



CompassLearning®

## Odyssey Reading/Language Arts Levels 3–4

### LEVEL 3 ONLINE AUTHENTIC LITERATURE

Title	Author	Genre	Copyright
Mr. Popper's Penguins	Richard & Florence Atwater	Fantasy fiction	1938
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters	John Steptoe	Fairy tale	1987
Winnie Dancing on Her Own	Jennifer Richard Jacobson	Realistic fiction	2001
Zero Grandparents	Michelle Edwards	Realistic fiction	2001

### LEVEL 4 ONLINE AUTHENTIC LITERATURE

Title	Author	Genre	Copyright
African American Poetry for Young Children (several titles)	<i>Dream Variation</i> by Langston Hughes,	Poetry	1994
	<i>Time to Play</i> by Nikki Grimes,		1991
	<i>Midway</i> by Naomi Long Madgett,		1970
	<i>Harriet Tubman</i> by Eloise Greenfield		1978
Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Dinosaur Bones	David A. Adler	Mystery/fiction	1980
Franklin D. Roosevelt	Joyce E. Newson	Biography/nonfiction	2002
In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson	Bette Bao Lord	Historical fiction	1984
Natural Disasters	Joyce E. Newson	Nonfiction	2002
Sarah, Plain and Tall	Patricia MacLachlan	Historical fiction	1985
The Toothpaste Millionaire	Jean Merrill	Realistic fiction	1972

## LEVEL 3 SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM LITERATURE CIRCLES

### Friendship

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF FRIENDSHIP

*Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White

(Ages 9–12) This classic and touching tale embodies the true meaning of friendship. Charlotte, a spider, spins a very special web in an effort to save her friend, Wilbur, a pig, from becoming a holiday meal. When Charlotte becomes very sick after laying hundreds of eggs, she continues to be a friend to Wilbur and the other animals on the farm by teaching them about the importance of life and legacy.

*Ellen Tebbits* by Beverly Cleary

(Ages 9–12) Although this book was written about fifty years ago, its depiction of friendship can still resonate with young readers. When Ellen's best friend moves away, she finds a new best friend in Austine. With a humorous touch, this story chronicles Ellen and Austine's year in third grade. Even though Ellen and Austine have different outside interests, they each display the qualities of a best friend. And when the two have a falling out, they need to find a way to resolve the conflict together.

*My Friend John* by Charlotte Zolotow

(Ages 4–8) This simple, yet poignant story focuses on the true friendship of two boys. With a simple narrative, a realistic portrayal of friendship emerges. Together, the boys share all of the joys and pitfalls of growing up.

*Stirring It Up (Dish #1)* by Diane Muldrow

(Ages 9–12) For readers with an interest in cooking, this first book in a series about young girls who start a cooking club and business will be a delight! Together, the friends enjoy the process of cooking, eating, and sharing, and realize how food can be an instrument to bring people together. Cooking tips and recipes are included. (This book also ties in well with the sequencing skill highlighted in this chapter.)

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF INDIVIDUALITY

*Bein' With You This Way* by W. Nikola-Lisa

(Ages 4–8) Against an urban, multicultural backdrop, this playground rap emphasizes the beautiful and wonderful differences that make each person an individual. (This book will also work nicely as an example of patterned text.)

*How to Be Cool in the Third Grade* by Betsy Duffey

(Ages 9–12) Upon entering third grade, Robbie decides to make some changes in his life in order to be cool. Through a number of experiences, Bobbie achieves his cool status, but not because of what he wears or who he's with, but because of how he thinks of himself.

*Stellaluna* by Jannell Cannon

(Ages 4–8) When a bat is orphaned at a young age, she is adopted by a family of birds under the condition that she must learn to behave like a bird. Stellaluna does this well until she takes the opportunity to show her bird siblings what life is like as a bat. Through the resolution of the conflict, Stellaluna and her siblings learn an important lesson about the importance of being one's self.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF RELATIONSHIPS

*My Teacher's My Friend* by P. K. Hallinan

(Ages 4–8) This easy-to-read rhyming book positively highlights the important and nurturing relationship between a teacher and a student.

*Ramona and Her Father* by Beverly Cleary

(Ages 9–12) When Ramona's father loses his job and her mother begins working full-time, Ramona's life is unrecognizable to her. Seeing her family in disarray, Ramona tries to solve the problems in her family by practicing to be in television commercials. Her efforts only make things messier, but the touching theme of this novel surfaces as Ramona learns that even through conflict, a family's love and strength can persevere.

#### Fairy Tales

*Bubba the Cowboy Prince: A Fractured Texas Tale* by Helen Ketteman

(Ages 4–8) This is the tale of Bubba (a Texas male version of Cinderella). Bubba gets pushed around on the ranch by his ornery stepdaddy and stepbrothers. He has to do all the dirty work. Bubba has the help of a fairy godcow. When he loses his boot he gains a ranch with Lurleen. This book is chock full of Texas lingo.

*Cinder Edna* by Ellen Jackson

(Ages 5–8) Cinderella waits for the fairy godmother to save her, but Cinder Edna wears loafers and is resourceful. She learns practical skills and earns money cleaning out parrot cages and mowing lawns.

*Cinderella Bigfoot (Happily Ever Laughter)* by Mike Thaler

(Ages 4–8) This is a humorous update of the Cinderella story about a Cinderella with feet so large she wasn't invited to the ball.

