



## Literature and Language Arts

### Resource List for Grades K through 4

The Resources in this document can be used with the Literature and Language Arts Curriculum Packet for grades K through 4.

#### Books

##### Non-fiction and Biography

- AlphaBest: The Zany, Zanier, Zaniest Book about Comparatives and Superlatives, 2012 by Helaine Becker (Author), Dave Whamond (Illustrator).  
Adjectival comparatives and superlatives from angry, angrier, angriest to zany, zanier, zaniest are presented alongside energetic cartoons of carnival scenes. Some pages require a careful look to discern the connection between word and picture. There's no narrative sequence to this visual feast, but the whole is connected by the alphabetical sequence and patterned wordplay.
- An Ambush of Tigers: A Wild Gathering of Collective Nouns, 2015 by Betsy R. Rosenthal (Author), Jago (Illustrator).  
"Would a labor of moles / wear polka-dot ties / when it goes to work / for a business of flies?" Rhyming text features the proper collective noun terms (which may require some adult explanation) for thirty-three animal groups. Textured illustrations of often-personified animals will help readers pick up on the wordplay and enjoy the text's humor.
- Animalogy: Animal Analogies, 2011 by Marianne Berkes (Author), Cathy Morrison (Illustrator).  
This animal-themed book introduces analogies: "Amphibian is to frog / as mammal is to moose." Whether illustrating verbs or nouns, the crisp language features accurate syntax, and rhymes on the alternate pages work well. Vivid illustrations of animals in natural settings are eye-catching.
- Author: A True Story, 2002 by Helen Lester (Author).  
By sharing her struggles as a child and later as a successful author, Helen Lester demonstrates that hurdles are part of the process. She even gives writing tips, such as keeping a "fizzle box." Helen Lester uses her unique ability to laugh at her mistakes to create both a guide for young writers and an amusing personal story of the disappointments and triumphs of a writer's life.
- A Boy, a Mouse, and a Spider: The Story of E. B. White, 2017 by Barbara Herkert (Author), Lauren Castillo (Illustrator).  
When young Elwyn White lay in bed as a sickly child, a bold house mouse befriended him. When the time came for kindergarten, an anxious Elwyn longed for the farm, where animal friends awaited him at the end of each day. Propelled by his fascination with the outside world, he began to jot down his reflections in a journal. Writing filled him with joy, and words became his world.
- A Boy Called Dickens, 2012 by Deborah Hopkinson (Author), John Hendrix (Illustrator).  
As a child, Dickens was forced to live on his own and work long hours in a rat-infested blacking factory. Readers will be drawn into the winding streets of London, where they will learn how Dickens got the inspiration for many of his characters. The 200th anniversary of Dickens's birth

was February 7, 2012, and this tale of his little-known boyhood is the perfect way to introduce kids to the great author.

- Game Changers: A Biography of J. K. Rowling (Time for Kids Nonfiction Readers), 2017 by Teacher Created Materials (Author).  
J.K. Rowling's success is beyond impressive. Few authors in history have experienced anything like it. This high-interest biography details the fascinating life of the creator of the Harry Potter books, J.K. Rowling.
- How to Write a Play, 2012 by Cecilia Roth Minden (Author).  
Writing is an important skill that kids use almost every day, in school, with friends, at home, almost everywhere. This title has tips and tricks that will help them become writing experts.
- Kid Authors: True Tales of Childhood from Famous Writers, 2017 by David Stabler (Author), Doogie Horner (Illustrator).  
Every great author started out as a kid. Before the best sellers, fan clubs, and beloved stories we know today, the world's most celebrated writers had regular-kid problems just like you. Sam Clemens (aka Mark Twain) loved to skip school and make mischief, with his best friend Tom, of course! A young J. R. R. Tolkien was bitten by a huge tarantula, or as he called it, "a spider as big as a dragon." Toddler Zora Neale Hurston took her first steps when a wild hog entered her house and started chasing her!
- Pablo Neruda: Poet of the People, 2011 by Monica Brown (Author), Julie Paschkis (Illustrator).  
Once there was a little boy named Neftalí who loved wild things wildly and quiet things quietly. From the moment he could talk, he surrounded himself with words. Neftalí discovered the magic between the pages of books. When he was sixteen, he began publishing his poems as Pablo Neruda.
- The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus, 2014 by Jen Bryant (Author), Melissa Sweet (Illustrator).  
For shy young Peter Mark Roget, books were the best companions, and it wasn't long before Peter began writing his own book. But he didn't write stories; he wrote lists. Peter took his love for words and turned it to organizing ideas and finding exactly the right word to express just what he thought. His lists grew and grew, eventually turning into one of the most important reference books of all time.
- A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams, 2008 by Jen Bryant (Author), Melissa Sweet (Illustrator).  
When he wrote poems, he felt as free as the Passaic River as it rushed to the falls. Willie's notebooks filled up, one after another. Willie's words gave him freedom and peace, but he also knew he needed to earn a living. So he went off to medical school and became a doctor, one of the busiest men in town! Yet he never stopped writing poetry.
- Twenty-Odd Ducks: Why, every punctuation mark counts!, 2008 by Lynne Truss (Author), Bonnie Timmons (Illustrator).  
Commas and apostrophes aren't the only punctuation marks that can cause big trouble if they're put in the wrong place. The authors put hyphens, parentheses, quotation marks, periods, and more in the spotlight, showing how which marks you choose and where you put them can cause hilarious mix-ups.

