualization**.

A strong consideration to **endangered animals** / species and the way we treat the environment.

Regular acknowledgement and reference to various areas of **science** including **genetics**

#### A

##### Arts

The book very purposefully does not have illustrations to foster a sense of imagination among readers.

There is regular reference to all the **artistic senses** - sight, sounds, touch, form, movement, energy, language, texture, and so many more that naturally come through the writing.

#### T

##### Themes

Power and importance of imagination

Open minds of children compared to adults

Determination

Courage / Bravery

Trust

#### C

##### Create

Use the vivid descriptions of each character and place to illustrate the book.

Take the Professor's challenge and really notice things. Keep a notebook of all the things you suddenly notice through both sight and sound.

Create your own "scrappy cap". When do you think you need to use it?

Make a Whangdoodleland Word Book for all the new words you learn.

*The book has SO many inspirations. Endless possibilities!*

#### H

##### Heart Words

*"Whatever man imagines is possible."*

*"There aren't many people in this world who really know how to look."*

*"Peace, love and a sense of fun."*

*"If you remain calm in the midst of great chaos, it is the surest guarantee that it will eventually subside."*

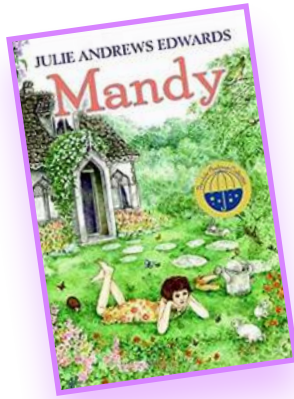
*"Miracles...do not just happen. A miracle is the achievement of the impossible..."*

*"If you truly wish to accomplish something, you should allow nothing to stop you, and chances are you'll succeed."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Mandy

Written by Julie Andrews Edwards

320 pages / Grades 2-7

Mandy is a ten-year old orphan who discovers an abandoned cottage beyond the walls of the orphanage. In her longing for a home of her own, she transforms this one and strives to keep it all for herself. A secret admirer and a series of events that happen one stormy night at the cottage will change her life forever. This is a delightful story about a desire for independence, yet also a longing for family and love.

### C

#### Context

The book is very rich in **vocabulary**.

Superb mentor text for **descriptive writing** and **visualization**.

**Plants**, gardening, the **power of nature**.

Looking at a greater world around you, as well as understanding one different from your own, in this case, **life as an orphan**.

**Point of view and perspective**. Have students place themselves in Mandy's shoes, along with the other characters as they arise.

### A

#### Arts

The **artistry and beauty of nature**.

This is explored in many different ways, from the visualization of the grounds where the cottage is, to the garden that Mandy creates and the descriptions of her flowers and colors.

**Words and language as art** and their descriptive qualities.

### T

#### Themes

Hope

Family

Love

Independence

Belonging

Home

Caretaking

### C

#### Create

Design a garden. Consider plant/flower choices including color, height and variety. After creating this independently, design a collaborative garden and plant it together.

Begin a collection, much like the shells that line the inside of the cottage (which was a real cottage as seen by the author).

How will you showcase your collection and create something bigger with it?

What is an area you could transform for a community project, like Mandy does with the cottage? Make a plan for this.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"...sometimes she felt as though she must surely break apart with so much going on inside her. It was as though she were searching for something, though what or where it was she could not say."*

*"...you're strong and not afraid to go looking for your life."*

*"She had found what she had been looking for her whole life."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Very Fairy Princess

Written by Julie Andrews Edwards & Emma Walton Hamilton  
32 pages / Grades K-2

Geraldine KNOWS she is a fairy princess and has all the reasons to prove it. Even though fairy princesses always bring their sparkle and energy, they still have dirty fingernails and scraped up knees! It is impossible not to smile as you follow Gerry through her day and all of the happiness she spreads with her vivid imagination and creative energy. This is the first in a large and delightful series.

## C

### Context

**Reading and writing with expression.**

**Finding joy** in the ordinary things.

A perfect book to help teach **character** and **personality traits**.

**Writer's craft** and **word choice**.

## A

### Arts

**Words and language as art** and their descriptive qualities.

Discuss the **artistic style** of the illustrations. Why do they work so well with the story?

What colors (besides pink) best go with Gerry? What instruments would you choose to match her?

## T

### Themes

Self-confidence

Independence

Personality

## C

### Create

All children have imagined they were someone else...a superhero perhaps?

Write the story of how they know they are that other person. What language and vocabulary can they use to back up their thinking? How would that other person approach everything in the course of the day?

Create a play with the Very Fairy Princess as the main character,. It may help to read more books in the series to get even more of a sense of her.

What would the musical score be like for this story? Why?

## H

### Heart Words

*"...a sparkly feeling of just knowing in my heart."*

*"You just have to let your sparkle out."*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Simeon's Gift

Written by Julie Andrews Edwards & Emma Walton Hamilton  
40 pages / Grades K-6

A beautiful fairy tale/fable that celebrates the beauty and sounds of nature and all the gifts it has to share as discovered by Simeon, a musician on a quest to prove his love and to better himself by exploring the world. Stunning language and illustrations make this book important and accessible to readers of all ages, as there will be different takeaways and messages depending on the age of the student. A book not to be missed!



### C

#### Context

Rich and vibrant **vocabulary**. The power of **word choice**.

**Evoking feeling** through language.

**Medieval** time period and the differences from today.

**Sounds of nature** and being aware of the world around you.

**Elements and terms of music** including harmony, melody, tone and so many more.

A [full teaching guide](#) is available from the authors.

### A

#### Arts

The artistry and illustrations of **Gennady Spirin**. A Russian watercolor artist, he brings worlds to life through stunning creative realism. His work in this book is said to be an "illuminated manuscript" and very renaissance in its style to match the story.

**Music** as a way to bring life to a story and to complete a vision. The story was performed with a symphony behind it, narrated by Ms. Andrews and is available on YouTube.

### T

#### Themes

Generosity

Creativity

Confidence and Self-Doubt

Kindness

Trust

Wonder

### C

#### Create

Write a melody to go with the story. Discuss your artist choices.

Go on a nature walk and gather a list of sounds you hear. Using technology, create a "natural symphony" comprised of your collected sounds. Be still and hear as much as you can.

Create your own song for others to sing. What will it be about? Who will it be a gift for? How would you collect new sounds and experiences to make part of your unique song? What color is your song?

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Simeon suddenly heard the entire soul in his head and in his heart."*

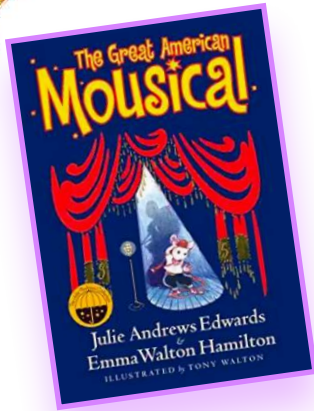
*"...a true and brave heart can find a way, if it will only trust in all the wonder's under God's canopy."*

Really look at the illustrations with awe and a sense of wonder. Which speaks to your heart the most. Why?



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Great American Mousical

Written by Julie Andrews Edwards & Emma Walton Hamilton  
160 pages / Grades 2-5

Beneath a famous theatre on Broadway in New York City, sits another theatre. The architect's model, long forgotten, has become a secret space and home for a band of theatre mice busily preparing for their own show. Their show is threatened when the main theatre is set to be demolished and their star disappears. A fast-paced fun tribute to the world of the theatre, with lovable characters and an adventure with many twists and turns.

### C

#### Context

A journey through **musical theatre history**. Characters are all named after theatre legends and characters.

**Rich and vibrant vocabulary**, including many references to Shakespeare's writing.

**Conservation of historic buildings** and city landmarks.

Story features that help readers such as character lists, chapter titles and glossaries.

There is an in-depth teacher guide available at [The Julie Andrews Collection](#).

### A

#### Arts

Along with weaving in theatre history, this is an incredible introduction to the world of **theatre** and all that goes in to **creating a show** from the actors to the designers and technician.

**Theatre terms and vocabulary** are used regularly, with a glossary of terms included at the end of the story. Be sure to take note of the chapter titles as well.

Be sure to read the interview with the authors with your students in the teacher guide cited here.

### T

#### Themes

Friendship

Determination in the face of adversity

Courage

Teamwork and Collaboration

Resourcefulness

Perseverance

Commitment

Wonder

### C

#### Create

Explore New York City with a map and track Adelaide's adventure. See if there was an easier route she could have taken.

For older students, challenge them to find as many musical Theatre references as they can. Start with the characters. Through research, see if they can discover who each character was named after, and perhaps why.

Put on a show! Use the mice as your inspiration.

Write a story that puts together many characters from different stories, as was done here.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"It is amazing what he pulled off tonight.... That a mouse, so small, could do something so monumental, for so many."*

*"A superior mouse is modest in speech but exceeds in actions."*

*"Big things are only achieved by attending to small beginnings."*



# CATCH a spark!

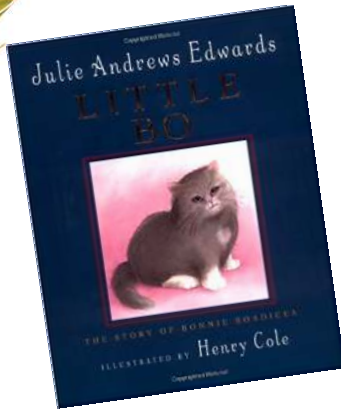
## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Little Bo: The Story of Bonnie Boadicea

Written by Julie Andrews Edwards

88 pages / Grades K-5

Little Bo is a shy little kitten, given a big, brave name and about to embark on a huge adventure across the sea. The first in a small series of four adventures, Little Bo will capture readers hearts. It has something for everyone - lovable kittens, a somewhat scary and exciting world, and gorgeous illustrations. A timeless story of friendship that is a perfect read-aloud for younger students.



### C

#### Context

The **responsibilities of owning a pet.**

**Weather and transportation** (mainly the seas).

**Fighting for what you believe in.**

The **meaning and story of names.**

When you read all four in the series, **geography** will be a natural point of conversation.

**Rich and vibrant vocabulary.**

### A

#### Arts

Gorgeous, large **illustrations** will capture the reader. The illustrator, Henry Cole, has done many children's books. Gather them together and engage students in a comparison.

Engage in a discussion about **choosing what to illustrate**. While there are many full page illustrations, the book also has many smaller ones of tiny but important moments in the story. Read one chapter of the story without showing the illustrations, and ask students to name one large illustration and two small they would create.

### T

#### Themes

Friendship

Courage

Family

Adventure

Life choices

### C

#### Create

Have students find and share the story of their own name from their parents.

Look at the titles of the other books in the series. Ask students to write a new adventure at a different place that Bo and Billy go to. Engage students in research about their chosen city to include accurate details.

Create an adventure for their own pet to take.

Have a class pet (stuffed animal) that goes home with a different student each night along with a journal to chart their adventures in each home.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Life is for having fun, learning things, and going on adventures. It keeps you on your paws."*

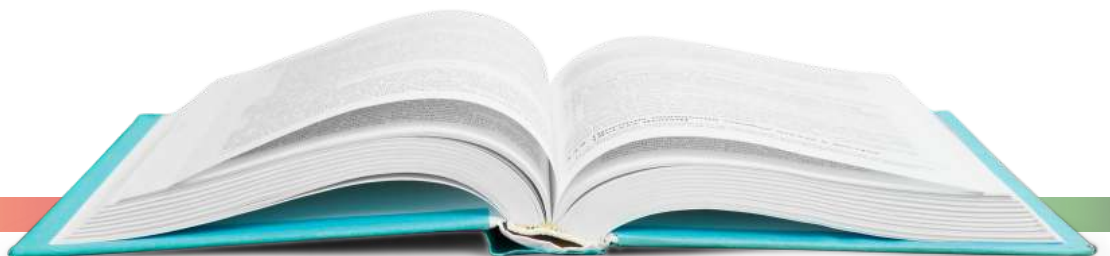
*"What have you done to me, gorgeous? I've never stood up to anyone as I did for you today."*

Ask students to look through the illustrations, and choose which one captures their heart more than words could. Why?