*Cindy Ellen: A Wild Western Cinderella* by Susan Lowell

(Ages 4–8) This is a funny Western version of Cinderella, in which the main character has to do all the work around the ranch until her fairy godmother teaches her to have some "gumption". She meets the prince after losing her diamond spur.

*Prince Cinders* by Babette Cole

(Ages 4–8) Prince Cinders is the male version of Cinderella. A skinny boy who does all the work, Prince Cinders is teased by his larger, more masculine brothers who have all the fun. He

does have the help of a fairy godmother. Instead of losing a slipper, he loses his pants but gains the love of a clever princess.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF FRACTURED FAIRY TALES

*Newfangled Fairy Tales: Classic Stories with a Funny Twist, Book #1* by Bruce Lansky (Editor)  
(Age 5–8) This is the first of a multiple-volume collection of classic fairy tales with a new twist. Some of the details of the stories and characters have been changed to add humor and a new, updated angle.

*The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka  
(Ages 5–12) This is the hilarious story of the three little pigs as told from the wolf’s point of view. He insists that he was framed.

#### Animals

##### LAUNCH A STUDY OF PENGUINS

*Antarctic Antics: A Book of Penguin Poems* by Judy Sierra  
(Ages 5–8) This is a collection of songs and poems about the Antarctic and the animals that live there. The poems are fun, but also include factual information. The book includes rhymes such as: “A Hatchling’s Song,” “My Father’s Feet,” “Penguin’s First Swim,” and “Predator Riddles.”

*The Penguin, a Funny Bird* by Beatrice Fontanel  
(Ages 5–8) The book explores penguin habits, family life, characteristics, and the penguin’s natural habitat. A year in the life of King penguins is presented. The book includes beautiful photographs.

*Plenty of Penguins (Hello Reader Science Series)* by Sonia W. Black  
(Ages 4–8) The book includes information about different types of penguins. It also gives similarities and differences between penguins and humans.

*Tacky the Penguin* by Helen Lester  
(Ages 7–9) This fictional story is one in a series about a penguin that marches to his own drummer. His tacky dress and bad manners make him an individual and he is also quite clever. Tacky has many adventures and these can be found in the books: *Three Cheers for Tacky*, *Tacky and the Emperor*, and *Tacky in Trouble*, all by Helen Lester.

##### LAUNCH A STUDY OF THE ARCTIC, THE ANTARCTIC, AND HABITATS

*Antarctica* by Helen Cowcher  
(Ages 5–8) The author describes the daily lives and trials of the Emperor penguins, Adelle penguins, and seals during one Antarctic winter. This book may be slightly below grade level, but includes worthwhile information.

*Ice Continent: A Story of Antarctica* by Louise O. Young

(Ages 6–9) This is available in a book and cassette package. It lyrically illustrates the environment of Antarctica and the animals that live in that habitat. The cassette includes both narration and animal sounds that accompany the story.

*Seven Weeks on an Iceberg: A Journey to the Coldest Place on the Planet . . . Antarctica*

by Keith R. Potter

(Ages 6–9) This book includes a wealth of information about penguins that is presented in a friendly, yet informative style as cartoon characters, King and Queen Penguin, travel on an iceberg to Antarctica. Full-color photographs describe 17 types of penguins and their way of life.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF EXOTIC PETS

*Annie and the Wild Animals* by Jan Brett

(Ages 4–8) Annie loses her cat and tries to make friends with many woodland animals.

*The Salamander Room* by Anne Mazer

(Ages 4–8) A boy finds a salamander and then turns his bedroom into the perfect salamander environment.

*Wolves* by Seymour Simon

(Ages 4–8) This book explains the characteristics of wolves, their relationship to one another, and their relationship to humans.

*Your Goats: A Kid's Guide to Raising and Showing* by Gail Damerow

(Ages 9–12) This book tells the reader about many different types of goats and how to buy, raise, and show them.

#### Family

##### LAUNCH A STUDY OF FAMILY

*The Elevator Family* by Douglas Evans

(Ages 8–12) This is a funny story about a family that only wants the best. They travel to a fancy hotel only to find that there are no more rooms available! So, they decide to check into the hotel's elevator. Read all about the silly adventures this family shares, and the guests they encounter.

*The Family Under the Bridge* by Natalie Savage Carlson

(Ages 7–11) This is a chapter book about a family that lives under a bridge. They only own the clothes on their backs, and carry their few belongings in a cart. This story describes the amazing love a family shares when all they have is each other.

*In My Family/En Mi Familia* by Carmen Lomas Garza

(Ages 6–9) The author of this book highlights her life growing up in a Hispanic family and community. There are English and Spanish translations as well as bright, beautiful illustrations.

*The Swiss Family Robinson* by Johann Wyss

(Ages 8–10) First published in 1812, this is a classic tale of a shipwrecked family that must adjust to life on a deserted island. This version was rewritten to accommodate third- through fifth-grade readers.

*When Lightning Comes in a Jar* by Patricia Polacco

(Ages 4–8) This picture book is told from a young girl's point of view. She tells a story about how much she enjoys the family reunion that took place at her grandmother's house.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF GENEALOGY

*Climbing Your Family Tree: Online and Off-line Genealogy for Kids* by Ira Wolfman

(Ages 4–8) This is a complete guide to help children create a family tree, and track their family history and ancestors.

*Grandma's Ashanti Cloth* by Maria McNaught

(Ages 3–10) This is a story about Malik, a third grader, who is given an assignment to make a family tree. In his studies, he learns about his family and ancestors, and he gains a deep respect for the importance of family.