## Fiction

- The Best Story, 2008 by Eileen Spinelli (Author), Anne Wilsdorf (Illustrator).  
The best story is one that comes from the heart The library is having a contest for the best story, and the quirky narrator of this story just has to win that rollercoaster ride with her favorite author! But what makes a story the best?
- The Plot Chickens, 2010 by Mary Jane Auch (Author).  
Henrietta loves to read. When she clucks buk, buk, buk at the library, the librarian knows exactly what to recommend. Then Henrietta decides to write a book. With the help of her three aunts, she hatches a plot. But when Henrietta publishes her story, the critics say she's laid an egg! Is this the end of Henrietta's career as an author?
- READ! READ! READ!, 2017 by Amy Ludwig Vanderwater (Author), Ryan O'Rourke (Illustrator).  
Twenty-three poems capture the joys of reading from that thrilling moment when a child first learns to decipher words to the excitement that follows in reading everything from road signs to field guides to internet articles to stories.
- Rocket Writes a Story, 2012 by Tad Hills (Author, Illustrator).  
Rocket loves books and he wants to make his own, but he can't think of a story. Encouraged by the little yellow bird to look closely at the world around him for inspiration, Rocket sets out on a journey. Along the way he discovers small details that he has never noticed before, a timid baby owl who becomes his friend, and an idea for a story.
- A Squiggly Story, 2016 by Andrew Larsen (Author), Mike Lowery (Illustrator).  
A young boy wants to write a story, just like his big sister. But there's a problem, he tells her. Though he knows his letters, he doesn't know many words. Every story starts with a single word and every word starts with a single letter, his sister explains patiently. Why don't you start there, with a letter? So the boy tries. He writes a letter. An easy letter. The letter I. And from that one skinny letter, the story grows, and the little boy discovers that all of us, including him, have what we need to write our own perfect story.
- The Word Collector, 2018 by Peter H. Reynolds (Author).  
Jerome discovers the magic of the words all around him -- short and sweet words, two-syllable treats, and multisyllable words that sound like little songs. Words that connect, transform, and empower.
- Wordplay, 2017 by Ivan Brunetti (Author).  
After Annemarie defines compound word for her teacher, the girl imagines interpreting compounds part by part: an eggplant, for instance, would be a plant that grows eggs. Spacious graphic-novel panels invite readers to spend time with each of Brunetti's humorous illustrations.

## Magazines, Journals, Miscellaneous

- Storybird: Fun, free way to be creative.  
Download in your App Store.
- StoryBuilder: Very cool app asks questions, creates stories from answers.  
Download in your App Store.
- This Is My Story (And I'm Sticking To It): Build (and hear) simple stories by filling in the blanks.  
Download in your App Store.

## Online Links

- The Carle: Museum of Picture Book Art: Interactive Exhibits and much more  
<https://www.carlemuseum.org/>
- The Federation of Children's Books Group: Websites by Children's Authors and Illustrators  
<http://www.fcbg.org.uk/childrens-authors-and-illustrators/>

## Background information for the Educator

- Literature Teaching Guides by Teacher Vision  
<https://www.teachervision.com/lesson-planning/literature-guide>
- Teaching Books: Literacy Connections  
Manage the demands of implementing literacy instruction with materials that deepen the conversation and understanding of the books read in your classes.  
<https://www.teachingbooks.net/>