# June

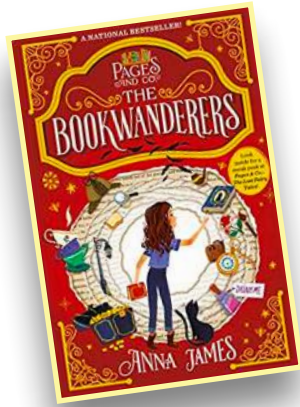
- ***The Bookwanderers***  
by Anna James
- ***Page by Paige***  
by Laura Lee Gullledge
- ***The Whisper***  
by Pamela Zagarenski
- ***One Girl***  
by Andrea Beatty
- ***The Librarian's Stories***  
by Lucy Falcone
- ***The Bookstore Cat***  
by Cylin Busby





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Bookwanderers

Written by Anna James, Illustrated by Paola Escobar  
304 pages / Grades 4-8

An adventure that will have readers of all ages hooked. Tilly Pages is an avid reader whose family owns a bookstore. When book characters start showing up un person and Tilly discovers she can wander into any story she chooses, things change dramatically. Secrets are divulged and the mystery of what happened to her mother many years ago is about to come front and center.

### C

#### Context

##### Characterization.

What makes a strong character in a book and why do some stand out more than others?

##### Personality Traits -

use a character to develop character traits consider which characters might be most like you.

Considering the idea that the present can change the past and vice-versa.

Considering a time period that you feel like you could change by going back to one specific moment.

### A

#### Arts

The power of **imagination** and how it can manifest in many different forms.

**Illustrations in chapter books.** A valuable discussion about this topic and how an illustrator chooses to illustrate certain moments.

What are the moments that are important to make visual? How does the illustrator's choice make a different experience for the reader? Are there different moments that should have been illustrated?

### T

#### Themes

Imagination

Character

Reading and books

Finding adventure

Rule following

### C

#### Create

Design your ideal bookshop. Bring in architectural elements and drawing to scale. Use the description of Pages & Co. in Chapter 1 as a guide.

Choose a book character with a strong personality. Write a scene in which you and that character interact. Perform the scene.

Choose 3 specific moments in the book you think should have been illustrated. Illustrate them and explain your choice.

Write a full length story of when you wander into a book.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"The books we love when we're growing up shape us in special ways. The characters in the books we read help us to decide who we want to be."*

*"...a bookshop is like a map of the world. There are infinite paths you can take through it and none of them are right or wrong."*

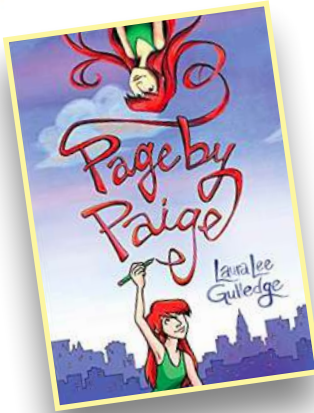
*"Our stories are how we will be remembered - so we've got to make sure they are worth telling."*

*"You must go and find adventure and shake it firmly by the hand as you set out toward the horizon together."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Page by Page

Written and Illustrated by Laura Lee Gulledge  
192 pages / Grades 6-8

Paige Turner has recently moved and is struggling to adjust to her new life, along with all the regular adolescent struggles. She uses the pages of her sketchbook to make sense of everything and does so in a moving and powerful way as she realizes the importance of opening up and letting people in. An important book for any teens struggling to find their place.

### C

#### Context

**Adolescence** and **Social Emotional** themes. From feeling alone, to making friends, to finding love, to opening up and allowing people in, to relationships with parents, there are so many layers of social emotional topics to discuss.

**Idioms** and **nuances in language**. A great piece to help students more deeply understand figurative phrases. Connect this with visual art and **analyzing** illustrations which align with word and phrase meanings.

### A

#### Arts

Using art as a form of **self-expression** and way to tap into understanding feelings. Give students an illustration without the words on the page and have them analyze the meaning.

#### Illustration vs. graphic design.

Illustrations combine with traditional layouts of graphic novels to make them feel like they are coming off the page.

The power of **grayscale in illustration** and how it deeply conveys meaning.

### T

#### Themes

Coming of age

Self-expression

Self-reflection

Self-acceptance

Friendship

Getting started - creativity

Power of the arts

Confidence

### C

#### Create

Give each student their own sketchbook to use a few times a week, focused on understanding themselves.

**"Drawing Telephone"**  
Paige describes the process within Rule #7. Use it with a class to connect writing, the arts, and lack of other.

Make an artistic license for yourself. Allow yourself the freedom to create and not limit yourself.

Create a message in a bottle tree. Place student expressions (art, writing, song lyrics, etc) in a tree for someone else who many need it.

### H

#### Heart Words

ALL of the "Rules" in the book, set up as chapter headings.

*"The inside of my head is a loud place."*

*"This world ain't about how big you are or how little. It's about how every little thing touches every other thing in creation."*

*"It's up to me to draw my own beanstalk if I want to climb anywhere."*

*"Artists are granted special permission to do things that don't make sense."*

*"My pencil can do anything."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Whisper

Written and Illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski  
40 pages / Grades K-4

A young girl is given a magical book by her teacher that she discovers is filled with only pictures. Thinking she has lost the words and the book is not able to be read, a whisper comes to her convincing her to create the words she cannot see. What follows is an adventure in imagination and creativity.

## C

### Context

The elements of **creating stories**.

Discuss beginnings, middles and ends as a necessity. Use the stories the main character creates as examples.

Telling stories in **wordless picture books**. Reading stories by reading pictures and combining it with your imagination.

**Aesop's Fables**. The end of this story blends in the trickster fox. How can students use their imagination when thinking about fables differently? Which fable character would be in their story?

## A

### Arts

Illustrations made with **layers**. How does the illustrator use layers? Consider transparency, color, layers of depth, color schemes and so much more.

Where do artists acquire their **inspiration**? The author biography on the jacket goes into great depth of her inspiration and process for creating her illustrations. Are there elements of the illustrations that carry over into each other?

## T

### Themes

Imagination

Language

Storytelling

Celebration of reading

## C

### Create

Give each student a copy of an illustration (from this book or another) and allow it to be the inspiration for a full story. Compare stories and see how different they are, even though they were all inspired from the same beginning.

Alter a fable so that the deception/trickery that happens in the original is altered to being an act of kindness.

Have students imagine the words of multiple books fell away. How would characters interact without the stories being written already for them. Perform a scene.

## H

### Heart Words

*"There are never any rules, rights or wrongs in imagining - imagining just is."*

*"Start with a few simple words and imagine from there. Remember: beginnings, middles and ends of stories can be imagined differently."*

*"She grew sleepy and drifted off into a dreamworld woven out of the pictures and the stories she had imagined."*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### One Girl

Written by Andrea Beatty / Illustrated by Dow Phumiruk  
40 pages / Grades K-4

A simple yet rich and complex story about the power of education and one girl who reads a book and lights a spark for her future and the future of girls everywhere. Lyrical words and stunning illustrations lift this special story about the ways books and education can create and inspire change, starting small and making a huge difference. Be sure to read the author's note.

### C

#### Context

The importance and necessity of **education**.  
**Knowledge** is precious and powerful.

**Inferencing.** The language in the book is simple, yet very lyrical. Older students will be able to read deeply to gain more meaning and depth.

The concept of **equity in education** around the world and factors that may prohibit children from getting an education.

The idea that any person at any age can **inspire change** and **empower** ourselves and others.

### A

#### Arts

**Symbolism** in illustration to emphasize and express meaning.

Using **light** to highlight and emphasize meaning as well as giving depth to an interpretation of art.

### T

#### Themes

Power and importance of education

Moving from darkness into light

Books as gateways to endless possibilities

Inspiring others

### C

#### Create

Particularly in the first illustrations, books and pencils are used as the building blocks of the future.

Challenge students to take one topic (like reading) and create an illustration using that object as the majority of their artwork.

Challenge students to share the story of a change maker in just a few words, lyrically as the author does, using inferencing to choose their words.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"One Girl.  
One spark."*

*"Tiny ember.  
Burning low."*

*"One Girl glowing.  
Shares her song."*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Librarian's Stories

Written by Lucy Falcone / Illustrated by Anna Wilson  
32 pages / Grades 2-5

A war-torn city whose library was destroyed is slowly given hope again when the librarian returns to the town square and simply sits and reads aloud. A story that reminds us of the comfort books can bring us, the hope and the inspiration. An interesting companion to the way many are feeling during the recent pandemic.

#### C

##### Context

The idea that **stories matter** providing a sense of connection and hope. A discussion starter with students about why we turn to books and stories in difficult times.

**Inferencing.** While the language of the story is simple, the layers of meaning are deep, with many moments only shown in illustration.

The concept of **hope** and finding little glimmers of light in dark times.

Using **real events** to inspire fiction.

#### A

##### Arts

**Symbolism** and **color** in illustration to emphasize and express meaning.

Using **light** and **color** to highlight and emphasize meaning as well as giving depth to an interpretation of art. How does color help draw the eye and punctuate meaning? Is it used on every page or only at certain times?

Using **words as illustration.**

#### T

##### Themes

Keeping hope

The power of stories

Words as comfort

Moving forward in dark times

#### C

##### Create

Align the story of the young child and the war he lives through with the war we face today during the pandemic. How can you alter the story to fit the different time period.

After writing the new story, how will you use symbolism and color to illustrate it?

Create a representation of any kind (visual, musical, written) of the story that gives you hope. Similarly, what is the story you would share with others to inspire and comfort them?

#### H

##### Heart Words

*"I close my eyes. Her words carry me back..."*

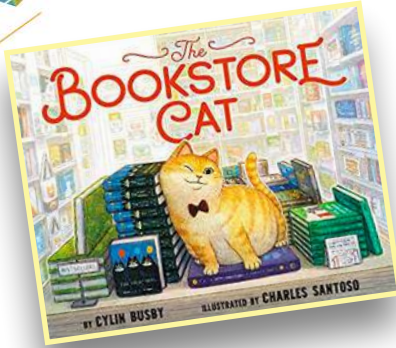
*"The librarian's stories make us laugh. They help us remember ... what life was like before."*

*"I want to help."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Bookstore Cat

Written by Cylin Busby / Illustrated by Charles Santos  
32 pages / Grades K-2

A playful and captivating cat captures young readers in a journey through a bookstore and the alphabet. Students will be challenged to think of words and gain new vocabulary through the course of the story. The book lends itself to being a mentor text in many ways.

## C

### Context

What **adjectives** are and why we use them.

**Character/ personality traits** and the ways in which one character can have multiple different traits.

**Alphabet books** that tell stories.

The idea of **bookstore cats**. There are multiple examples of real bookstore cats which are easily shared with students and found on through a google search or Instagram accounts.

## A

### Arts

**Illustrations** as a means of description and **context clues**.

**Developing a character** in illustration and using it again and again in different ways.

Using **colored pencils** as a medium and techniques for shading and emphasizing with them.

## T

### Themes

Personality

The alphabet

Language

## C

### Create

Take the words off a page and show students the letter of the word the picture is describing. Can they guess it based on visual context clues?

Create a different kind of shop cat (or dog). It could be based on their own pet.

Build an adjective dictionary.

Play charades with adjectives.