*Who's Who in My Family?* by Loreen Leedy

(Ages 5–8) Students make family trees in their classroom. They learn the many different kinds of members in families. By sharing their family trees with each other they realize how special all families are.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF GRANDPARENTS

*Abuela's Weave* by Omar S. Castaneda

(Ages 5–8) This is a story about a Guatemalan grandmother who shares her love of weaving with her young granddaughter. They develop a close relationship as they spend time together weaving, and bring their tapestries to a market with hopes of selling them. Enjoy the colorful cultural illustrations.

*Grandparents: Around the World* by Patricia Lakin

(Ages 8–11) This book discusses the cultural role of grandparents in countries around the world such as China, Iraq, the United States, Italy, Canada, and Ecuador.

### Community

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF OTHER BILINGUAL (SPANISH/ENGLISH) BOOKS

*Bakery Lady/La señora de la panadería* by Pat Mora

(Ages 5–8) This is a story of family tradition, in the context of a non-traditional family. A girl lives with her grandparents above the bakery. She relates what it is like to work in a bakery and dreams of some day doing so. Soon, she gets her chance and the grandparents allow her to act as boss and do the baking for a big party. The book is enhanced by colorful illustrations and the text is bilingual.

*Calling the Doves/El canto de las palomas* by Juan Felipe Herrera

(Ages 5–8) This book presents poet Juan Felipe Herrera’s personal memories of his childhood as a son of a migrant farm worker in the mountains and valleys of California. From his loving family, he learns a love for the land and gains an appreciation for poetry and song. It is illustrated in colored pencil and acrylic and the text is bilingual. The book is suitable for group activities.

*Faith and the Electric Dogs* by Patrick Jennings

(Ages 9–12) This book is suitable for advanced readers in your classroom or you can use it to read aloud to students. Jennings paints an amusing portrait of Faith, an American girl who feels very alone in her new, Mexican home. Fortunately, she befriends a Mexican dog named Eddie who speaks fluent English, Spanish, and Bowwow.

*Hairs/Pelitos* by Sandra Cisneros

(Ages 5–8) As an example of the diversity among us, a girl describes how each person in her family has hair that looks and behaves differently. Taken from the author’s acclaimed *The House on Mango Street*, this book has poetic language and intimate portrayals of characters. The text is bilingual.

*In My Family/En Mi Familia* by Carmen Lomas Garza

(Ages 6–9) This book tells of the author’s childhood in a Texas community. It is a follow-up book to her best-selling *Family Pictures* and has rich illustrations and personal anecdotes. The book gives the reader a sense of the small town community of Kingsville, Texas. The text is bilingual.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF HISPANIC CULTURE

*Barrio: Jose’s Neighborhood* by George Ancona

(Ages 7–12) An eight-year-old boy celebrates life in a barrio of San Francisco, with adventures in school, at play, and on holidays. Photographs in the book are by the award-winning author and photographer. The author captures the diversity in language and culture of an American community.

*Drum, Chavi, Drum!/¡Toca, Chavi, Toca!* by Mayra L. Dole

(Ages 6–8) This is a story of a young girl who lives in the Cuban-American community of Miami, Florida. Her love of drums finds her using lots of things in her environment in order to produce a rhythmic beat. Everything from paint cans to pieces of furniture become a drum. The book includes a description of the Calle Ocho festival, which is also introduced in *¡Bienvenidos a Mi Barrio!* by Nicole Marie Droz.

*Mama Does the Mambo* by Katherine Leiner

(Ages 5–9) Set in Cuba, this is a sad, sweet story told by a young girl who has lost her papa. Dealing with the loss, the girl’s wish is that her mama will dance again. This, she thinks, would make everything okay. Some Spanish phrases are included. Colored woodcuts present the warm colors of Havana. Teachers may need to be prepared to handle questions about the United States’ boycott of Cuba, and about the painful loss of a loved one.

## LAUNCH A STUDY OF COMMUNITY LIFE

### *America's Promise* by Alma Powell

(Ages 4–8) Written by the wife of Secretary of State Colin Powell, this book introduces the readers to the five promises of America's Alliance for Youth—a non-profit organization that encourages the nation to make the needs of children a priority. These include such promises as: children will have a caring adult in their life and all children will learn skills that will help them make a living. The five principles are imbedded in a story about Momma, Honey, and Benji Bear, who visit places in their community.

### *City Green* by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan

(Ages 5–8) A young girl, saddened by the demolition of an old building in her neighborhood, rallies everyone to pitch in and clean up this newly created vacant lot. Soon, all the neighbors are contributing, with seeds and plants and work, and the final product is a beautiful garden that everyone can enjoy. The book includes watercolor and soft pencil illustrations. A multicultural mix of African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Caucasians are assembled in a warm, urban renewal story.

### *Community Helpers from A to Z* by Bobbie Kalman

(Ages 6–7) This alphabet book is more than a simple alphabet book. This is a picture dictionary of community-related occupations. Some of the community helpers described are veterinarians, firefighters, police officers, and others in the medical and service industries of a typical community.

### *I Live in a Town* by Stasia Ward Kehoe

(Age 8) An eight-year-old boy describes life in New Hampshire. This book provides information about the small town, including its homes, schools, and local government. This book is part of the *Kids in Their Communities* series.

### *Miami: What to Do, Where to Go, and How to Have Fun in Miami* by Frank Davies

(Ages 6–10) This book will give students a description of the city of Miami and an introduction to its activities. This book is part of the *Kidding Around!* series.

