

Engaging Gifted Boys in New Literacies

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Dr. Beth Wilson, principal of Roosevelt Elementary School, enters the fifth-grade planning area in late August. Excited about the upcoming school year, she greets the five teachers seated around a table and pulls up a chair. After she checks in with her teachers regarding their summer travels and questions them about their families, she begins to chat about what they expect for challenges during the new school year.

Jason Rogers, an educator with a strong passion for teaching language arts, smiles broadly and announces that he is determined to get fifth-grade boys more excited about reading this year. He explains that he attended a summer institute on new literacies at the nearby university and he's excited about exposing his guys to new books: "I picked up a lot of great strategies for getting boys to consider reading different types of books and writing activities that should keep them more engaged."

Celeste Jamison, a mother of three teenage boys, shakes her head and says, "Jason, I just wish I had had you around when my boys were in fifth grade. I was so frustrated with my guys this summer. They spent days texting their friends. I couldn't get them to even pick up a book. I fought to pry them away from their computers, iPods, and cell phones! The only success I had was getting Josh, my youngest, to check out a few graphic novels from the local library. He was glued to those for a couple of days until his two older brothers started getting on his case for reading something dorky."

The other fifth-grade teachers commiserate with Celeste as Dr. Wilson listens attentively. Samantha Jones continues, "I think the issue is what's happened to boys before they get to fifth grade. If they haven't learned to love reading in the primary grades, then we had just better remain prepared for a long, hard struggle. I think it's simply a matter of early exposure to good books."

Caroline Krisel joins in: "So many of the boys I've had over the years have complained that we read too many 'girl books' in language arts. They're

constantly asking me to let them read war stories and some of the most gruesome murder mysteries. I just don't feel comfortable allowing much of that stuff in my classroom. I can just imagine what parents might think."

Kathy Graham, a new teacher to Roosevelt Elementary, bravely pipes in with, "Yes, but Caroline, at least they're asking to read something. I think that's a step in the right direction. Think about the men in our lives. My husband spends so much of his business travel time on airline flights immersed in James Patterson novels. I guess we shouldn't be so surprised. I think it's simply a guy thing."

By this time, Dr. Wilson realizes that she has apparently struck a nerve with this issue this morning. As she continues to cue in on their concerns, Mark Matthews, the school's enrichment facilitator, walks into the planning area. The teachers seated around the table ask him to join in on the discussion.

Caroline asks, "Mark, I bet you don't have this problem, do you? We've been talking about how hard it is to get boys to read these days. The gifted boys you see in your classroom are a different story, aren't they?"

Mark throws his hands in the air as he replies, "Are you kidding? Even with some of the sharpest guys I work with, I can't convince them to read anything substantial these days. So many of them are accessing their information through technology instead. They're saying to me, 'Mr. Matthews, why read a book when you can get the same information from a podcast?'"

This report from the enrichment specialist really has Dr. Wilson's eyebrows raised. She gets up from the table and, as she begins to leave, she says, "Well folks, it sounds like you've really called attention to an issue that has been overlooked for quite some time. As I've sat here listening to you, I've been reflecting on last year's schoolwide assessment results. I'm now realizing that what you've described is consistent with the gender-specific results that were reported to our school board.

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I'm afraid our boys will continue to be trouble if we don't find different ways to engage them in more reading and writing."

As the teachers seated around the conference table nod in agreement with their administrator, Dr. Wilson continues, "Perhaps we should examine this issue as one of our school's priorities this year and look at what the research is saying about effective practices. Jason, I'd be interested in hearing more about the new literacies training you received this summer at Concordia College. We may need to consider having several of those instructors work with us in professional development this year. I'd like to look at the materials you acquired at the summer institute and get contact information for the instructors."

Jason smiles as he responds, "Sure, I'd be happy to bring that in, Dr. Wilson."

It is safe to assume that many conversations similar to the one described above have recently occurred in many elementary and middle schools throughout the country. The serious challenge of engaging boys in reading and writing has become more complex and the problem even influences the lives of gifted adolescent males. This article attempts to address this concern. In order to do so, we examine the scholarly literature on boys' reading preferences and report findings from that work. This is followed by a discussion of the role of new literacies—digital technologies—as new ways to capture the reading and writing interests of males to develop their abilities in these domains. We then discuss specific strategies and methods for getting gifted boys more engaged in literacy activity. We conclude our discussion with a listing of recommended reading materials for elementary and middle school males, as well as resource materials and websites to support educators.