## H

### Heart Words

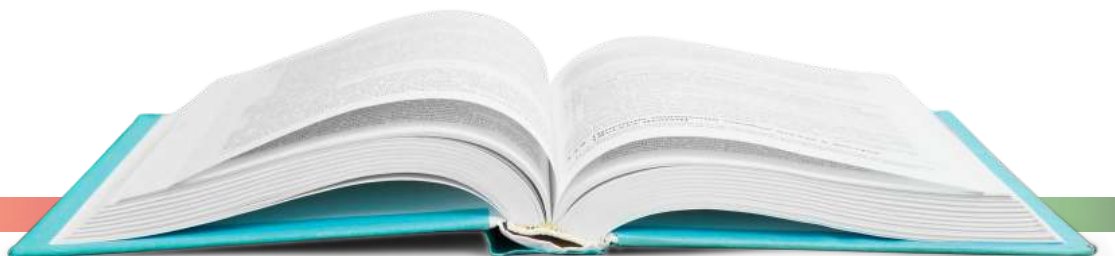
Find a "Heart Illustration". Due to the simplistic nature of the text, ask students to identify the illustration that captures their hearts the best. Why?

Which illustration do they think best aligns with the word being described?



# July

- ***The Boy Who Grew a Forest***  
by Sophia Gholz
- ***Flashlight***  
by Lizi Boyd
- ***Perfect Square***  
by Michael Hall
- ***Lift***  
by Minh Lê
- ***Blue Floats Away***  
by Travis Jonker
- ***The Little Blue Cottage***  
by Kelly Jordan



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Boy Who Grew a Forest

32 pages / Grades K-3

An inspiring, true story of Jadav, a young boy in India who saw what erosion and deforestation was doing to his island home in India. Determined to do something about it, Jadav began planting trees and ultimately grew a forest of over 1,300 trees.

#### C

##### Context

A multilayered look at life sciences including **life cycles, ecosystems, ecology, climate** (rain seasons and flooding) and **erosion**.

**Plant** life cycle and diversity of **wildlife** in given **regions**.

**Simplicity of language** and minimal word choice to add to the meaning of a story.

#### A

##### Arts

Using **light** and **color** in illustrations to **highlight** and add to the setting. The use of light and color adds to the warmth of the story and the climate of this particular location.

#### T

##### Themes

Determination

Making a difference

The power of one person

Starting small - the ripple effect.

#### C

##### Create

Think about what your community needs. It may not be a "forest" but how can you start small to "plant" what it needs and watch it grow. (i.e. "planting kindness,")

Create your own forest, imaginatively.

Think about what "seeds" you plant.

This may not be planting actual seeds. Be creative! A candy forest perhaps?

#### H

##### Heart Words

*"Each day he planted."*

*"Only by growing plants the earth will survive."*







# CATCH *a spark!*

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Flashlight

Written by Lizi Boyd

40 pages / Grades K-1

A delightful story told completely in images, students will explore light, shadow, night and nature while telling the story of a young child's imaginative adventure through the woods at nighttime. A book with multiple layers of context and ways to view, this will be a book all of your students, including struggling readers, will read again and again.

### C

#### Context

A fun and whimsical look at **light**. Light sources such as flashlights and the moon. Engage students in conversations as to whether things exist and happen if you can't see them.

**Telling stories with pictures.**

**Animals** (particularly nocturnal) and **habitats**.

**Visual poetry.**

### A

#### Arts

Using **layers** and **cutouts** in illustration.

**Positive and negative space.**

**Color vs. black and white.**

**Light and dark**

### T

#### Themes

Wonder

Imagination

Adventure

Magic in darkness

### C

#### Create

Create a "darkroom" with hidden treasure for your students. This could be as simple as play scenes set up with toys, new pictures to find. Provide them flashlights to discover. Think about what happens in your classroom at nighttime.

Encourage students to take a picture at nighttime outside in their yard, with a flashlight illuminating one area. Encourage them to tell the story of that scene.

### H

#### Heart Words

Find a moment for students to narrate their own Heart Words, as this is a wordless book. Which picture speaks the most to them?



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Perfect Square

Written and Illustrated by Michael Hall  
40 pages / Grades K-1

Be sure you have lots of colored paper available when you read this book about all the things you can do with a square! Students will want to try everything for themselves as they learn new techniques for art and working with paper, while connecting to math and various artistic tools in this fun, playful book that blends fact with story.

### C

#### Context

A fun and playful look at **geometry**. Think big! Talk about so much more than squares - corners, length, width, and rectangles. A great book to introduce **tangrams**.

#### Colors

#### Days of the Week

What does **perfect** mean?

**Visualization and imagination** - how can one thing, such as a square, be seen in multiple ways?

**Repurposing and reimagining**.

### A

#### Arts

**Techniques** for working with **paper** include hole punching, shredding, tearing, cutting, ripping, wrinkling.

**Colors** - encourage students to think about why certain colors were chosen with certain features.

### T

#### Themes

Transformation

Being "perfect"

Reimagining and repurposing.

### C

#### Create

Give students a shape each day and let them repurpose it, like the events of the book. Allow them to add a *little* more to the new creation, and to write a sentence about it. Give them as little guidance as possible to foster their own imagination and creativity.

Challenge students to find shapes repurposed in their surroundings.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"...it waited to see what would happen."*

*".....it babbled and giggled and clapped."*

After reading the book and allowing students to reimagine a new creation, have them write a sentence of their own heart words about it.



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Lift

Written by Minh Lê, Illustrated by Dan Santat  
56 pages / Grades K-2

A wordless picture book (beginning graphic novel) that sparks imagination and celebrates the power of possibility as a young girl attempts an escape and exploration on her own to gain independence, but ultimately discovers the importance of family and the people who are most important to you.

### C

#### Context

**Sibling rivalry** and the **importance of family**.

**Making inferences.**

The story has a great deal of emotion and character, without being discussed directly. A great book to begin talking about what inferences are and **justifying thinking**.

**Literal and figurative meanings** of words.

(i.e. the idea of a physical lift, but also an emotional lift)

**Fantasy** as a **genre**

### A

#### Arts

What are **graphic novels**? This beginning graphic novel will introduce students to the craft, and how they are written, fostering conversations about **layout, storyboarding, and telling stories through pictures**.

### T

#### Themes

Independence

Family

Coming home

Giving a lift

### C

#### Create

Work in teams to create a wordless story, which could be done in illustration or through photography for younger learners.

Connect to fictional writing by having students create their own story of the adventure their elevator would take them on and including what it is that brings them back, much like the character in the story.

### H

#### Heart Words

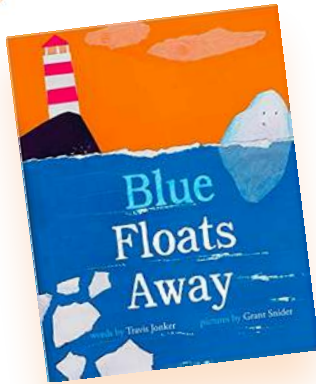
*"After all, everyone can use a lift sometimes."*

As there are few words in this story ask students to choose their favorite panel or their "heart art" and explain their choice.



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Blue Floats Away

Written by Travis Jonker, Illustrated by Grant Snider  
40 pages / Grades K-2

This wonderful picture book brings so many opportunities with it! Follow the journey of Little Blue, an iceberg who lives at the North Pole until he breaks away and experiences so many new things, which ultimately transforms him. A wonderfully delightful story about the Water Cycle, also layering in many artistic conversations and the idea of growing up.

### C

#### Context

##### **Water cycle.**

Reinforce and teach the steps of the water cycle in a creative way that will stick with your students.

##### **Growing up.**

Little Blue's journey will start conversations about wanting to grow and be independent, while still missing and keeping hold of family.

**Being open to new experiences,** thinking positively and embracing change.

### A

#### Arts

What are **layers** in illustration?

**Creating texture** when using paper. How can torn edges and shape enhance a mood or feeling? What about wrinkles, or a few additions of color or pencil.

Choosing a **color palette** to focus and connect artistic work.

**Opaque** and **transparent** papers.

Using a minimalistic illustration style to reach viewers

### T

#### Themes

Growing up

Water cycle

Perspective

Positive attitude

Transformation

### C

#### Create

Choose an illustration. Work together to decide how it was created using only paper, scissors and one crayon. Try to recreate it and then make your won.

Write the next chapter of Little Blue's story, using both writing style and characterization and scientific vocabulary for the water cycle. What happens to him next and how?

Engage in a discussion - how would Blue's journey have been different if he hadn't been open to new things?

### H

#### Heart Words

*"After days of seeing nothing, Blue began to see things. New things."*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Little Blue Cottage

Written by Kelly Jordan, Illustrated by Jessica Courtney-Tickle  
32 pages / Grades K-3

A heartwarming story, this charming picture book will have us all fondly remembering our own favorite places we visited in childhood. Told from the point of view of a summer cottage by the sea, we follow the journey of the house who deals with embracing change and cherishing family. This is a book you will read again and again...and smile as you escape to visit the little blue cottage.

### C

#### Context

Told from the point of view of the cottage, a perfect lead-in to teaching **personification** and **perspective**.

**Purposeful, targeted use of repetitive text.**

**Cherishing traditions and family memories** through time, whether you are a child or an adult.

**Lyrical text** as a method to creating feeling in readers.

**Tone of text**, as this book as a natural calming, nostalgic, sweet feel to it.

### A

#### Arts

Illustration as a way to build **mood** and **tone** in stories.

**Shading and color choice** when creating illustrations to build feeling and texture.

**Combining techniques** to create depth in illustration. While there is an incredibly cohesive feel in these illustrations, upon closer look, there is clearly a focused set of techniques being used.

### T

#### Themes

Growing up

Summer memories

Family traditions

Favorite places as a grounding force in life

Simple pleasures

The more things change the more they stay the same.

### C

#### Create

Write the story of your own favorite place, through the eyes of an object that is always there. (A treehouse, a special room, a grandparent's house, etc)

Experiment with combining two different artistic techniques to create depth and focus in an original illustration. Be selective in how you use them.

Set the story to music. What would you have playing in the background as you read it aloud, and why? Does the music change?

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Nose to window, the girl stared at the waves and whispered, "You are my favorite place."*

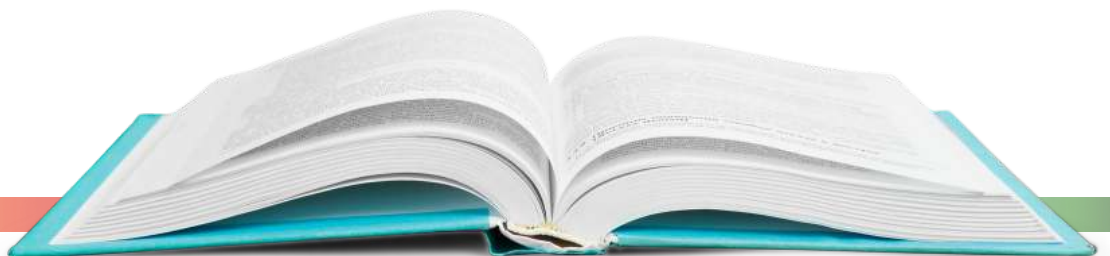
*"Gray dolphins dove and white seagulls sang. Bright-colored boats bounced over the bay."*

*"Year after year, and night after day - the girl and the cottage.....they grew up together from summer to summer."*



# August

- ***The One Thing You'd Save***  
by Linda Sue Park
- ***The Rembrandt Conspiracy***  
by Deron Hicks
- ***Many Points of Me***  
by Caroline Gertler
- ***Forever Neverland***  
by Susan Adrian
- **Henry and the Chalk Dragon**  
by Jennifer Trafton
- **The Last Last-Day-Of-Summer**  
by Lamar Giles



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The One Thing You'd Save

Written by Linda Sue Park

72 pages / Grades 3 - 6

Newbery Award winner Linda Sue Park brings us a quiet, simple but powerful story told through a form of Korean poetry. In just 72 short pages, we meet a middle school class and get to know them well. An engaging piece of literature that captures middle schoolers well as they grapple with a teacher's question: What is the one thing you would save if your house was on fire?

