

CATCH a spark!

Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY

I Have an Idea

Written by Herve Tullet

88 pages / All Grades

Finding ideas and recognizing them is a big scavenger hunt, filled with creativity and magic. A book filled with playfulness and imagination, readers of all ages will smile and be determined to recognize the hidden ideas all around them, acknowledging that it isn't always easy. But while it may not be easy...the feeling when you succeed is incomparable!



C

Context

Finding inspiration

What ideas are

Acknowledging the frustration of searching for ideas

Determination

Keeping an open mind and eye

A

Arts

How do artists become inspired?

Creativity living all around us - if we can recognize it

Keeping an open mind and eye

T

Themes

Determination

Inspiration

Imagination

Power of ideas and finding them.

C

Create

Go on an idea scavenger hunt. Take a blank page or notebook and just walk. What do you see? How does it inspire you? What art forms seem to align?

Begin writing "I don't know what to write" over and over on a blank page. Watch as it eventually morphs into a creative piece.

Give students a blank paper and just have them doodle. Turn on some music. Watch their doodles play out into a scene or larger idea.

H

Heart Words

"It's a little like finding a seed, which grows and grows and grows..."

"...often the ideas come rushing, they can be a bit messy and bubbly..."

"With looking, comes finding."



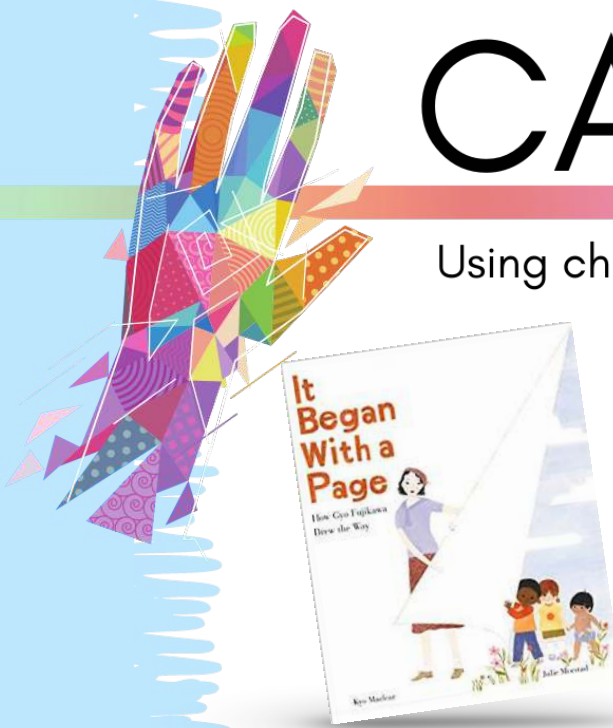
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It Began With a Page

Written by Kyo Maclear, Illustrated by Julie Morstad
48 pages / Grades 2-8

Gyo Fujikawa was a groundbreaking Japanese American artist who fought for racial diversity in picture books. Art was always a part of Gyo's life. Growing up in the time of World War II, she resisted the rules often set upon her, while also being influenced of the war happening around her. Living in New York and seeing great diversity, she was determined to have all children feel represented.



C Context

A look at the world through the eyes of **Japanese Americans** in the 20th century. Growing up in **World War II**, students will have a glimpse into **Japanese Internment Camps**, in a child friendly way, which will foster important conversations around **segregation** of all people.

Biographies and **timelines**. The story is told as a narrative picture the book, and the final section of the book is written more factually, with photographs and a more detailed look at Gyo.

A Arts

What is **artist block**? For many students blank pages are scary, whether in art or writing.

Line drawings

Japanese brush painting

Wood block carving

Calligraphy

T Themes

Determination

Representation

Segregation

Sticking to your beliefs

Staying positive

Not letting events around you break you.

Trailblazing - going against the norms.

C Create

Start with a blank page every day and fill it! It doesn't matter how students fill it. Consider binding many blank pages and let it be a chronicle of their work.

A teacher caught Gyo's talent. Have students write a letter or create a piece of art for a teacher that has made a difference in their life.

H Heart Words

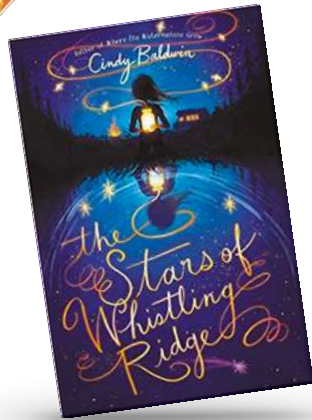
"When the world felt gray, color lifted her."

"A book can be anything that anyone imagines it to be."



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The Stars of Whistling Ridge

Written by Cindy Baldwin

400 pages / Grades 5-8

Ivy Mae Bloom is a 13 year old girl who lives with magic and wishes desperately for it to take effect on her for a change. Longing for a home of her own more than anything, Ivy realizes that wishes are not always fulfilled as promised, feelings are not always cut and dry, magic comes in many forms, and that reflecting on one's own life, place and purpose in this world can bring the most profound magic of all.

C Context

Astronomy. There is an underlying presence to stars, the sky, and atmospheric events to the story.

Local History and its significance on current citizens.

Family relationships and dynamics - particularly that of siblings.

Growing up, gaining independence, and searching for a place in the world that you fit in and feel a sense of belonging in.

Dealing with **feelings and emotions**

A Arts

Color and its importance in the world, along with what can happen when it is missing.

Writing and wordplay as an art form.

Visualization
Finding patterns of threes

T Themes

Magic and where it is found

Sibling relationships

Wants and desires

Longing

Friendship

Love

Home

Family

Power of visualization and positive thinking

Feelings and emotions

C Create

Research a local town legend. Create a representation of it, using multiple art forms as Ivy, Simon and Ravi do.