Boys' Reading Preferences

When reviewing the prior research literature on gender-based reading preferences, one may be easily struck by the high degree of consistency that appears among the general findings. Although the number of research studies conducted has not been particularly large, the published reports have reliably demonstrated similar conclusions and strengthened their major claims.

Among the research findings, five general understandings have garnered such wide acceptance that they may be considered foundational. First, studies have consistently shown that males and females do enjoy different types of reading—with preferences for different genres and sometimes reading for different purposes (Hall & Coles, 1999; Millard, 1997; Pirie, 2002; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). One illustration of this comes from the work of Simpson (1996), who studied the reading preferences of a middle school class. The 13 young women she observed reported taking time to read fiction novels 325 times during that month, outpacing the 212 times reported by her 17 young men. These young men had presumably been too busy reading nonfiction instead, as their reported total of 55 times with this type of text dwarfs the girls' collective figure of only 3 occurrences (Simpson, 1996, p. 270). Even when reading the same texts, boys and girls have been shown to approach the material differently, and Millard (1997) proposed that boys naturally use reading as a way to "find out" about the world, even if it means using *Charlotte's Web* to "learn" about spiders (p. 12).

The next three general understandings each concern the links between reading, achievement, and gender. First, researchers have found numerous

connections between reading habits and reading ability, ultimately resulting in higher or lower achievement scores (Coles & Hall, 2002; Krashen, 1993; Pirie, 2002; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). Krashen (1993) found that reading habits successfully predict multiple academic abilities, including comprehension, vocabulary, reading speed, and writing skill. Second, research studies have consistently found that females spend more time reading than males, and finish more books as well (Hall & Coles, 1999; Hopper, 2005). The differences by gender are relatively large and cross-cultural, with the reported percentage of girls who read regularly being consistently pegged at least 10–15 percentage points higher than that of their male counterparts. Sadly, by the time students reach high school, almost 50% of males consider themselves "nonreaders" entirely (Partington, 2006). Third, when these last two factors are combined, an additional assumption can be easily predicted: Females surpass males in reading achievement globally, with higher grades in language arts classes, higher scores on standardized tests, and general recognition as having higher aptitude for the subject (Hall & Coles, 1999; Millard, 1997; Taylor, 2005). Smith and Wilhelm (2002) claimed that "The [achievement] gap in writing between eighth-grade males and females is more than six times greater than the differences in mathematical reasoning" scores (p. 1), yet gender differences in mathematics continue to receive much more attention. Perhaps this is due to a feeling of inevitability by some, as the gender gap in language arts education is suspected to have existed for more than two centuries (Cohen, 1998).

Knowing that boys read less than girls and perform more poorly at reading-related tasks, it is also easy to predict the fifth general understand-

ing uncovered in the literature: Males report lower enjoyment levels and self-concept levels than females when it comes to reading and language arts (Hopper, 2005; Simpson, 1996). Hall and Coles (1999) found that while 74% of girls claim to enjoy reading, only 57% of boys say the same (p. 76), a difference that may be explained by the fact that boys are more apt to see themselves as having little skill in this area and are likely to give up and retreat to an area of greater ability. What is perhaps most surprising is that this lessening of perceived enjoyment and skill in reading cuts across all achievement levels—and is apparent even in successful gifted male readers.

Having examined the five main themes from research literature on this

with reports that not only do fewer females read nonfiction literature but those who do tend to cluster around the related topic headings of music, pop-culture, and fashion. One may wonder how boys can read so much nonfiction yet believe that they are poor readers, a paradox also discussed by Coles and Hall (2002). Modern language arts classes, they argued, tend to be so reliant on narrative fiction that “being ‘good at reading’ often becomes synonymous with being good at reading stories” (Coles & Hall, 2002, p. 105). Boys eventually perceive that others do not value “their” type of reading—and eventually they cease to value it themselves. “I get lost in [science fiction] books about other worlds and forget the time,” a 10-year-old boy told Freedman

might like to read either in class or on their own. Science fiction, fantasy, and horror novels (three genres sharing a close bond as “imaginative fiction”) accounted for more than half of the books chosen for personal reading, yet very few were selected for classroom reading purposes. The young men knew that these books were not fully accepted at school, echoing a story by Taylor (2005): “When I asked [my son] Gabe if his teachers had valued all types of reading, he replied, ‘Some teachers treated sci-fi books like they were pornography; others were just glad to see reading’” (p. 293).