### *My Grandma's the Mayor: A Story for Children about Community Spirit and Pride*

by Marjorie White Pellegrino

(Ages 6–12) Annie loves her grandmother, but dislikes sharing her with so many people in the community. Annie's grandmother, the mayor, has a great deal of responsibility. Annie discovers her own community spirit and just how valuable her grandmother is when a community disaster strikes.

### *What Is a Community? from A to Z* by Bobbie Kalman

(Ages 7–8) This alphabet book introduces the basic elements of a typical community, such as government, buildings, transportation, and community services. This book emphasizes the idea that a community consists of people working together.

## Folktales

### LAUNCH A STUDY OF FOLKTALES

*Abiyoyo* by Pete Seeger

(Ages 5–8) This is a story adapted from the South African folktale written in 1956. A boy and his magician father are told to leave town because the father makes everything disappear. But when a giant named Abiyoyo comes to town, the villagers ask the father and son to come back and also make the giant vanish.

*Ananse and the Lizard: A West African Tale* by Pat Cummings

(Ages 4–8) This is a retelling of a trickster tale from Ghana about Ananse the spider. In this retelling, Ananse and Lizard are both vying for the princess' hand in marriage. Whoever discovers her name can marry her and inherit all of the riches in the kingdom.

*Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain: A Nandi Tale* by Verna Aardema

(Ages 5–8) Aardema's story of Ka-pit bringing rain to Kapiti Plain is a good story that illustrates rhyme and repetition. Colorful illustrations add to the story's charm.

*Crocodile and Hen: A Bakongo Folktale* by Joan M. Lexau

(Ages 4–6) This Level 1 book from the *I Can Read* series would be good to have on hand for lower readers. It is the charming story of a hen who outwits the crocodile who wants to eat her.

*Mediopollito/Half-Chicken* by Alma Flor Ada

(Ages 4–8) This bilingual story is a retelling of a traditional folktale. It is an entertaining story of how the weather vane came into creation.

*A Story, a Story* by Gail E. Haley

(Ages 4–8) There are many African tales written about Ananse, the spider. This book explains how all of those stories came to be.

*Strega Nona* by Tomie dePaola

(Ages 4–8) This Caldecott award-winning book by dePaola is sure to amuse readers of all ages. In a small Italian town, Strega Nona or Grandma Witch leaves Big Anthony to watch her house as she leaves town to visit a friend. He gets into trouble when he attempts to use one of her spells to fill a pot with pasta and he can't stop the spell.

*The Talking Eggs* by Robert D. San Souci

(Ages 5–8) This Southern Creole story shows how kindness and generosity are rewarded and greed is punished. The imaginative story is told with a charming voice, and vivid illustrations add to the overall flavor.

*The Wish Giver* by Bill Brittain

(Ages 9–12) This is a spooky tale of a strange man who visits the small town of Coven Tree and promises to give townsfolk whatever they wish for. This is a good book for advanced readers or for read-alouds.

## LAUNCH A STUDY OF EGYPT

*Ancient Egypt* by Rosalie David

(Ages 8–11) *Ancient Egypt* from the *Growing Up In* series, is a good reference book for students.

*Bill and Pete Go Down the Nile* by Tomie dePaola

(Ages 5–8) Bill the crocodile and Pete, his feathered friend, are going on a field trip with their class. Readers can join them in their adventures as they foil a jewel thief and learn a bit about Egyptian history.

*Cleopatra* by Diane Stanley and Peter Vennema

(Ages 8–11) Young students will find the biography enjoyable, as it is filled with interesting details about the historical queen's life.

*The Egyptian Cinderella* by Shirley Climo

(Ages 5–8) Students will enjoy this whimsical Cinderella story set in Egypt. The story can prompt comparisons of fairy tales and folktales, as well as comparisons of this story and the online story, *The Queen and the Crocodile*.

*Pyramids! 50 Hands-On Activities to Experience Ancient Egypt* by Avery Hart and Paul Mantell

(Ages 5–11) This project book is great for teachers to use to provide students with hands-on experience with the culture, art, and customs of Ancient Egypt.

## LAUNCH A STUDY OF CROCODILES

*The Crocodile Family Book* by Mark Deeble

(Ages 6–10) *The Crocodile Family Book* offers excellent photographs and informative details about the crocodile life cycle and habits.

*The Enormous Crocodile* by Roald Dahl

(Ages 7–10) One day, a clever crocodile decides he wants to make a meal of a child. The other animals are horrified by the crocodile and they manage to stop him from getting his wish. In the end, the trickster gets what he deserves.

*Snap! A Book About Alligators and Crocodiles* by Melvin and Gilda Berger

(Ages 6–8) This nonfiction science book provides detailed information about these two interesting creatures. It is part of the *Hello Reader! Science* series.

## LAUNCH A STUDY OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

*The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

(Ages 5–8) Silverstein's timeless story of generosity, friendship, and love is a favorite of young and old.

*The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss

(Ages 4–8) The Once-ler tells this story of how he was obsessed with greed and how his greedy actions destroyed the environment.

*The Quiltmaker's Gift* by Jeff Brumbeau

(Ages 5–8) A greedy king learns his lesson from a generous quiltmaker. He asks her to sew him a quilt and she encourages him to change his ways.

*The Sign of the Seahorse: A Tale of Greed and High Adventure in Two Acts* by Graeme Base

(Ages 6–9) The rhyming verse in the story may prove a bit too difficult for lower readers, but this is a delightful story to read aloud. Follow Pearl Trout and Corporal Bert as they race to save their coral reef from the greedy underhanded dealings of Gropmund Grouper.