#### C

##### Context

**Sijo** - a form of Korean poetry that has three lines of thirteen to seventeen syllables.

**Socio-emotional decisions.** How do we make them and what drives the choices.

**What is valuable?**

**Purposeful word choice** in developing characters and emotion.

**Author style and craft.** How do authors give us insight into characters by showing us, not telling us details. How do we **infer** knowledge about characters?

#### A

##### Arts

**Point of view, layout, and focus in illustration.** How does choice in editing come into play when depicting illustrations? How can you give meaning to illustration through purposeful layouts and design?

**Pencil drawing** - gaining depth, layers and color using grayscale.

#### T

##### Themes

Emotions

Value

Memories

What is important? /  
What really matters?

#### C

##### Create

Infer while reading to discover the names and backgrounds of each character. Use the clues given by the author to choose a character and develop their backstories. Write a short story about your chosen character.

Create a pencil drawing that uses layout and focus to direct audience attention in gaining meaning. How can you develop depth and meaning using just one pencil?

Debate what is really important and what matters. Why do we place value on material items?

#### H

##### Heart Words

*"...it's from the day that Pete Alonso looked at me, right at my eyes, and that's not on ink or paper, it's for real, so it can't ever fade."*

*"I don't need the grade books to remember you... because you're unforgettable. Don't you ever forget that."*

From the author's note: *"Using old forms in new ways is how poetry continually renews itself, and the world."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Rembrandt Conspiracy

Written by Deron R. Hicks

206 pages / Grades 3-6

Art's father works at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington DC and comes across information that leads him to believe a huge heist is about to take place at the museum. After convincing his best friend Camille that it is real, the two team up to stop a theft that could involve billions of dollars of art. A fast paced mystery filled with twists, turns and art history which uses QR codes to introduce students to the art mentioned in the story.

### C

#### Context

**Mysteries** as a genre. A great way to teach being observant readers and gathering clues, along with plot twists and elaboration.

**QR codes** as an engagement tool and ways to use them.

The infamous **Gardner Museum Theft** in 1990. Much is tied in to this real life, still unsolved event which will grab readers to know this could truly (and did!) happen.

### A

#### Arts

**Art History.** The book is filled with mentions of the masters of art. (Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Cassatt, and so many more. The author cleverly uses QR codes throughout the book to allow students to instantly view the art spoken of throughout the book.

**Art Museums.** An in-depth look at art preservation, galleries, displays and artists. In particular, the National Portrait Gallery is explored in-depth, including maps of the layout to all students to visualize what is happening.

### T

#### Themes

Friendship

Art preservation

Confidence

Honesty

### C

#### Create

Engage students in a virtual or real session around art preservation.

Students choose one piece of art from the [National Portrait Gallery](#) and write a mystery around it.

Take an online tour of the [National Portrait Gallery](#), particularly the areas mentioned in the book.

Students create their own "Millennium Exhibition" as in the book, working together to choose which art pieces should be represented and why.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"He understood the power of art."*

*"And so he lingered in the shadows for another day. "*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Many Points of Me

Written by Caroline Gertler

347 pages / Grades 4-8

Georgia's late father is a famous artist who passed away before he could finish the last painting in his most famous series. Georgia is unsure about so much in her life, but when she discovers a sketch her father left behind that may have been meant as the final painting, she sets out to discover the truth, and along the way discovers a great deal about friendships and herself.

### C

#### Context

##### Family and friendship dynamics.

Looking at how friendships ebb and flow, and the many layers of emotion that are grounded in families.

**Personalities and alter egos** - the real you compared to the you that you wish was seen by other people.

In this case, it is represented as their superhero selves.

### A

#### Arts

**Abstract art** as a style, along with different artists and meanings behind abstract art.

Connecting **colors, emotions** and **personality**.

[The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) in New York City.

**Automatic Drawing** - letting your hand draw without looking at the paper for a set time, then discovering what is there in the art.

**Color names and shades** - hue and values

### T

#### Themes

Family

Loss / Grief

Friendship

The power of art

Creativity

Home

### C

#### Create

Create a list of the people around you that you know well and assign them colors. What color do you see when you think of them? Why? Create a piece of abstract art that represents the people you have chosen.

Create an abstract self-portrait. This could take so many different forms and shapes, as Georgia's did.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Self-portrait is about making a visual representation of yourself. Sometimes you need to skew things on the outside in order to show how shattered you feel inside."*

*"Be the peace. As an artist, and a person."*

*"All the different parts of me have been put back together in a different way."*

*"Maybe all I've learner is that the points of me don't always connect, but at least there's a glimmer of something - a vision of who I can become."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Forever Neverland

Written by Susan Adrian

272 pages / Grades 2 (read-aloud) - 7

Clover and Fergus, direct descendent of Peter Pan's Wendy, head to Neverland for their own adventure with Peter, Fergus is autistic, and Clover is his nervous caring sister, but they each discover they have different voices in Neverland. A modern sequel to the beloved classic, filled with the same sense of adventure and familiar characters, while introducing us to many new ones.

### C

#### Context

**Greek mythology.** A fan of Greek Myths, Fergus brings many of them to life in the story, and considers whether Peter himself may be a relative of the Greek gods.

A look at **autism**, through the eyes of a boy with autism and a girl who is caring for him.

Changing **narrative voices.** Each chapter changes between Clover and Fergus, two very different characters. How can students tell they have changed characters without being told?

### A

#### Arts

Classic literature and its **visual representations.** How do we visualize Neverland and why? How can we use descriptive language to picture new places.

### T

#### Themes

Acceptance

Bravery

Finding your voice

Siblings

Adventure

### C

#### Create

Illustrate a descriptive scenic passage of the story (such as p. 53 or pg. 58 when they arrive in Neverland).

Have everyone illustrate and do not share their work until the end. Look at the similarities and differences.

Create your own Neverland adventure. Knowing people bring their own villains to their adventure and there are different foes for different people, who are the villains you unknowingly bring with you, and why? How do you defeat them?

### H

#### Heart Words

*"You cannot doubt while you are flying. You must think happy thoughts. Believe."*

*"They wanted me to come."*

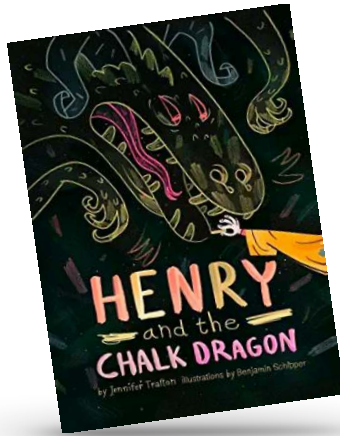
*"I feel like maybe I could fly right now even without pixie dust."*





# CATCH *a spark!*

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Henry and the Chalk Dragon

Written by Jennifer Trafton / Illustrated by Benjamin Schipper

240 pages / Grades 1- 4

Henry has more than a wild imagination. He escapes into art and draws ALL the time. When his drawing come to life, adventure follows that no one sees coming. This highly entertaining story will be a fabulous read-aloud and have your students wanting their artwork to come alive like Henry's!

#### C

##### Context

**Similes and metaphors.** Not only are the children in the story taught about these terms, the book is filled with them!

**Classic literature.** Throughout the book, nods are given to beloved characters and poems, such as *The Jabberwocky*, *Wizard of Oz*, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, and so many more. A full list is found in the back of the book.

**Keeping imagination.** Many of the adults in the book are challenged to think differently and remember when they could.

#### A

##### Arts

**Chalk** as an artistic medium. What are the challenges and benefits of using it?

**The artistic process** and journey into confidence of sharing your art.

**Telling story through pictures.**

#### T

##### Themes

Imagination

Bravery / Courage

Confidence

Friendship

Trust

Bullying.

#### C

##### Create

Create a panel in or a section of your classroom which is chalkboard paint. Allow students to create on their whims.

Create a collaborative piece of art, with little to no guidance, as happens towards the end of the book.

Give every student a plain notebook to fill with their drawings, and then to write new adventures based on their drawings.

#### H

##### Heart Words

*"I don't need glasses!  
I see more than  
everyone else!"*

*"It is a dangerous  
thing to open a door.  
But that, after all, is  
the only way to find  
an adventure."*

*"You have to be  
brave to be an artist."*

*"Once you make  
something, a picture,  
or a story, or a song,  
or an invention, or  
even a delicious meal,  
it isn't yours anymore.  
It has a life."*

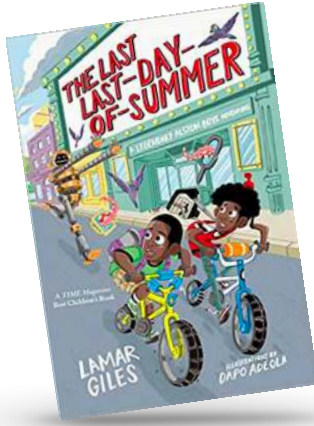
*"Let your imagination  
be as wild as the  
spinning universe. Let  
it be beautiful and  
adventurous and even  
terrifying. Let it go  
free."*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Last Last-Day-Of-Summer

Written by Lamar Giles

320 pages / Grades 4-6 (independent) / Grades 2+ as a read-aloud.

This novel is pure imaginative fun, filled with figurative language. Otto and Sheed are cousins who want to have one last adventure before school starts tomorrow, and they sure get it! We have all said the phrase, "If only we could stop time". What if you could? When the boys find a camera that does just that, chaos follows!

## C

### Context

**Figurative Language** and plays on words (such as Crunch Time, Second Guess, Father Time, etc)

The concept of **missed opportunities**: recognizing them as well as considering their consequences.

How the past effects the future, and how one might want to change the past if they could.

**Keeping track of characters** as you are reading.

**Newton's Laws of Motion**

## A

### Arts

Tie in using **frames of a movie**. Consider how people and objects literally freeze in many poses and movements in each frame.

**Movement**. How do you slow it down or stop it, how it can speed up, how it connects to everyday life. Have students really stop to think about their movements. They likely aren't conscious of them.

**Photography** - focus, setting the picture, what is captured.

## T

### Themes

Time

Family/Friendship

Adventure

Loyalty

Opportunities

Risks

Bravery

## C

### Create

Randomly "Freeze" students. They must fret in an exact position at the time you call it. How long can they keep their pose? Why or why not. What happens to your body as you try to hold positions? Consider this in relation to the events of the book.

What moment of your life would you photograph as "the best time of your life" and to freeze time at that moment. Is that something you would really want?

## H

### Heart Words

*"You can't be brave without fear."*

*"...humans deciding what to do with time. With opportunity. How often do you think they make the right decisions?"*

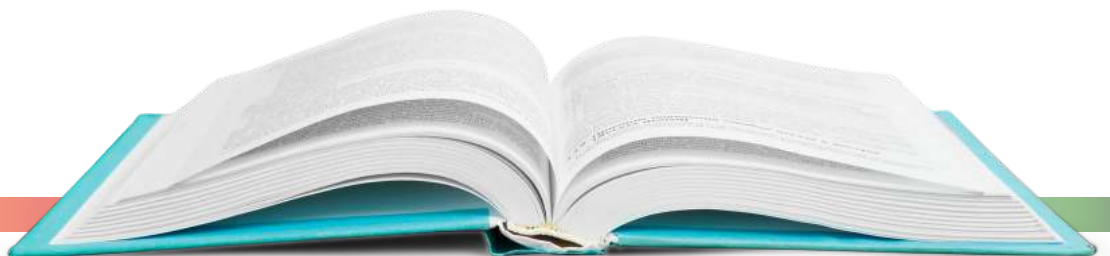
*"There will always be...people who want to tell us no, and can't, and shouldn't."*





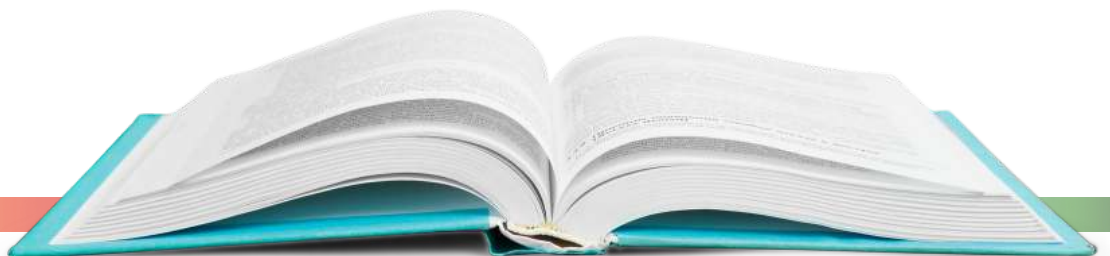
# September

- ***The Chance to Fly***  
by Ali Stroker
- ***Fearless***  
by Mandy Gonzalez
- ***Better Nate Than Never***  
by Tim Federle
- ***Hattie in the Spotlight***  
by Poppy Green
- ***Lights on Broadway***  
by Harriet Ziefert
- ***Feed Your Mind: A Story of August Wilson***  
by Jen Bryant



# September

- ***The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles***  
by Ali Stroker
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by Jen Bryant



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Chance to Fly

Written by Ali Stroker and Stacy Davidowitz

272 pages / Grades 5-8

A middle-school girl who is obsessed with theatre defies all expectations in this heartwarming story about friendship, gain independence and following your heart. Readers will root for Natalie, who steps up and takes charge to put on a show when everyone else is ready to give up. A story for anyone, but especially for musical theatre lovers, you will be reminded that we all are unlimited in what we can do, despite being differently abled.