Many male readers also thirst for action and adventure novels, and quickly grow frustrated by classroom novels that focus on character interaction, symbolism, emotions, and dialogue. What they really want is heroes, villains, explosions, and daring deeds. One such young man told researchers that he did not care for books because the characters tended to be boring and talk too much, especially in Charles Dickens’ novels (Carnell, 2005). Instead of these character-driven stories, boys tend to prefer books about action, including spy stories, war memoirs, sports novels, and survival tales.

Although male readers do enjoy several genres, research has shown that a serious disconnect exists between these genres and academic language arts curriculums (Millard, 1997; Partington, 2006; Simpson, 1996). Nonfiction, science fiction, fantasy, horror, action, and comedy may all be popular with males, but this matters very little when early educational experiences and language arts classes choose to focus instead on types of literature that typically cater to feminine preferences. For example, character-driven narrative fiction has been shown to have little appeal to males, yet the bulk of required reading novels comes from this type of “dialogue and

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topic, we now turn to research findings on which types of reading material males actually do enjoy. One of the most common findings is that males tend to prefer nonfiction texts, while females’ reading habits are heavily dominated by fiction (Boraks, Hoffman & Bauer, 1997; Hopper, 2005; Langerman, 1990; Simpson, 1996). Smith and Wilhelm (2002) reported that boys are more likely than girls to read informational texts, magazines, newspapers, and hobby/sports books. Simpson (1996) echoed these claims, also noting that males’ choices of nonfiction reading were highly diverse—as contrasted

(2003), but “My teacher doesn’t think these are real books” (p. 6).

Although boys read much more nonfiction than girls, it is important to note that many do read fiction as well; they simply read less of it than their female classmates. Among the fiction genres preferred by males, six stand out as popular favorites: science fiction, fantasy, comedy, action, horror, and serialized/media-connected fiction. Cavazos-Kottke (2006) conducted a study that supported many of these findings in which he asked talented male readers to browse a bookstore and fill baskets with books they

emotions” literature. Hall and Coles (1999) argued that this overreliance on books that females prefer has actually hindered students of both sexes, as males become bored and females are not encouraged to broaden their horizons. Several authors have encouraged schools to expand the genres they include, seeking an increasingly balanced and gender-neutral approach (Partington, 2006; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002), but as Simpson (1996) noted: “It is very difficult for female teachers who are themselves prime readers of narrative fiction to commit themselves to teaching and modeling nonfiction with the same energy, imagination, and enjoyment” (p. 278). Finding a way to involve, affirm, and value the types of literature preferred by each gender is of utmost importance to the education of young readers, however, especially considering that male readers have few other sources of affirmation for their reading interests. As Millard (1997) explained, more than 70% of male readers claim to never share books or reading recommendations with anyone—meaning that if schools do not help them find quality gender-preferred literature, they are likely on their own.

New Literacies to Engage Gifted Boys

Along with an understanding of why boys select the types of books they read, educators must also understand several important contemporary issues that influence how they might successfully engage boys in literacy experiences in their classrooms. Teachers are becoming more aware of the degree to which technology shapes students’ lives. Literacy scholars are calling attention to the importance of appreciating the digital technologies that adolescents use in their daily lives and

how critical it is that educators come to understand more fully what students view as modern literacy. Young people today are doing their homework by using computers and constantly use them to stay connected with friends near and far. They are exploring the world via the Internet, and moreover, they use technology to construct how they view themselves and how they represent their identities (Hagood, 2008; Leander & Lovvorn, 2006; Leander & Rowe, 2006). Educators are faced with teaching a generation of multitaskers, a population of students who after school are actively engaged with instant messaging, text messaging, music downloading, networking in online social spaces, blogging, and designing web pages while simultaneously doing their homework assignments (Alvermann, 2002; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Realizing that young people will read, write, and discuss materials that have intrinsic value to them, the overwhelming challenge for teachers is to figure out how to transfer the afterschool literacy practices of students into their literacy classrooms.