*The Tower: A Story of Humility* by Richard Paul Evans

(Ages 4–8) Evans weaves a lyrical and beautiful story of a virtue that's difficult to teach. A Chinese man believes that in order to be great, people must literally look up to him, so he builds a tower that extends to the clouds and lives alone at the top of this tower. One day, a bird tells him that there is a woman who is greater than he. He leaves his tower to find this woman and learns important lessons from her about the virtues necessary to truly be great.

*Wringer* by Jerry Spinelli

(Ages 8–12) Advanced readers will enjoy this book about Palmer, a boy who must stand up for his beliefs and do what's right, despite inevitable taunting. Some of the language and concepts may be difficult for students, so you may choose to read this aloud. It's a thought-provoking book that will promote discussion of peer pressure and courage.

## Tall Tales

### LAUNCH A STUDY OF TALL TALE COLLECTIONS

*American Tall Tales* by Mary Pope Osborne

(Ages 8–11) This oversized book is a collection of beautifully illustrated American tall tales about folk heroes such as Pecos Bill, John Henry, Johnny Appleseed, Paul Bunyan, Davy Crockett, Stormalong, and a fictitious composite female character called Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind. There are nine tall tale heroes in all. Each tale includes an introduction.

*American Tall Tales* by Adrien Stoutenburg

(Ages 8–11) This is a collection of eight American tall tales about the following folk heroes: Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, Stormalong, Mike Fink, Davy Crockett, Johnny Appleseed, John Henry, and Joe Magarac.

### LAUNCH A STUDY OF REGIONAL FOLK HEROES

*Big Jabe* by Jerdine Nolen

(Ages 7–10) An inspiring tall tale set in slavery times. Addy, a slave, finds a boy floating down the river in a basket. The boy grows rapidly and does a number of wondrous things. The plantation prospers despite the fact that slaves begin to mysteriously disappear. The scenes that are illustrated provide a sense of real place and character.

*The Bunyans* by Audrey Wood

(Ages 5–9) Paul Bunyan, his wife, and their two king-sized kids frolic across America. Paul scoops out Niagara Falls to make a shower for his daughter. Ma Bunyan uses her giant pickax to create Old Faithful to get hot water for her laundry. The Bunyan family has roaring fun and the reader is introduced to the natural wonders of America. This book includes full-page color illustrations.

*Jalapeño Hal* by Jo Harper

(Ages 5–8) Rough and tough Jalapeño Hal, who eats hot peppers as if they were potato chips, rides into a dry Texas town. With the aid of a boy named Kit, they cook up a plan to save the town from drought. Barbed wire, peppers, and brands decorate the text and the large format illustrations make this book good for group sharing.

*Johnny Appleseed: A Tall Tale* by Steven Kellogg

(Ages 6–9) This is a story of Johnny's travels throughout the land. It tells of his love of nature and of his scattering of apple seeds. It describes the adventures of a beloved American folk hero, from his birth in Massachusetts in 1774 to his death in Indiana in 1845. The book is done in picture book format with illustrations by the author.

*Johnny Kaw: The Pioneer Spirit of Kansas* by Jerri Garretson

(Ages 5–9) In a Bunyan-like tall tale, larger-than-life Johnny Kaw creates the territory called Kansas by taking off the tops of mountains, digging riverbeds, planting wheat, and carving out pioneer trails.

*Kansas Katie: A Sunflower Tale* by Jerri Garretson

(Ages 6–10) A companion book to Johnny Kaw, Katie heads west with the pioneers and becomes the "Johnny Appleseed" of sunflowers. She "spreads sunshine" all over Kansas until it is declared the Sunflower State in 1903.

*Ozark Tall Tales* by Richard Alan Young and Judy Dockrey Young

(Ages 9–11) This book is a collection of tall tales that mountain people have been telling for years, such as the popular "The One-Bullet Hunt." The addition of jokes and pen-and-ink drawings by W. E. Hall add to this book's enjoyment.

*Pecos Bill* by Bill Balczak

(Ages 7–9) This is a humorous tale of a boy raised by coyotes, who grew up to be a wild cowboy. The story begins with Bill's round-up of a herd of runaway longhorns, and then the tall tale adventures just keep coming. This book includes vibrant watercolor illustrations and is also good as a read-aloud book.

*Steamboat Annie and the Thousand-Pound Catfish* by Catherine Wright

(Ages 6–9) Steamboat Annie vows to catch a 1000-pound catfish named Ernie, who has eaten a number of boats, the dock, and half of the church. Meanwhile, Jefferson Jackson, the villain and a candidate for mayor, teams up with the catfish to get rid of Annie. The battle of wits that follows is pure fun. Bold and humorous acrylic paintings comprise the illustrations.

## LEVEL 4 SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM LITERATURE CIRCLES

### Pioneers

#### LAUNCH A FURTHER STUDY OF JACOB, SARAH, ANNA, AND CALEB

The following books are a part of the series that begins with *Sarah, Plain and Tall*.

##### *Caleb's Story* by Patricia MacLachlan

(Ages 9–12) When Anna leaves home to work in town, Caleb is given the responsibility of recording the family events, and thus, he narrates this third and final book in the series. When the new member of the family, Cassie, daughter of Jacob and Sarah, sees an unknown man on the farm, the family dynamic is disturbed. The man turns out to be Jacob's father. Family problems are once again addressed as a theme in this novel as old conflicts between Jacob and his father resurface and are healed with the help of Caleb.