### C

#### Context

**Representation** - of cultures and abilities.  
There is nothing anyone can't do when determined.

**Figurative language.**  
The book is filled with musical theatre references that lend themselves to real life - such as "defying gravity, and even in the chapter titles, which all are a line from a song, but perfectly adhere to the theme of the chapter.

**Theme** - how does one story give us important, big ideas? What can we learn from a fictional story and characters?

### A

#### Arts

A chronicle of **musical theatre** references and vocabulary, from putting on a show to many, many show references and plays on words.

**Dance** being a representation of feeling, no matter one's ability.

**Theatre** as representative and the role it plays in life.

### T

#### Themes

Overcoming obstacles

Representation

Being different is more than ok

Friendship

Following your passion

Gaining independence

Determination

Putting yourself in someone else's shoes

Everyone is fighting a battle whether you are aware of it or not.

### C

#### Create

Using the scene where Hudson puts himself in Nat's wheelchair, have students consider how they would follow their passion if limited. Ask them to identify their passion, and reinvent the way they would do it if thrown a challenge, as Nat has been.

How have you defied gravity? Ask students to consider how they have overcome odds in their own lives to achieve a dream. How have they been challenged, and how did they push themselves through? Allow them to create a representation.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"I don't want to be the next anyone...I want people to be the next me."*

*"I just feel like theater is the one place where we can try on different roles and show the world that there's more to us than what people might see."*

*"....telling my story reminds me of what I've been through..."*

*"No matter who you are and what challenges you face, remember: Creativity is Key. You can break boundaries. You can burst through boxes."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Fearless

Written by Mandy Gonzalez

240 pages / Grades 4-8

Twelve year old Monica arrives in NYC about to achieve her dream of a role in a Broadway show. However, rumors of a curse on the theatre begin to appear to not be rumors, and threaten that the show may not even open. It is up to Monica, her new friends and castmates, as well as some theatre magic and superstition to break the curse and hopefully save the show, and their dreams.

### C

#### Context

**Folklore and family history** along with tradition and story.

**Superstition** and the role they play in history - whether theatrical history or family history.

Using **suspense** and **mystery** as an author's craft / studying the genre.

**Realistic fiction**

### A

#### Arts

**Theatre history** - Broadway theatres (and all theatres) have rich, storied pasts that are fascinating to discover as evidenced in the novel.

**Songwriting** and the power of word choice.

**Using your voice** both musically and figuratively.

**Powerful women of Broadway** - Ethel Merman is a central name, as should be the author, a powerful Broadway voice herself.

**Theatrical superstitions**

### T

#### Themes

Being fearless

Finding your voice

Discovery

Being yourself

### C

#### Create

Research the history and theatrical lore of Broadway theatres, or a cultural building in your own city.

Use the picture book, *A is for Audra* (by John Robert Allman) to learn about and discover the powerful leading ladies of Broadway.

Write a mystery based in a cultural, artistic building (either invented or real) grounded in fact.

Use the author's song, *Fearless* (and other songs on the album) as a parallel text for meaning. Thought not written together, they all align perfectly

### H

#### Heart Words

*"The world has been looking for you."*

*"The theatre is a place where stories are told and released into the world and given life."*

*"Never be good enough."*

*"Learn from each other. Trust each other."*

*"We have to conquer our fears together."*

*"Thought I'd lost my voice, but it was here all along, just waiting for me to discover my song"*

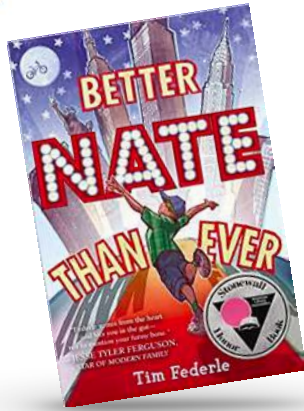
*"When darkness comes, hold it, love it, lean to understand it."*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Better Nate Than Ever

Written by Tim Federle  
275 pages / Grades 6-8

8th grader Nate has big dreams but is stuck in the small town of Jankburg. With the help of his best friend and alibi Libby, Nate makes an escape to New York City, to audition for 'E.T. the Musical'. Things don't go as planned, and an adventure in the city ensues which allows Nate to feel more at home and comfortable in his own skin than he ever has before. Readers will fall in love with Nate and become his biggest cheerleaders, despite a true cliffhanger ending!

### C

#### Context

##### Characterization.

Nate is not only realistic, but embodies humor, solicits empathy, and finds readers in his corner.

##### Growing up and Identity

**Bullying** - being bullied, how to handle it and what the often unseen effects of it can be.

How to **hook readers** as a writer. The book is a mentor text for writing with humor and wit, plot twists and suspense.

### A

#### Arts

**Casting process** of musical theatre. The book gives readers a nice inside view of what the "cattle call" audition and casting process can be like.

### T

#### Themes

Being and feeling different

Independence

Decisions and Consequences

Friendship

Family

Determination

Confidence

Effects of bullying

Acceptance

### C

#### Create

Ask students to choose a city and have them research it. (Even better if it's a city they know and have been to) Write an adventure of a kid escaping to that city...and making it! Another text to use with this as a mentor is *From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E Frankweiler*.

Nate is asked what his special skills are. Ask students theirs, have them demonstrate, and discuss how these skills can and will help them in life.

Who is your co-star? Create a scenario for you and your co-star.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"There's nothing to be scared of....You're small and scrappy and can get out of any situation the world throws at you."*

*"All of this, all of this adventure and novelty, it would be nothing without someone to share it with."*

*"You just can't have a scene without a co-star"*



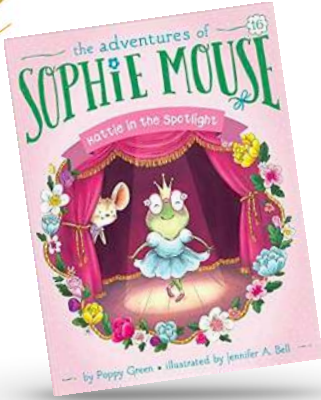
# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Hattie in the Spotlight

Written by Poppy Green

118 pages / Grades K-3



What could be better than lovable animal characters and friendship? Throw in the theatre. Hattie Frog and her friends Sophie Mouse and Owen Snake learn that a play is going to be done in a brand new theatre in their town, and they are able to audition. Hattie is known for being shy and doesn't know if she can do it. A look inside a production both onstage and backstage for beginning chapter book readers or a read aloud for the youngest readers.

## C

### Context

**Structure of chapter books** - a perfect model for young readers.

**Fluency** - with short sentences and chapters, along with characters and dialogue, a great text to use for fluency work and reading with expression. Short reader's theatre pieces could easily be created.

**Character arcs** - how do characters change in a story, using Hattie and Sophie as examples

## A

### Arts

**What a play is** and all that is needed to put one on, from auditions, to scenery and lights.

**Theatre Vocabulary**

## T

### Themes

Friendship

Teamwork

Confidence

Bravery

## C

### Create

Determine how the characters would sound and move in certain parts of the story. Ask students to perform sections of the story.

Discuss the various roles and jobs in the theatre mentioned in the story. Ask students to "audition" for one of the jobs (both onstage and backstage). Why do they feel like it would be the best fit for them?

Take a virtual field trip to a theatre, or bring theatre professionals in to explain more to students.

## H

### Heart Words

*"Maybe the next star of the stage is....you"*

*"This was going to be even better than trying out herself."*

*"Her voice was loud and forceful and clear as day. Sophie's heart soared."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Lights on Broadway

Written by Harriet Ziefert, Illustrated by Elliot Krelloff  
48 pages / Grades K-8

An Alphabet book for all ages, Lights on Broadway gives readers an in-depth look at everything in the theatre and involved with a show, from the cast and crew to designers, vocabulary, technical elements, front of house and audience...this book has it all. Add in extremely colorful and engaging illustrations, and you have a book that readers of all ages will want to read again and again to absorb all the information they will learn about the theatre. .



### C

#### Context

**Alphabet books** - looking at how they can be a structure to teach so much more than the alphabet.

**Quotations** - each page of the book has quotes related to the topic of the letter at hand. Explore why quotes can be so powerful.

### A

#### Arts

**Use of color and style** in illustrations.

**Theatre Vocabulary**

### T

#### Themes

Vocabulary

Theatre

### C

#### Create

Each student chooses a letter to research more about the topic and gain a deeper insight into the concept, then jigsaw it to the class, being the expert.

Develop an alphabet book for a topic of their choice which they are passionate about, also using quotes from people in the field of their topic.

Students create one page (an alphabet book collaboration, and after finishing the text, focus on the color, style and illustration they will use to bring it to life.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Collaboration. Like the tiny crystals in a colossal cloud, it is contact and interaction that give us the ability to create a thunderbolt, which can illuminate the heavens and shake the earth.*

*Collaboration.*

*It is the power behind the arts - behind the book and the music, the dance and the design.*

*Collaboration."*





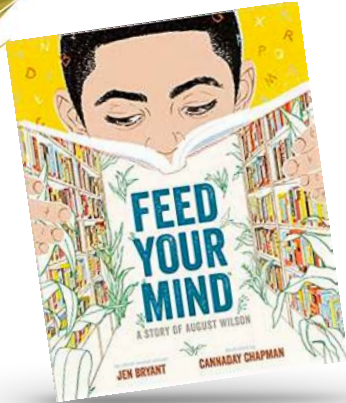
# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Feed Your Mind: A Story of August Wilson

Written by Jen Bryant, Illustrated by Canada Chapman  
48 pages / Grades 3-8

August Wilson is a two-time Pulitzer winning playwright and one of the nation's greatest playwrights in history. This story, told in two acts and multiple scenes, is told in powerful language and imagery, which embodies Wilson in everyday. Readers will be amazed at his path to success, being self taught in the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh when he couldn't find a school to accept him for himself.



### C

#### Context

**Racial prejudice** - America in the 1950s and 1960s

**Importance of words, language and reading**

**Poetry, language** and inspiration of authors.

**Author's Notes** as an important resource of knowledge.

### A

#### Arts

**Play structure** - scenes, climax, characters

**Spoken Word** as a way of public speaking

**August Wilson**, the playwright. The book includes a detailed timeline and listing of his plays. He is one of America's most influential playwrights.

### T

#### Themes

Determination  
Persistence

Words and language

Power of listening

Knowledge is power

### C

#### Create

Just like Freddy did...  
*Write a paper on someone from the past that you admire.*

Create your life as play with scenes.  
What are the standout moments that deserve to be highlighted?