To engage gifted boys in reading and writing classrooms, educators need to explore the new literacies, the practices mediated by digital technologies such as blogging, gaming, and social networking, as well as popular contemporary adolescent literacy practices that do not involve digital technologies such as writing fan fiction and live action role-plays (LARPs; Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008). In exploring these new possibilities, educators realize that these digital spaces are the contexts in which many gifted male students are spending their time. By teaching through these contexts, teachers are agreeing to meet their students on their own turf; however, they may be pleasantly surprised to discover how enriching these digital contexts may be and the high intellectual rigor

involved in the work associated with digital technologies. The ultimate challenge for teachers of literacy is how to combine high-quality reading materials with the new literacy contexts.

High-Quality Books for Boys + New Literacy Approach = Engaged Readers and Writers

The equation in the subhead above succinctly describes what we hope educators of gifted elementary and middle school students will consider for their classrooms. Our discussion below highlights several exemplars we have selected from the genres appealing to male readers and describes how teachers of gifted students may use them as they incorporate new web technologies to engage boys in reading, writing, and discussing good books.

Nonfiction

Conn and Hal Iggulden (2006), the British authors of *The Dangerous Book for Boys*, have created an international sensation. They claimed that their guidebook is aimed at boys from “eight to eighty.” This how-to manual incorporates more than 80 different topics, including how to build a tree house, grow crystals, or tell direction with a watch. Throughout the collection are famous quotes, stories, and military battles, and everyday phrases that every young man should know. This volume is packed with rich information about hundreds of topics that appeal to young men and should serve as a helpful resource to fathers, mentors, or any adult entrusted with teaching young men. Each page provides readers with ideas for many hands-on activities that can be explored by following the directions provided by the authors.

A literacy activity to accompany the reading of this book would be to have gifted boys write additional entries for the book and submit them to a class compilation that could be published for the entire school community. Boys might design a “Father and Son Day” or “Mentor and Friend Day” as a follow-up activity. Activities from the Igguldens’ guidebook or original new entries from the boys who have enjoyed the book could be celebrated as a “male only” class event. (*The Daring Book for Girls* by Buchanan and Peskowitz [2007] could provide a similar opportunity for the young women in your class). Audio recordings of the events could become a podcast shared on the class website, or photos and videos might be posted on the teacher’s or students’ blogs.

Action

Eric Walters’ (2003) *Camp X* is an action-packed story that appeals to boys in upper elementary and middle school classrooms. This story takes place during World War II when 12-year-old George and his older brother Jack are spending the wartime summer in Whitby, Ontario, Canada where their mother is employed in a munitions factory and their father is off fighting the Germans. The boys stumble across Canada’s top-secret spy camp and their action-packed summer begins to heat up as they get involved in the covert activities of Camp X.

The camp and all of its secrets fascinate the boys and they begin to suspect some of the local citizens of being spies. They are unable to stay away from Camp X and continue to discover more details of what is going on in the camp. While snooping around, they attract the attention of a sinister individual who becomes determined to use George and Jack’s knowledge of Camp X against the Allies.

Eric Walters’ (2003) adventure story serves as great inspiration for teachers who may want to encourage the boys in their classrooms to research the history of their local communities and discover if there are any compelling surprises in the story of their own town. Are there any local secrets that might be investigated? Boys might also enjoy pursuing oral history interviews with senior members of their community who can reflect on the experience of living in the area during World War II. An oral history collection of interviews could be electronically archived by the technology and history buffs in the class and preserved for the school and local historical society. Alternatively, students could even use the digitalized discussions to create an online museum of hometown history, complete with photographs, essays, videos, podcasts, and discussion forums.

Humor

David Lubar’s (2005) *Invasion of the Road Weenies and Other Warped and Creepy Tales* is a collection of 35 comical and creepy short stories that explore a variety of weird situations and raise thought-provoking questions. The author incorporates his vivid imagination and quirky sense of humor with enjoyable wordplay to produce a volume that serves as a model for upper elementary students writing short stories. In the signature macabre story entitled “Invasion of the Road Weenies,” Marlon notices that adult joggers never smile. He views them as “road weenies—mindless, grim-faced creatures” who run all over town for reasons nobody can explain, and he begins to explore what might be making these people jog. Marlon’s investigation takes him to an old, red barn on the outskirts of town where he discovers the community’s joggers are

housed. When he locks them all into the barn overnight, his town’s environment changes and he learns important lessons about the value of looking out at the world every day with an eye for discovery.