##### *Skylark* by Patricia MacLachlan

(Ages 9–12) When a drought threatens the farm, Sarah takes Anna and Caleb to Maine. While the children are somewhat happily distracted by their new surroundings, they still worry about the farm and they miss their father. They worry, too, that Sarah will not feel the same bond to the farm as their father. The multi-leveled conflicts are pacified when after it finally rains on the prairie, Papa fetches his wife and children from Maine and they return to the prairie where Sarah writes her name in the soil.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF PIONEERS

##### *Caddie Woodlawn* by Carol Ryrie Brink

(Ages 9–12) Although this Newbery Medal Winner was written in 1935, its main character and action-filled plot still holds the interest of its readers. Set in 1864, Caddie and her brothers engage readers with their many adventures in the forests and rivers of Wisconsin. The high-spirited Caddie is based on the real-life grandmother of the author. (The length of this novel—288 pages—may be too challenging to be read independently by some readers.)

##### *Ellen's Story* by Susan Kirby

(Ages 9–12) Similar to Anna and Caleb in *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, Ellen has lost her mother and must adjust to a new mother. Ellen's father leaves for town one day in 1830 and returns to the farm with a new wife and a new stepson. The family is forced to deal with the new family dynamic and the typical challenges, like storms, floods and fires, faced on a farm in the 1800s.

##### *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder

(Ages 9–12) Perhaps the most famous of pioneer stories, this novel centers on young Laura Ingalls and her family. The family sets their sights on Kansas as they say goodbye to their home in Wisconsin. Although different obstacles challenge them as they make their way and build their little house on the prairie, they are excited about the possibilities of a new life in a new setting. (This is just one of the many stories written by Laura Ingalls Wilder about life on the prairie.)

*Pioneer Cat* by William H. Hooks

(Ages 9–12) This action-filled adventure highlights three memorable characters: two young girls and one feline. The two young girls, Kate and Rosie, are determined to keep the feline, Snuggs, a secret while they travel in a wagon train with their families to Oregon. (The readability, quick-paced plot, and length of this book—62 pages—make it appropriate for independent reading and/or for less independent readers.)

*Rachel's Journal: The Story of a Pioneer Girl* by Marissa Moss

(Ages 9–12) Through Rachel's prose, notes, and colorful drawings, readers will feel as if they are traveling with ten-year old Rachel in a covered wagon from Illinois to California.

*Westward to Home: Joshua's Diary, The Oregon Trail, 1848* by Patricia Hermes

(Ages 9–12) Through the young voice of Joshua McCullough, readers will be transported to 1848 to travel from Missouri to Oregon with Josh and his family. Readers will get a vivid and accurate account of the daily routines and obstacles faced by wagon train travelers.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF SETTINGS IN THE UNITED STATES

*One Morning in Maine* by Robert McCloskey

(Ages 4–8) The loveable and charming young character in this simple story parallels the equally charming setting of the story. Young Sal experiences myriad adventures growing up on the coast of Maine.

*Stories from Where We Live: The California Coast* by Sara St. Antoine (Editor)

(Ages 9–12) The diversity of the California coast is echoed in the diverse nature of the inclusions in this anthology. Historical and modern stories, poems, essays, and autobiographical vignettes will provide a thorough introduction to this expansive setting. Appendixes, including maps, climates, parks and preserves, may work well to augment a cross-curricular social studies unit.

*Stories from Where We Live: The North Atlantic Coast* by Sara St. Antoine (Editor)

(Ages 9–12) Accompanied by pictures depicting natural settings, these stories, folktales, essays, journal entries, songs and poems about the people, places, and lifestyles indigenous to the North Atlantic coast will both teach and entertain readers.

#### Natural Disasters

##### LAUNCH A STUDY OF NATURAL DISASTERS AND HAZARDS

*Avalanche (Nature in Action Series)* by Stephen Kramer

(Ages 8–10) This book explains different types of avalanches and where they happen. It gives advice for safety when in avalanche territory.

*Blizzard! The Storm that Changed America* by Jim Murphy

(Ages 9–12) This book is an account of the blizzard of 1888 that occurred on the East Coast and how people survived.

*Janice VanCleave's Earthquakes: Mind-Boggling Experiments You Can Turn into Science Fair Projects* by Janice VanCleave

(Ages 9–12) This book includes twenty simple experiments explaining earthquakes that can be done by children with household materials.

*Tornadoes: And Other Dramatic Weather Systems* by Michael Allaby

(Ages 9–12) This book includes information about hurricanes, droughts, flash floods, and other weather events. It includes numerous photos, “Weird World” facts, and lists of Web sites.

*Volcano & Earthquake (DK Eyewitness Books #38)* by Susanna Van Rose

(Ages 9–12) This book in the *DK Eyewitness Books* series shows the locations of earthquakes and volcanoes and how they occur. There are numerous photos and drawings. It also discusses how humans predict and interact with these phenomena of nature.

*Volcanoes and Other Natural Disasters (DK Eyewitness Readers)* by Harriet Griffey

(Ages 7–9) This book includes full-color photos and facts on earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, fires, and tidal waves.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF SAFETY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

*The Blizzard Disaster* by Peg Kehret (Fiction)

(Ages 9–11) With the use of a special time-travel machine, Warren and Betsy find themselves in a Minnesota blizzard in 1940.

*Earthquake Terror* by Peg Kehret (Fiction)

(Ages 9–11) While camping on a deserted island, a boy, his injured mother, and his disabled sister find themselves stranded when an earthquake hits.