Sit in a crowded room and listen. Write down some of the sentences you hear. Turn those sentences into a story or piece of art.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"If you can read, you can do anything - you can be anything."*

*"He reads with delight and with a fearsome hunger, like a guest at a royal feast, the table so wide, so vast - all he can do is try to taste a bit of everything."*

*"Connection - a word that's all about how the 'I' becomes 'we. how the artist becomes the voice, the spirit of his own community."*

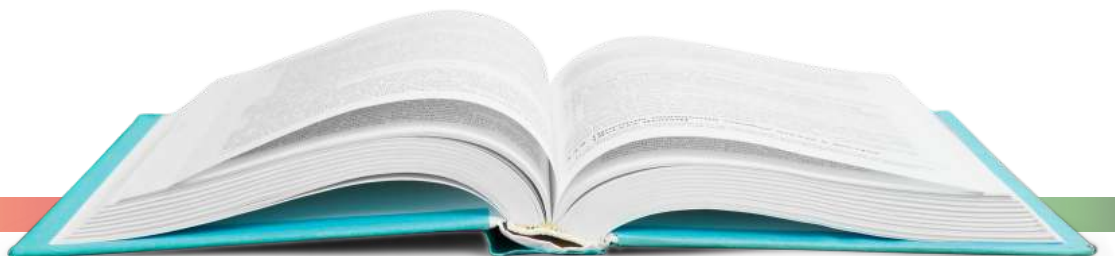
*"... a whole world can flower from some small, single thing."*





# October

- ***The Sixty-Eight Rooms***  
by Marianne Malone
- ***The Marvels***  
by Brian Selznick
- ***The Magic Misfits***  
by Neil Patrick Harris
- ***Anything but Ordinary Addie: The True Story of Adelaide Herrmann, Queen of Magic***  
by Mara Rockliff
- ***Sandy's Circus: A story About Alexander Calder***  
by Tanya Lee Stone
- ***The Midnight Fair***  
by Gideon Sterer



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Sixty-Eight Rooms

Written by Marianne Malone

280 pages / Grades 3-8

The Thorne Rooms are 68 intricately created miniature rooms located in the Art Institute of Chicago, designed down to every minute detail of different time periods. While on a field trip, Ruthie and Jack discover a key that allows them to shrink small enough to explore the rooms. While doing just that, they realize they weren't the first ones to do it, and that someone who had been there before them left something quite important behind!

## C

### Context

**Maps** - take a virtual tour of the Thorne Rooms, easily found online, and have students create a map of the layout based on the tours and the references in the book.

**Math and Scale Drawings** Much of the book discusses perspective and scale. A perfect setting to make the topic alive for students.

**Historical Time Periods** - With a room for almost every European and America time period, there are solid visual and written details for students.

## A

### Arts

**Miniatures and dioramas** as art forms, and the importance of scale. A worthwhile companion text is the book *Miniature Rooms: The Thorne Rooms at the Art Institute of Chicago*, which has beautiful photographs of each room.

**Museums** - curators, layout, acquisitions and security.

**Historical dress/costumes** - There are multiple references to clothing styles throughout, based on the rooms themselves.

## T

### Themes

Friendship

Adversity

Insecurity

Magic - believing in the impossible

Memories

Historical past

## C

### Create

Create a dialogue or story about a conversation you have with someone from a long-ago time period. What historical context would you need to know? How could you give them clues about the future without sharing too much?

Choose a time period and work to create a replica diorama

Do some research as to the content of the Thorne Rooms. What style room do you think is missing? Create it to scale.

## H

### Heart Words

*"Her heart had never pounded so hard and... but she had the strongest instinct not to let fear stop her."*

*"...artists like her create their lives rather than letting other people set the rules."*

*"Of course, you have to be open to these feelings for the magic to work, and not everyone is."*

*"I have discovered that knowledge is the only property that endows its owner with power."*

*"Truth is always precious. But memories are part of life - a wonderful part."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Marvels

Written by Brian Selznick

672 pages / Grades 5-8

Don't let the number of pages scare you away from this incredible novel, which combines two independent stories which weave together. One story is told through over 400 pages of sequential pictures, the other through traditional prose, taking readers from the year 1766 to 1990. This is a powerful adventures that will grab readers from page one as readers strive to discover how the two stories will connect. A tale of family, mystery, and the past.

### C

#### Context

**Literary classics** - multiple stories and characters are regularly referred to, particularly Shakespeare and Yeats.

There are multiple references to numerous topics that open up discussions:

- Physical tics
- The AIDS epidemic is hinted at

The power of **crafting stories**. What makes a good story?

### A

#### Arts

**Storytelling** as an art form and creative process.

**Visual Observation** - the story told through pictures is a class in observing in itself. While reading the story in prose, readers will find them selves going back to the illustrations to look for certain details. Did they spot them the first time?

**Theatre** - particularly the history of theatre in England, with original rigging and theatres being built.

### T

#### Themes

Acceptance

Love

Family

Home

The power of storytelling

Feeling different

### C

#### Create

Challenge students to "get lost in a story". What would happen to them if they somehow managed to converse with some of their favorite characters.

Go on a Shakespeare scavenger hunt. What are all the ways our world is filled with references to Shakespeare?

Dive into theatre archives - playbills, costumes, photographs. Craft a new story based on something you see.

Write the backstory of a simple item.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Even a broken watch is correct twice a day."*

*"You either see it or you don't."*

*"It's what we all need in life. A direction."*

*"I don't know, but there's always something you can do, even if it's small."*

*"That's what life is... miracles and sadness, side by side."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Magic Misfits

Written by Neil Patrick Harris

289 pages / Grades 3-6

Runaway magician Carter settles in a new town as he escapes the idea of magic being used for bad behaviors and reasons. While escaping villainous characters, Carter meets a band of new friends who help him realize that magic can be used for good. An adventure ensues with a classic battle of good vs. evil between a group of crooked carnival workers and a moveable gang of "misfits", with the added bonus of learning magic tricks along the way.

### C

#### Context

**Vocabulary** - the book breaks the fourth wall with the audience and speaks directly to the reader, particularly with vocabulary and words that can have double meanings

**"Misfits"** through time - looking at success stories that didn't always start off that way and how their misfit status became celebrated.

### A

#### Arts

**Magic** as an art form. An opportunity to look at slight of hand as a visual art form.

The **history of carnivals** and how their place in society has changed over time, as well as their structure.

### T

#### Themes

Home

Family

Good vs bad

Decisions and consequences

Perspective

Hope

### C

#### Create

Give students a bin of "misfit" paper and materials - the misfits/leftovers. How can they combine them to create a single, connected piece of art?

Stage a magic show

Showcase magicians in your classroom, potentially through research and video with students.

Consider what a magician is. It doesn't always have to be about tricks. Is someone who makes something out of nothing also a magician?

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Magic is all around us. We just have to pay attention."*

*"Trust your instincts. They will serve you in ways you've yet to witness..."*

*"Mistakes are part of mastery. Try again."*

*"Families come in all different shapes and sizes...Like a snowflake or a thumbprint, no two look alike."*

*"...magic is about more than stagecraft. It's about happiness. It's about laughter. It's about that feeling you get inside."*





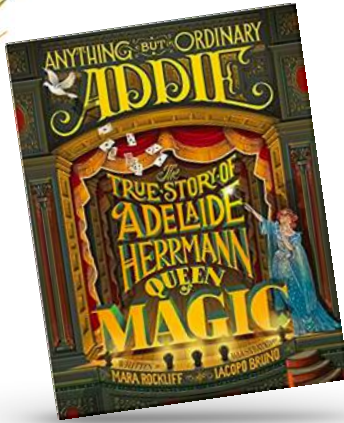
# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Anything but Ordinary Addie: The True Story of Adelaide Herrmann, Queen of Magic

Written by Mara Rockliff, Illustrated by Iacopo Bruno  
48 pages / Grades K-3

A name you have likely not heard, Adelaide Herrmann, longed for thrills at a time when such excitement was not conventional for young girls. She defied the odds in more ways than one, on her quest to "astonish, shock and dazzle.", becoming the first female magician. With captivating illustrations, readers will be longing to learn more about Adelaide and on the edge of their seats.



### C

#### Context

**Gender roles** through society and how they have changed over time.

**Descriptive and purposeful language choice** - filled with colorful, strong adjectives and phrases that lend the reader to the world of magic.

**Author's notes** as a writing tool. The end of the book has in-depth detailed notes about the real Adelaide and as a bonus, gives readers all the details for one of her most famous tricks.

### A

#### Arts

Bruno's **illustrations** are remarkably intriguing. A combination of pencil and digital coloring with layers of colorful cutouts, they combine to transport readers back in time, popping off the page. Students will want to look at them endlessly and analyze the many layers of depth. Scenes are made to look like paper dolls almost, with the layering of characters and backgrounds.

**Words as images** - another layer to the illustrations are the visual layout and use of key words.

### T

#### Themes

Gender in society  
Determination  
Courage  
Forging a path  
Breaking rules

### C

#### Create

Ask students to create an illustration in Bruno's style. Create separate characters, and layer them into one illustration, with a paper doll feel. For older students, add in digital art by scanning in their original creations.

Research and write a picture book biography of another woman who "broke the rules". How will they use purposeful word choice on the page as they illustrate and write?

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Addie never wanted to be ordinary."*

*"I WILL DO IT MYSELF."*

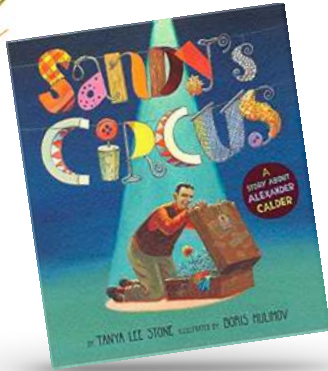


# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Sandy's Circus: A Story About Alexander Calder

Written by Tanya Lee Stone, Illustrated by Boris Kulikov  
40 pages / Grades K-3



Sandy was always tinkering and creating as a boy, seeing the magic of life in new ways. When he began creating wire sculptures, he stumbled upon a new kind of art, creating an entire traveling circus. Sparking imagination, this delightful picture book will bring the artist Alexander Calder to the forefront as he creates a magical, moveable circus out of ordinary materials.

### C

#### Context

**Biography** as a writing style, particularly in picture book format. What choices does an author need to make to create a full story without too many details.

The **history of the circus** - how was it more prominent in past times?

### A

#### Arts

**Alexander Calder**, the artist

**Sculpture** as an art form, no matter the materials being used. How is 3-D art different?

**Combining art forms** - the illustrator uses two unique styles of art within the illustrations. Why?

**Mobiles** - the art of motion and space

### T

#### Themes

Thinking outside of the box

Imagination

Seeing and believing

The power of art to bring people together

### C

#### Create

Create a collaborative "magical, moveable" classroom. Challenge students to create wire sculptures of themselves, and play with the classroom as Calder did his circus.

Create a mobile that has personal meaning through abstract art. Write artist statements about the reasoning behind the creation.

Give students a supply of "odds and ends". What can they tinker with and create?

### H

#### Heart Words

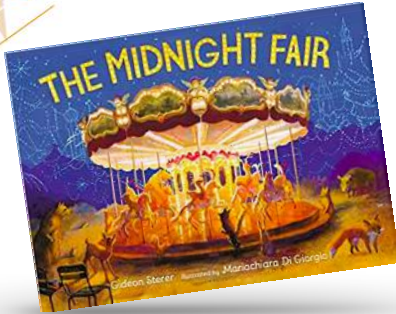
*"In Paris it's a compliment to be called crazy."*

*"He has discovered, in playing, a new world. His art 'has the force of the ocean.'"*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Midnight Fair

Written by Gideon Sterer, Illustrated by Mariachiara Di Giorgio  
40 pages / Grades K-2

Who among us hasn't wondered what happens at nighttime? Does the unexpected come true and our wildest imagination come true? At the Midnight Fair, when everyone has gone away for the night, the animals come out of the woods and a nocturnal world comes alive as the rest of us are sleeping. This wordless picture book will naturally have readers writing the story at hand, and thinking about the impossible becoming possible!