Create a vision board for your future. Include wishes - from the biggest to the smallest.

Who are the magical stars in your life? Who brings the golden light to you and keeps you warm and enveloped? Find a way to represent them and thank them.

Keep a notebook like Ivy does, with sections. Rich vocabulary, sparks of ideas, and quiet wishes.

H Heart Words

"Wishes new unpredictable. Wishes are powerful. Wishes don't always work out the way you hope they will. Wishes aren't to be treated lightly or taken for granted. Wishes are to be respected, honored, earned."

"The world needs light, Ivy, and we stars have light to give."

"Trying to use a wish to change something that's a part of somebody is dangerous - you never know what may happen."



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Mornings With Monet

Written by Barb Rosenstock, Illustrated by Mary GrandPré
40 pages / Grades K-5

The quietness and fleeting morning light is beautifully captured in this powerful story. In just one morning, we are taught so much about impressionist painter Monet - from his skill and talent, his style, to his extreme passion and love for his work. This is by no means a simple picture book. There are numerous life lessons the reader, of any age, can take away. Plus, they will immediately want to see pictures of the real work.



C Context

Vocabulary and context clues - this book does not shy away from rich words, like Monet's colors, but uses them sparingly (so that students are not overwhelmed) and masterfully in context.

Plays on words - multiple meaning words used in a way that both meanings can apply, such as "impression"

A Arts

Impressionism as a style of painting, with the life of Monet being front and center.

Process of painting - from the actual painting, to storing and drying.

Mornings on the Seine - a collection of Monet's paintings.

T Themes

Patience

Determination

Following your passion - despite what others say

C Create

Start your morning meeting or beginning of class the same way Monet did. Give students the same viewpoint everyday for just 10 minutes. Have them capture it (paint, photography, drawing, anything). How does the same space change day to day?

Ask students to consider a time where they had great patience to accomplish something great, that they felt proud of. Write about the experience - or represent it artistically.

H Heart Words

"...past a palette he's rooted in earth: poppies, nasturtiums, hollyhocks."

"...for some things take time to grow."

"Monet only waits for the light."

"Shaping without lines, seeing in patches of color."

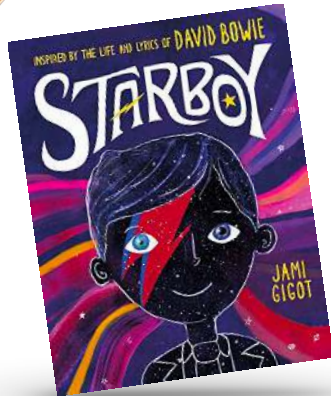
"Artists try."

"Art is not magic. It is work, and work, and work, and then.... it is magic."



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Starboy: Inspired by the Life and Lyrics of David Bowie

Written by Jami Gigot
40 pages / All Grades

All too often, we are expected to fit the norms. This book is a tribute to individuality, creativity and self-expression, along with the understanding that it will radiate and bring joy to all those around you. There is a rhythm and music inside all of us, special and unique. Find your song and create it.

C Context

Individuality - the sense that being unique is a positive trait despite the loneliness that is sometimes accompanied by it.

Onomatopoeia and giving voice through sound to writing.

The self you portray to others versus your real self.

A Arts

Adding color to life's often dull situations.

Fostering imagination.

The music and artistry of David Bowie

The impulse to create

T Themes

Using music and art as an outlet for loneliness.

Celebrating uniqueness

Sharing passion and light

Not being afraid to be yourself

C Create

Start with a writing piece that is only for the student. What do they keep quiet? How do they keep their individuality to themselves and why? Create a fictional character based on this journal writing. Share the story with others and watch them be inspired. Discuss with students.

Create a abstract self portrait made entirely of color. What are your colors and why? How can you represent your sparkle, your light and your sound through this piece?

Create yourself in song, music, lyrics.

H Heart Words

"He added a flash of color wherever he went and let his imagination run wild."

"With the rhythm of the stars, joy tickled through him in waves."

"Commotion and color swirled around him. Rhythms and riffs, like the hearts of stars beating loudly began to spread..."

"The spark inside him radiates like a shining star"



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Bob

Written by Wendy Mass, Nicholas Gannon
224 pages / Grades 2-5

Childhood friendships are magic and we never outgrow them. There is a loyalty, a whimsy and a sense of belonging that come with them, staying with us forever. Years can go by and they pick right back up, as evidenced by the sweet - though mysterious - friendship of Livy and Bob. Readers will be hooked to know the basis of their friendship no matter whether reading independently or listening to the story. Wrap yourself up in friendship.

C

Context

Characterization.

Bob is a unique character - lifelike and whimsical at the same time.

Author's craft -

creating voice, humor and wit in writing.

Droughts and their impacts

Memories and growing up

Myths and folktales

A

Arts

Fantasy and whimsy.

There are few illustrations in the book, yet so many places that seem to jump off the page.

Color and tone. How does the underlying drought in the book effect the illustrations?

T

Themes

Friendship

Childhood

Imagination

Love and loyalty

Growing up

Anxiety

C

Create

Ask students to describe a childhood imaginary friend they had. Bring that character to life in writing, art or both. Consider word choice and humor.

Ask students to choose a piece of weather and imagine if it was gone. Write a myth that explains why it disappeared and how it came back.

Discuss memories. Represent earliest memories, and how you would encounter them now at your current age.

H

Heart Words

"You're back. Took you long enough."

"It's always nice to return somewhere you've already made happy memories."

"...it's about recognizing the strength of the little guy."

"a way of describing the thrill you feel at moving toward something you are excited about, something that makes you the most alive out of anything."

Look at the last two illustrations, the last pages of the book. Write the Heart Words.