*The Night on Avalanche Hill* by Mike Hulit (Fiction)

(Ages 8–11) This is a story of Jamie and Elizabeth, who end up swept under a blanket of snow and must use their wits to escape.

*Online stories of Julia and Robbie, the Disaster Twins*, from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Web site. Through a number of online stories, the twins tell how to protect your home from disaster.

*Rescue (DK Eyewitness Books)* by Claire Watts

(Ages 9–12) This reference book teaches children about emergency rescues and what to do until help arrives.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF NEWSPAPER REPORTING

*Extra! Extra! The Who, What, Where, When, and Why of Newspapers* by Linda Granfield

(Ages 9–12) Through facts and cartoon-line illustrations, young readers get to experience the workings of a big city newspaper.

*The Young Journalist's Book: How to Write and Produce Your Own Newspaper* by Donna Guthrie and Nancy Bentley

(Ages 8–11) This easy-to-read book describes the functions and elements of a newspaper and explains the process from covering news to distribution.

## **African American Poetry**

### **LAUNCH A STUDY OF MORE AFRICAN AMERICAN POETRY**

*The Dream Keeper and Other Poems* by Langston Hughes

(Age 9 and up) This book, originally published in 1932, is a collection of sixty-six poems that were chosen for young readers by the author. The poems explore the black experience through many different styles of rhythmic language.

*I, Too, Sing America: Three Centuries of African American Poetry* by Catherine Clinton (Editor)

(Ages 9–11) This is a collection of thirty-five poems by over twenty African American authors. The book includes poems by Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Lucy Terry and others. The breadth of the poetry extends from the first known poem by a black author through the Harlem Renaissance poets to the present.

*Nathaniel Talking* by Eloise Greenfield

(Ages 9–11) This book won the 1990 Coretta Scott King Award. The author writes poetry from the perspective of a young, African American boy. The eighteen poems span a variety of styles including free verse and rap.

*A Pocketful of Poems* by Nikki Grimes

(Ages 6–12) This book begins with a spring morning and ends with a New Year. The setting is Harlem and the character is a young girl named Tiana. The layout of the book includes one poem in free verse and another in haiku on the facing page. The poems will inspire children to write verse of their own.

*Soul Looks Back in Wonder* by Tom Feelings (Illustrator)

(Ages 6–12) This poetry collection is a picture book that includes contemporary African American authors. Among those represented are: Maya Angelou, Lucille Clifton, Askia M. Toure, and Langston Hughes. The book honors the African American heritage. There are twelve contributors in all. (**Note:** poems are best chosen by the teacher as the vocabulary in a few poems might not be appropriate for young children.)

### **LAUNCH A STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN POETS**

*Gwendolyn Brooks* by Jill C. Wheeler

(Ages 9–12) This book is a biography of Gwendolyn Brooks. Ms. Brooks, an African American poet, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1950 for her poetry, which reflects the African American experience.

*Langston Hughes, American Poet* by Alice Walker

(Ages 7–10) This biography of the African American poet, Langston Hughes, is told by Alice Walker. Walker, a Pulitzer-Prize winning writer, describes how Langston experienced loneliness and racism as a child, but found solace in his love of books. The love of books inspired him to write poetry about black people and later become one of the great African American poets of the 20th century.

*A Voice of Her Own: The Story of Phillis Wheatley, Slave Poet* by Kathryn Lasky

(Ages 9–11) In this book, Kathryn Lasky tells the story of Phyllis Wheatley, the first published African American poet who arrived in Boston in 1760 on a slave ship. She began writing poetry at age 12 and became famous in her teens.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF PAST GENERATIONS

*Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman* by Dorothy Sterling

(Ages 8–12) This book is a biography of the brave African American woman who was known for her efforts in the Underground Railroad, by which she helped hundreds of slaves go North to freedom. The book gives many details of Harriet's life.

*In Praise of Our Fathers and Our Mothers* compiled by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson  
(Age 9 and up) This is a collection of stories and memories of nearly fifty black authors who write appreciatively of their elders. This book contains poetry, essays, memoirs, and interviews as well as a selection of paintings and photographs. Because of the sophistication of the contents, this book will probably be best used as a resource for teachers to share with students, rather than read independently.

*Remember the Bridge: Poems of a People* by Carole Boston Weatherford

(Ages 9–12) The author uses archival photographs of over 400 years of the African American struggle to accompany her original poetry. The book includes images of the slave trade, slave markets and plantation life, as well as the Civil Rights movement and famous Black Americans in the present.

#### Inventors

##### LAUNCH A STUDY OF KIDS INVENTING

*Brainstorm! The Stories of Twenty American Kid Inventors* by Tom Tucker

(Ages 9–12) Kids have invented things such as the Popsicle and earmuffs. This inspiring book describes the stories of patented inventions designed by young people, including girls and minorities, from colonial times to the present.

*Build a Better Mousetrap: Make Classic Inventions, Discover Your Problem-Solving Genius, and Take the Inventor's Challenge* by Ruth Kassinger

(Ages 9–12) The book shows how inventions are solutions to human problems. It is filled with exciting projects and easy-to-follow directions on how to make such things as a bottle organ and a kaleidoscope. It challenges students' thinking and gets them started on the creative process.