Students reading Lubar’s (2005) collection may want to respond to his writing in a variety of ways. Teachers traditionally ask boys to write their own scary story, applying some of the observations they have made from studying this literary form. Gifted boys may enjoy writing and illustrating a sequel to Lubar’s *Road Weenie* story; however, they may engage in this activity more enthusiastically if provided the opportunity to write the sequel in order to develop it into a digitally animated video or anime-style clip, complete with script, scenery, and sound effects to be shared on the class website or YouTube.

For younger students, Kevin O’Malley’s (2007) *Gimme Cracked Corn and I Will Share* is a delightful collection of jokes, riddles, and puns appreciated by young readers with their childlike sense of humor. Teachers of young gifted boys could easily engage their aspiring young comedians to maintain an online journal of their original jokes or become involved in a joke blogging site in which they share their favorite original corny jokes.

Fantasy

For readers of fantasy, Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson’s (2004) *Peter and the Starcatchers* is crafted as a prequel to J. M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan*. Those who have long wondered about how Captain Hook lost his hand and why Peter Pan never grows older will find many answers to their questions in this delightful novel. The story opens with Peter and several other boys from St. Norbert’s Home for Wayward Boys who have been sent away aboard the

ship *Never Land* to become servants of the cruel King of Rundoon. Aboard this ship, Peter develops a friendship with Molly, who introduces herself as a starcatcher and reveals secrets about falling stars and a precious magical substance hidden in a trunk aboard the ship. With just a small sprinkle of this substance deadly wounds are healed and people are capable of flying! Pirate Black Stache and his mates learn of this treasure and scheme to acquire it. Following several sea chases, battles,

acters from *Peter and the Starcatchers* and write a whole new story or take the established story in different directions. Students who enjoy fan fiction often enjoy posting their work online for other fans to read and critique.

Science Fiction

One genre of literature that has often been pegged as stereotypically male is that of science fiction. Science fiction books traditionally take place

combination of technological expertise and cunning.

One key theme of *Little Brother* is the author's support for free online media and the open sharing of information, a notion that can easily be transferred to a host of fun classroom activities. Students might be encouraged to research the pros and cons of open media sharing online, such as issues of copyright infringement and music piracy, and then host a class-wide debate on these cutting-edge issues. Students might even wish to poll their school's students and faculty regarding the issue. Following these activities, students might be encouraged to produce a short video or news clip explaining the controversies to others their age and disseminate this video via YouTube.

Fiction

Understanding that boys typically prefer fiction with a male protagonist, teachers often reach for the work of Gary Paulsen, an author well known for writing adventurous books that appeal to boys. Paulsen's (2006) *The Car* is no exception. In this coming-of-age novel, readers meet Terry Anders, a young man abandoned by his parents at age 14. Terry is armed with tools, some experience with cars, and a detailed set of instructions that accompanies a car kit that his father had begun to build in the garage. When he finishes assembling his convertible, he decides to drive his new car across several states to Oregon in search of relatives. When heavy rains force him to the roadside, he encounters a Vietnam veteran named Waylon who convinces Terry to accompany him on his road trip. Later, they are joined by one of Waylon's army buddies riding a Harley Davidson. The cross-country odyssey teaches Terry he must always try to learn from his

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and shipwrecks, all of the key figures wind up on the island of Mollusk and struggle to obtain the glowing contents of the magical trunk. With multiple chapters of swashbuckling action, readers of *Peter and the Starcatchers* slowly learn the secrets and mysteries of the beloved Peter Pan.