### C

#### Context

**Wordless picture books** - how do they tell a story? How do we read them?

**Graphic novels and comics** - when drawings aren't laid out from right to left, how do we read them?

**Thinking and reading** - a wonderful mentor text for thinking aloud as you are reading, comprehending, and processing the story.

### A

#### Arts

**Color, light, shadows** as artistic elements.

Look at the illustrations through each of those lenses.

How does the illustrator use them to help craft and share the story? How do they each add feeling to the text?

**Watercolor**

### T

#### Themes

Imagination

Believing and seeing

Color, light and mood

Perspective

### C

#### Create

Add the text to the story. This could be in the form of thought bubbles to the panels, or the prose to match the sequence of the story.

Create the tale (orally, visually, written) of what happens at nighttime in your own environment. (i.e your pets while you are sleeping, the city you live in during the night, etc)

### H

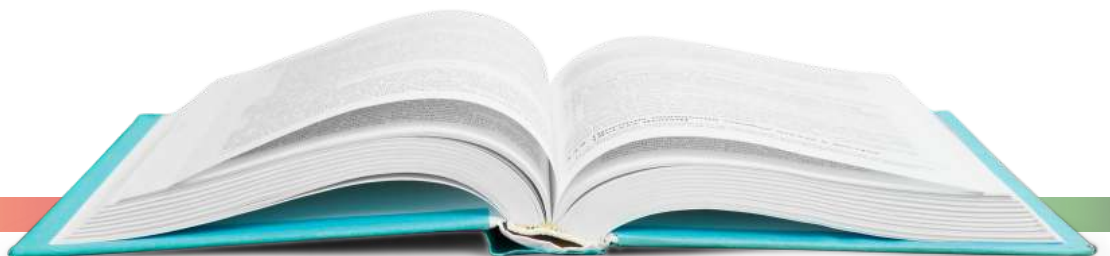
#### Heart Words

*As this is a wordless picture book, have students select the panel/painting that stands out the most to them and share why. It seems to strike them a little differently.*



# November

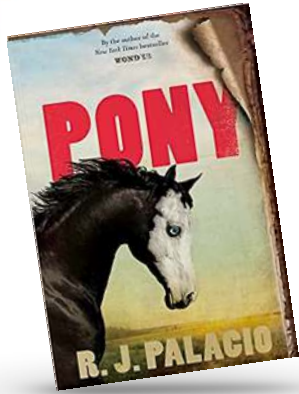
- ***Pony***  
by R.J. Palacio
- ***Maya Lin: Artist-Architect of Light and Lines***  
by Jeanne Walker Harvey
- ***Kaleidoscope***  
by Brian Selznik
- ***Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade***  
by Melissa Sweet
- ***The Amazing Trail of Seymour Snail***  
by Lynn Hazen
- ***Sticks and Stones***  
by Patricia Polacco





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Pony

Written by R.J. Palacio

304 pages / Grades 6-8

An adventure that will pull readers in, inspiring them to be brave and courageous. Twelve-year old Silas suddenly finds himself all alone after three men take his father away by horse, with the exception of a pony and his best friend, Mittenwool, who happens to be a ghost. A haunting, powerful, rich reminder that it is love that ties us together, and that love transcends time.

### C

#### Context

The **western territory**, post Civil War era.

**Chemistry** - how chemicals react with ink in terms of printing and photography development.

#### **Foreshadowing and figurative language.**

Each chapter begins with a quote from a writer or artist of the time period. After reading the chapter and rereading that quote, you have extra insight about the chapters. This is an important exercise in creative thinking.

### A

#### Arts

The **process of photography**, particularly daguerreotypes and the collodion process.

### T

#### Themes

Courage

Bravery

Grit and  
Determination

Love

Family

### C

#### Create

Find an old photograph, either on the internet, or perhaps even an old (many generations ago) family photo. Notice the different style, and how haunting it likely appears to be. Write the story of that person.

Consider a person in your family who is likely "always with you" though they are no longer alive.

Create a representation to show how you know they are there. It can be real or invented.

Research and share the history of photography.

### H

#### Heart Words

"...maybe life knows where it's going before you do sometimes..."

"...there are people who won't understand it because they can't see that kind of wonder."

"People see the world they believe in."

"...time is like the dappled light inside the Woods. It comes and goes. Hides and shines. And all the while, we're just running through it."

"You can travel thousands of miles, over strange lands, and still never find anything as unknowable as love."



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Maya Lin: Artist-Architect of Light and Lines

Written by Jeanne Walker Harvey, Illustrated by Dow Phumiruk

32 pages / Grades 2-5

The daughter of artists and future designer of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, Maya Lin was always aware of the space around her. She thought and made art with her hands. The simplicity of the written language and illustration aligns with the memorial and draws readers in.



### C

#### Context

The **power of names**.  
Not only a person's name, but the process of naming art.

#### Vietnam War

**Memorials** - what are they and why do we create them?

**Symbols** - looking at the reasoning behind the choices made around the creation of the memorial will have students thinking about symbols and meaning.

The **role of women** in an occupational field traditionally held for men.

### A

#### Arts

The art of **architecture**. Finding patterns and purpose. maya Lin was extremely purposeful in her choices and design. Allow this to begin important conversations to artistic **choice** and **purpose**.

**How - and why - do people make art?** A look at many forms - clay, with words, light, etc.

**Light and color:** how does light influence the viewing of art?

### T

#### Themes

Thinking freely

Grit

Determination

Artistry

Tributes

### C

#### Create

Connect to a chosen piece of history being studied (or an event in their family/ community) and ask students to design a memorial/tribute to it. They will need to include symbols, color choice and artistic design. They will write an artistic statement to explain their choices.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"A name brings back all the memories of a person."*

*"Dream, think again and create something new."*



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### Kaleidoscope

Written by Brian Selznick

208 pages / Grades 5-8

Time, memory, dreams, love, life, death. When you put them all together, sometimes they seem to fit, sometimes they don't. They may appear to be like the shattered pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope. An award-winning author shares a collection of short stories that connect two people together in many different facets. It's up to the reader to figure those connections out, which may require multiple readings to do so.

### C

#### Context

This is an excellent **mentor text** to track critical thinking that readers do. Many short stories that weave together and are connected. Create a chart while reading to record thoughts, figure out connections, and record clues.

**Perspective** - how do different views ultimately connect?

#### Personification

#### Emotion in writing.

How can writing about sadness still make the reader feel uplifted?

### A

#### Arts

The creation of and artistry of **kaleidoscopes**. How does **color, light** and **shadow** work within the fragmented pieces to create art?

### T

#### Themes

Time

Friendship

Memory

Dreams

### C

#### Create

Build a kaleidoscope, considering the amount of pieces, color, and the way light goes through it.

Fragment a story from your past into different perspectives of the people involved.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"Is what something looks like all that matters?"*

*"Most people think time is a machine that needs to be oiled and wound with a key.*

*They think it's something you control and maintain. But maybe it's more wild than that. Maybe it's bigger and stranger. Maybe time is uncontrollable and endless..."*

*"If I knew everything, there would be no mysteries....You don't feel wonder at things you know the answers to."*



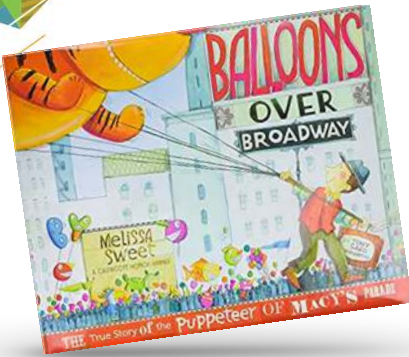
# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade

Written by Melissa Sweet  
40 pages / Grades K-5

Who doesn't love the time-honored tradition of the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade? Tony Sarg, the master puppeteer who created the infamous balloons was an imaginer, who accepted challenges and found ways to solve problems creatively. A book for all that will be sure to start conversations and inspire through amazing mixed media collage illustrations.



## C

### Context

Origins of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

**Force and Motion**  
(ropes and pulleys, gears)

Making **plans** and **blueprints** to guide thinking.

## A

### Arts

**Puppetry** and it's many different forms:

- marionettes
- rod puppets

**Articulation:**  
movements and gestures

**Mixed Media Illustration:** The illustrations include watercolor, collage, photographs, paper maché, paint, fabrics and found objects.

## T

### Themes

Accepting challenges

Thinking outside of the box

Invention

Creativity

## C

### Create

Design a new balloon for the Macy's parade.

Research the history of the animated Macy's Holiday windows.

Make puppets of various sizes, styles and formats. Allow students to use them freely, creating puppet shows, which will layer in the skills of performance and storytelling.

Watch a documentary on the Macy's Parade and balloons, and then launch an inquiry into the creation of them.

## H

### Heart Words

*"Every little movement has a meaning of its own."*

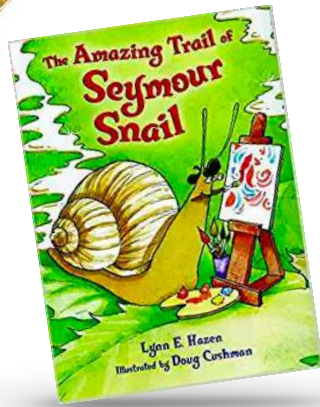
*"They shimmied and swayed through the canyons of New York City."*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Amazing Trail of Seymour Snail

Written by Lynn Hazen

64 pages / Grades K-2

Seymour Snail dreams of being an artist, but his shyness prohibits him from showing his work...plus, he's small and slow! A perfect early chapter book for newer readers, who will be rooting for Seymour to find success with his creativity. A touching, hopeful story, that will inevitably lead readers to ask if snails can "really do that?"

### C

#### Context

**Insects and bugs** - especially snails and the way that they move.

**Adjectives and adverbs**

**Puns** - what they are and finding them. This book is filled with them! This also allows you to address the idea of **humor in writing**.

### A

#### Arts

**Art descriptions** - have students go on an "art word hunt" throughout the book, looking for words that can describe art.

**Art Galleries** - an introduction to them and what they are.

### T

#### Themes

Determination

Pride

Confidence

### C

#### Create

Research jobs that are creative and would allow someone to make art.

If possible, find a Zen Board (also known as a Buddha Board) and allow students to experiment with art that "disappears". How does it make them feel?

Paint the bottom of feet and let students make their own "amazing trail" outside on the sidewalk.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"...oozing along at a snail's pace and leaving his own glittery mark on the world."*

After reading, ask students to identify the pun in the book they liked the best and explain. Did they realize it instantly, or did it take them a minute to figure it out?



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Sticks and Stones

Written and Illustrated by Patricia Polacco  
48 pages / Grades 1-5



A cherished author doesn't disappoint in this book celebrating friendship and the power of the arts for building confidence in children. As many of her books are, this one is autobiographical and timeless, reminding readers that it is our differences that define us and make us who we are, no matter the challenges we face along the way.

### C

#### Context

**Growing up**, new schools, real **friends**.

**Bullying** and the ways it can be dealt with positively rather than negatively.

**Story structure**. The book takes place over the course of a year. Identify ways in which the author advances the story and let s the readers know that. Follow the story arc.

**Narratives** as a genre. How do we know it is real? Be sure to read the final page that tells you what happened in life to the characters.

**Dealing with challenge** in positive ways.

### A

#### Arts

**Authors as illustrators**. Why is this likely important to some authors? What would be hard about having someone else be your illustrator?

View the **illustration style** of Patricia Polacco and discuss how she might work. [Read about her process.](#)

Choose an illustration before reading the story, and have students tell the story that goes with it.

Note how **informative illustrations** can be and detailed, even though the artistic style might not feel detailed.