With the popularity of social networking sites that captivate young people, teachers of gifted boys may want to tap into this fascination and have their students design Facebook or MySpace pages for the main characters in *Peter and the Starcatchers*. These pages could be posted on the class website. A variety of creative writing prompts as follow-up activities for this novel could serve as a blogging assignment to be posted on the class website. Fan-fiction writing could also offer students an opportunity to take the char-

acters in an imaginative future world and often juggle complex questions of morality and humanity while exploring the boundaries of technology and science. Many such titles engage a futuristic world of space exploration and starships, but others choose a setting much closer to the present day. One such "modern" science fiction tale is *Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow (2008), which has won several national awards and earned the praise of many teen book critics for its imaginative examination of civil liberties and technological responsibility after a fictional terror attack results in San Francisco becoming a police state. The novel's main characters, a collection of techno-savvy teens who are mistakenly arrested following the attacks, defend themselves and fight back against the abuse of political authority using a

experiences if he is to survive in life. Through his journey, Terry learns a lot about the countryside, develops many important survival skills, and additionally learns a lot about himself.

Upon completion of Paulsen's work, teachers may want to assign boys the fun of designing a cross-country trip similar to that taken by Terry Anders. Boys may enjoy pursuing online material on tourist and historic sites along the roads and highways they choose to travel. In their design of the road trip, they are asked to provide a rationale for the direction they take and the sites incorporated in their adventure. Another possibility would be to have them artistically create a series of postcards sent to families throughout the cross-country trip using Microsoft Publisher or Adobe Photoshop. The various components of the assignments could easily become a PowerPoint presentation, a short movie clip, or a series of annotated photographs posted on a class website. Musically oriented students might even enjoy writing and composing a song that captures the spirit of their cross-country adventure. Such a tune could be recorded and also included with the project and posted on the class website or on the popular photo-sharing website Flickr.com.

Biography

For the young man who enjoys reading biographies, Tony Hawk and Sean Mortimer's (2000) biography entitled *Hawk: Occupation: Skateboarder* appeals to many boys who are captivated by the skateboarding sports culture. Tony Hawk's story is one of a lively young boy whose teachers saw as hyperactive and completely out of control in school. When his mother had him undergo a battery of tests, the school system found that his IQ was above 140. Eventually the energy of this gifted and very enthusi-

astic youngster was channeled into an appropriate outlet when he discovered skateboarding, went on to compete professionally, and attained international fame in this athletic domain. Today Hawk is recognized for single-handedly placing a once-outlawed sport squarely into the mainstream of American youth culture.

Biographies provide teachers of gifted adolescent males with great material for helping boys to identify with appropriate role models. Biographies also assist educators in teaching boys to persevere through examples of men who have overcome adversity in their lives. With skateboarding having gained popularity, Tony Hawk's story is one that many boys would enjoy and teachers can easily combine this autobiography with literacy activities that enrich and teach important life lessons.

Collaborative blogging amongst the skateboarders within a school may provide an excellent opportunity for boys to become engaged in serious writing about a topic that intrigues them. Teachers may want to suggest that boys step in for Larry King and role-play an interview with Tony Hawk about his boyhood antics, his school experiences, and his professional career as a skateboarder. With popular celebrities, it might be possible for students to find archived footage of speeches they have given or transcripts of actual interviews found on the web as samples for students to explore. The script for such an interview would involve an appropriate challenge for gifted boys in a literacy classroom and would serve as a great outlet for creative expression. Combining this literacy exercise with podcasting or video sharing would enable students to present their work to the entire school and/or post it on the class website. Podcasts of mock interviews with individuals studied through biographies could be cel-

ebrated throughout the academic year and provide enjoyment for many long years after the biographies have been devoured.

Summary

Educators face the challenge of getting gifted boys to engage in reading and writing. Finding ways to involve and affirm the types of books preferred by boys is important to educating gifted males. Moreover, teachers need to explore the new literacies, practices mediated by digital technologies that are such an important part of the contemporary adolescent literacy experiences. Exploring these practices will enable teachers to design literacy experiences that engage and challenge gifted males. **GCT**

Recommended Books to Engage Gifted Boys in New Literacies

Nonfiction

- Allen, T. B. (2004). *George Washington, spy-master: How the Americans outspied the British and won the Revolutionary War*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.
- Bradley, J. (2001). *Flags of our fathers: Heroes of Iwo Jima* (Young Reader's Abridged Edition). New York, NY: Delacorte Books for Young Readers.
- Gonick, L. (2006). *The cartoon history of the modern world, part I: From Columbus to the U.S. Constitution*. New York, NY: Collins Reference.
- Iggulden, C., & Iggulden, H. (2007). *The dangerous book for boys*. New York, NY: William Morrow.
- MacPherson, M. (2001). *The cowboy and his elephant: The story of a remarkable friendship*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Mariotti, S. (2000). *The young entrepreneur's guide to starting and running a*

business. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.