### T

#### Themes

Friendship

Pursuing talent

Achieving dreams

Dealing with bullying

Celebrating individuality

Staying true to yourself

Power of positive thinking

Overcoming challenges

### C

#### Create

Identify an artist (of any form of the arts) and research their backstory. How did they overcome their challenges? How did their art form inspire them?

Research the lives of the characters in the story as they grew up.

Identify which of the arts motivates you. Why? How can you use the art form to express yourself during a hard time?

Write a song, create a play or a dance, or write a script which highlights overcoming a challenge by way of positive action rather than negative reaction.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"We watched that ship sail across the sky, through our glorious kites with their streamers moving like jellyfish in the sea."*

*"I don't think I had ever seen pure rapture in someone's eyes until then."*

*"We didn't say anything. There was no need to."*



# December

- ***The Christmas Pig***  
by J.K. Rowling
- ***The Wizard of Oz***  
Paper Engineering by Agnese Baruzzi
- ***Colors of Habitats***  
by Stepanka Sekaninova
- ***The Sleeping Beauty***  
by the New York City Ballet
- ***The Nutcracker Comes to America***  
by Chris Barton
- ***The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise***  
by Dan Gemeinhart



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Christmas Pig

Written by J.K. Rowling  
288 pages / Grades 2-6

A young boy faced with tough issues including bullying, divorce and the fear of letting go loses his most cherished friend and will go to any length to get him back. The magic of Christmas and the imagination of a beloved author bring a fast-paced adventure that will have students rooting for a little pig and a boy named Jack, who realize that hope will always be there, even in the hardest of times.

### C

#### Context

The concept of **personification**.

**Proper nouns** vs nouns. How does something change in its depiction by using a capital letter? (i.e. things vs. Things)

**Morals** and **mottos**

**Feelings, principles and emotions.** How do they drive us? How do we lose them and find them?

**Vocabulary** and **layers of meaning** - terms such as: disposable, waste, mislaid, lost

### A

#### Arts

**Imagination** and the creation of other worlds.

**Perspective**

### T

#### Themes

Courage

Bravery

Family

Acceptance

Letting go

Bullying

Divorce and blended families

Friendship

Love

### C

#### Create

Find your most cherished possession. Write its story, as if it were alive.

Ask students to participate in public speaking, explaining how they acquired their favorite possession. How did it get its name? What has it seen them through?

Make a list of principles, emotions and feelings, then choose two. Debate which is more powerful - (i.e. hope or happiness). How can you personify these things? Create a representation of what they look like.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"That's what wakes Things up. Being used and absorbing human feelings..."*

*"Losing is part of living. But some of us live even though we're lost. That's what love does."*

*"What makes humans love Things so much?"*

*"...nothing can be lost for good until all hope has gone."*





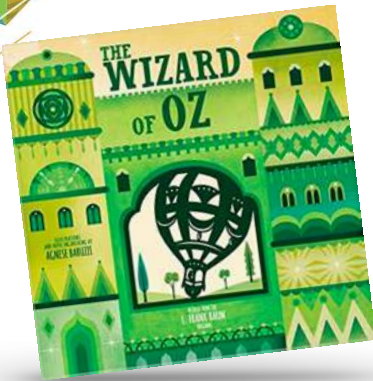
# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### The Wizard of Oz

Illustrations and Paper Engineering by Agnese Baruzzi  
27 pages / All grades

The ever classic story comes alive in this edition with remarkable illustrations, comprised of stunning, intricate paper-cut engravings which feature layers, foreground and background details. No matter how well you know the story, this edition will cause you to look at it through a different lens.



### C

#### Context

**Classic stories** - what makes a classic and what does it mean to **abridge** or **retell** a story.

**Friendship** - the importance of friends in life's journey

### A

#### Arts

**Paper-cut illustrations.** Engage in a discussion around the intricacies and silhouette of these illustrations in contrast to the digital, colorful illustrations in the rest of the book.

#### Silhouettes

**Layers** - experiment with layers and pieces in media arts programs to manipulate digital art.

#### Foreground / background

#### Color palettes

#### Positive and negative space

### T

#### Themes

Courage

Bravery

Family

Friendship

Home

### C

#### Create

Take photographs of people and objects which comprise a tableau. Turn the picture into a silhouette, and cut them out in different pieces. Create an illustration using these silhouettes, considering color, layers, and perspective. Allow students limited color choices to create their scene. Have them write an artist statement.

Create the engraving of a scene/moment not included in the story. Which are the central elements you would include, and how?

### H

#### Heart Words

Ask students to consider the artistic nature of this book. What strikes them most about the paper-cut illustrations? Have them discuss with their peers their thoughts around how these illustrations lend themselves to the story. Does the darkness of the paper-cuts change the focus of the story at all?

Allow students to research and watch numerous tutorial videos and interviews regarding the process of cut-paper illustration to serve as inspiration.



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

### Colors of Habitats

Written by Stepanka Sekaninova, Jana Sedlackova /

Illustrated by Magdalena Konecna

32 pages / K-5

When was the last time you thought about color names? Deep Sea Blue or Forest Green? Why do they have those names? This gorgeously illustrated book looks at habitats around the world through the eyes of color. The drawings and paintings throughout the book are inspirational and will inspire research into the habitats themselves and the artistic nature of how they were done.

### C

#### Context

**Habitats around the world.** Included habitats (not exclusive): polar regions, deciduous forests, lakes, meadows, coral reefs, desert, rainforest, savannah, Mediterranean

**Poetic language and prose**

**Diversity of nature's elements and creatures**

### A

#### Arts

**Color palettes**

**Color names**

**Elements of drawing and painting**

Developing an **artistic eye, noticing** the world around you.

**Harmony of color**

**Artistic vocabulary:** hue, subdue, tone, harmony, complimentary

### T

#### Themes

Diversity

Color

Artistic and Visual representation

### C

#### Create

Create a color palette for a location in your world. Create a two page spread, like that in the book, for an environment you are familiar with. What are the primary colors you would use, and how would you name them?

\*\*This could also be done digitally with a photograph, using the "color picker" to isolate certain colors and create new names for them.

Create the palette for an additional habitat you have studied.

Create new colors and name them.

Attach an artist statement as to the origin of the name you have created.

### H

#### Heart Words

*"A geyser of colors is swirling in the jungle, rampaging."*

*"Silent, the forest murmurs to the rhythm of brooks and springs."*

*"Fragrant oranges put their ears to the lips of olives."*

Ask students to choose three colors in the book they feel are most appropriately named. Why?



# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Sleeping Beauty

Written by New York City Ballet, Illustrated by Valeria Docampo  
40 pages / Grades K-5

Known for their presentation of classic stories through dance, the New York City Ballet has gone a step further with this beautifully illustrated book, which follows the storyline, choreography, costumes and scenery of their production of this classic tale. A perfect book for a young ballerina, but also a conversation starter for comparing versions of stories, as this follows the ballet's storyline, rather than the better-known Disney version.

## C

### Context

#### Vocabulary - go on word hunts

- the book has extensive use of descriptive adjectives.
- dance vocabulary is woven in throughout the story

**Adaptations of stories:** how is this version different from the traditionally known version of the same story? Why do you think it was adapted in this way?

## A

### Arts

#### Movement in illustration

**Ballet basics and the elements of dance** - use of body in space and time, energy and movement.

**Costumes / Scenery** - essential elements, design and color

**History of the NYC Ballet** - who is George Balanchine, choreography, telling story through dance

**Music telling story:** Listen to Tchaikovsky's Sleeping Beauty. Discuss elements of music and where the story is clearest.

## T

### Themes

Movement and storytelling

Love conquering all

Good vs. Evil

## C

### Create

Choose a moment in the story. Create the scene through movement, focusing on the elements of dance.

Play moments of the music for students. Based on the story, which moment do they believe is depicted in the section listened to? Why?

**\*\*There are numerous clips of the NYC Ballet production of Sleeping Beauty available on YouTube. Play audio only for one of these, allow students to discuss, and then show them the piece.**

Pull up photographs of the real production and compare them to the illustrations.

## H

### Heart Words

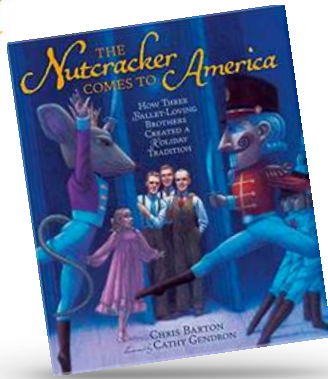
*Due to the nature of the story, capturing dance, ask students to identify the illustration which most feels as though it is leaping off the page and touching their own heart. What is it about the illustration that seems to do this?*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Nutcracker Comes To America

Written by Chris Barton, Illustrated by Cathy Gendron  
36 pages / Grades K-4

We think of The Nutcracker as being a longstanding American holiday tradition, but in reality, it has only been here since the 1940s, brought to America by three brothers growing up in Utah who staged their own production of the story on a tiny budget in San Francisco. Help your students understand the why behind the magic as a beloved holiday tale truly comes to life.

## C

### Context

**Historical context** of holiday traditions.

**Timelines and historical fiction.** The book includes archival photographs and real life event timelines at the end of the book to pique student interest more.

**Staying focused and determined despite humble beginnings.**

## A

### Arts

#### Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite

Be sure to expose students not just to the visual elements of ballet, but also through the musical elements of the original piece.

**Telling story through ballet** - There are numerous versions and clips of this ballet readily available on YouTube from multiple famed ballet companies, including the NYC Ballet.

**Process of illustration** There is a detailed, inspiring note from the illustrator that takes students inside the creative process.

## T

### Themes

Perseverance and dedication

Following a passion

Holiday traditions

## C

### Create

Play a movement of the music - ask students to visualize what they hear. Place the music within the frame of the story and analyze the movement of the music and how it fits.

Read the story without sharing pictures. Ask students to represent how they visualize the characters, particularly in the land of sweets.

Challenge students to research the beginnings of a different holiday tradition, from any holiday.

## H

### Heart Words

*"Like a trio of dancers trying to share two spotlights, the brothers often wove in and out of one another's view."*





# CATCH a spark!

## Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



### The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise

Written by Dan Gemeinhart

352 pages / Grades 4-8

There are some characters that grab our hearts from page one of a book. Coyote Sunrise is one of them. This is a book for the heart, that celebrates what is most important in life - the connections we make, the memories we hold close, and the idea of being open to whatever comes across our path - and all done with a touch of humor. Coyote will become part of every reader who lets her in, as will her journey.

## C

### Context

**Historical context** of holiday traditions.

**Timelines and historical fiction.** The book includes archival photographs and real life event timelines at the end of the book to pique student interest more.

**Staying focused and determined despite humble beginnings.**

**Recognizing small moments as big moments.**

## A

### Arts

**Visualization** - noticing the things around you. Cultivating an artistic eye. What is it you tend to focus on?

**Finding music** in the sounds around you (i.e. the music of someone's voice)

## T

### Themes

Courage

Growing up

Friendship

Overcoming obstacles

Finding joy in small moments

Recognizing sadness, recognizing happiness.

Loss and acceptance

## C

### Create

Challenge your students to create their own memory box with special friends/family as Coyote does.

What are 3 questions you would ask someone to see if they are a match with you and could "travel on your bus"? Take a poll and ask people around you. What would you do based on their answers?

Write a script or story about a journey across the country with up to 5 other people. Who are they, why do you connect with them, where are you going?

Create a soundtrack for Coyote's road trip. Justify your choices.

## H

### Heart Words

"It was a quiet moment, and maybe one that anyone watching from outside my heart wouldn't even have noticed, but I tell you it was a big moment all the same."

"...wherever your hearts wants to go, go there and don't look back."

"Sometimes trusting someone is about the scariest thing you can do. But you know what? It's a lot less scary than being all alone."

"There's so much sadness in the world."

"There's so much happiness in the world."

"Starts are important. Once-upon-a-times are important."

"Maybe we're all a little broken. Maybe we're all a little fragile. Maybe that's why we need each other so much."