Woodford, C., Collins, L., Witchalls, C., Morgan, B., & Flint, J. (2005). *Cool stuff and how it works*. New York, NY: DK Publishing.

Action

Bloor, E. (1997). *Tangerine*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Horowitz, A. (2001). *Stormbreaker*. New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Lisle, J. T. (2006). *Black duck*. New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Walters, E. (2002). *Camp X*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Humor

Clements, A. (2005). *Lunch money*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Clements, A. (2007). *No talking*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Lubar, D. (2005). *Invasion of the road weenies and other warped and creepy tales*. New York, NY: Tom Doherty Associates.

Lubar, D. (2005). *Sleeping freshmen never lie*. New York, NY: Dutton.

Lubar, D. (2007). *True talents*. New York, NY: Tom Doherty Associates.

O'Malley, K. (2007). *Gimme cracked corn and I will share*. New York, NY: Walker & Company.

Paulsen, G. (2007). *Lawn boy*. New York, NY: Yearling.

Peck, R. (2004). *The teacher's funeral: A comedy in three parts*. New York, NY: Dial Books.

Tolan, S. S. (2002). *Surviving the Applewhites*. New York, NY: HarperTrophy.

Fantasy

Abouzeid, C. (2006). *Anatopsis*. New York, NY: Dutton.

Barry, D., & Pearson, R. (2004). *Peter and the starcatchers*. New York, NY: Hyperion. (First of a four-part series).

Jean, M., & Carlson, C. C. (2008). *Puddlejumpers*. New York, NY: Hyperion.

MacHale, D. J. (2002). *Pendragon: The merchant of death*. New York, NY: Aladdin. (First of a 10-part series).

Nix, G. (2003). *The keys to the kingdom: Mister Monday*. New York, NY: Scholastic. (First of a seven-part series).

Pratchett, T. (2001). *The amazing Maurice and his educated rodents*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Pratchett, T. (2003). *The wee free men: A story of discworld*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Reeve, P. (2006). *Larklight*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Scieszka, J. (2004). *The time warp trio: Da wild, da crazy, da Vinci*. New York, NY: Viking.

Velde, V. V. (2003). *Now you see it . . .* New York, NY: Harcourt.

Science Fiction

Adlington, L. J. (2005). *The diary of Pelly D*. London, England: Hodder Children's Books.

Bechard, M. (2005). *Spacer and rat*. New York, NY: Roaring Book Press.

Doctorow, C. (2008). *Little brother*. New York, NY: Tom Doherty Associates.

Gaiman, N., & Reaves, M. (2007). *Interworld*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Hiaasen, C. (2009). *SCAT*. New York, NY: Knopf.

Klass, D. (2006). *Firestorm*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

Pearson, M. E. (2008). *The adoration of Jenna Fox*. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Company.

Pfeffer, S. B. (2006). *Life as we knew it*. New York, NY: Harcourt.

Philbrick, R. (2000). *The last book in the universe*. New York, NY: Blue Sky Press.

Rand, A. (2005). *Anthem* (Centennial ed.). New York, NY: Plume.

Werlin, N. (2005). *Double helix: A mystery*. New York, NY: Puffin.

Fiction

Hobbs, W. (2004). *Leaving protection*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Hobbs, W. (2006). *Crossing the wire*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Klise, K. (2005). *Deliver us from normal*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Konigsburg, E. L. (2007). *The mysterious edge of the heroic world*. New York, NY: Atheneum.

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Helpful Educator Resources and Web Sites

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Fantastic Fiction (<http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk>)

This is an excellent database that is helpful for learning what else an author has written. Simply search for the author's name and a complete bibliography is generated.

Richie's Picks (<http://www.richiespicks.com>)

This site is librarian Richie Partington's personal home page where he continually reviews the latest books in young adult literature.

Guys Read (<http://www.guysread.com>)

This is an interactive web site designed to help boys of all ages to find books that appeal to them. Young people can recommend their favorite books and search for recommendations of others.

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