*The Kids' Invention Book* by Arlene Erlbach

(Ages 9–12) This book contains stories about real kids who created actual inventions. It takes kids through the invention process, from imagining an idea to actually creating a model. It includes information on patents, contests, and organizations as well as how to start an inventor's club. The book also has a glossary of invention terms.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF FAMOUS INVENTIONS AND INVENTORS

*Accidents May Happen: Fifty Inventions Discovered by Mistake* by Charlotte Foltz Jones

(Ages 8–12) This book includes the sometimes humorous but inspiring stories of fifty inventions that were discovered by accident. Inventions include things from buttons to peanut brittle.

*Alexander Graham Bell: An Inventive Life* by Elizabeth MacLeod

(Ages 8–12) This book traces the life of the famous inventor from birth through his life of achievements that includes airplanes and sea equipment. The reader will learn not only about Bell's invention of the telephone, but also about his strong desire to help others, such as the hearing impaired. The book includes photographs and sketches of inventions.

*Invention (DK Eyewitness Books)* by Lionel Bender

(Ages 9–12) This book includes actual photographs and interesting stories of early inventions such as the wheel and gears, the radio and the telescope, as well as modern-day inventions, such as the computer.

*What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?* by Jean Fritz

(Ages 8–11) This is a short biography of Benjamin Franklin a multi-faceted man who, besides being a statesman, was a printer and inventor.

*The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane* by Russell Freedman

(Age 10 and up) This book is an amazing collection of biographical texts on the lives of the Wright brothers, plus original photographs taken by Wilbur and Orville Wright, letters, and journal articles that document the invention process. This is a 1992 Newbery Honor Book.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF BUSINESS, MARKETING, MATH, AND MONEY

*Better Than a Lemonade Stand: Small Business Ideas for Kids (Kids' Books by Kids)* by Daryl Bernstein

(Ages 9–13) The author of this book, Daryl Bernstein, published this book when he was fifteen. He has had his own businesses since the age of eight. In this book, he gives tips on how to start a business, what to charge, and how to advertise. He gives advice on pricing, start-up costs, and supplies. He also suggests fifty-one small businesses.

*The Kids' Business Book (Kids' Ventures)* by Arlene Erlbach

(Ages 9–13) This book describes businesses that were started by kids from ages seven to twelve. It includes information on advertising and accounting for businesses.

*The Totally Awesome Business Book for Kids: With Twenty Super Businesses You Can Start Right Now!*

by Adriane G. Berg and Arthur Berg Bochner

(Age 12 and up) A young boy and his mom wrote this book. It includes twenty businesses for kids to start plus practical tips on budgeting, keeping records, and marketing, as well as other essential business skills.

## Famous Americans

### LAUNCH A STUDY OF OTHER FAMOUS AMERICANS

*Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride: Based on a True Story* by Pam Muñoz Ryan

(Ages 4–8) This book is based on true facts of a night when Eleanor Roosevelt and Amelia Earhart slipped away from a formal dinner at the White House to take an impromptu flight. The picture book includes background information about these two political activists and role models.

*Jonas Salk and the Polio Vaccine (Unlocking the Secrets of Science)* by John Bankston

(Ages 9–12) This biography describes the life of Jonas Salk, from his childhood to the scientific research that finally led to the cure for polio. The book also describes Franklin Delano Roosevelt's illness.

*Presidents: A Library of Congress Book* by Martin W. Sandler

(Grades 3–8) This is an informational book on our forty-two presidents.

*Young Martin Luther King, Jr.: "I Have a Dream" (First-Start Biographies)* by Joanne Mattern

(Ages 4–8) This is a biography of a famous black leader who overcame obstacles to achieve his dreams of equality for all.

### LAUNCH A STUDY OF LIFE IN THE DEPRESSION ERA

*Dear Mr. President: Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Letters from a Mill Town Girl* by Elizabeth Winthrop

This fictional book chronicles a three-year correspondence between Emma Bartoletti, the 12-year-old daughter of an Italian immigrant, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Emma writes to the president to ask him why life is so hard for her family in the Depression era. The president responds with his philosophy. The book includes black and white photographs of the period.

*Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters from Children of the Great Depression* by Robert Cohen (Editor)

This book includes nearly 200 letters written to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt by American children during the time of the Depression. While the book may be slightly above grade-level reading, these authentic letters, written by real children, can be a poignant source for discussion about life during one of America's most challenging times.

*Dust for Dinner* by Ann Turner

(Ages 4–8) This is a story about an Oklahoma family living through hard times.

## LAUNCH A STUDY OF OVERCOMING PHYSICAL CHALLENGES

*Franklin D. Roosevelt: U.S. President (Great Achievers: Lives of the Physically Challenged)*

by Don Nardo

This book emphasizes Roosevelt's strong personality traits that allowed him to achieve his goals despite his physical challenges.

*Helen Keller's Teacher* by Margaret Davidson

(Grades 4–6) This is the true story of Annie Sullivan, a girl with many challenges of her own, who grew up to become Helen Keller's teacher and friend.

*Small Steps: The Year I Got Polio* by Peg Kehret

This book is an autobiography written by a children's book writer who contracted polio in 1949. The book details her struggles and triumphs.

## LAUNCH A COMMUNITY PROJECT

*The Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference* by Barbara A. Lewis

This book for children provides an extensive list of possible service projects and describes the steps for planning and carrying out a project.

## Mystery

### LAUNCH A STUDY OF OTHER MYSTERIES

*The Case of the Elevator Duck* by Polly Berrien Berends

(Ages 7–9) Gilbert is eleven years old, but he's a detective. The case he is solving involves a duck found in the elevator of his housing project.

*Dinosaur Alert (Nancy Drew Notebooks #40)* by Carolyn Keene

(Ages 9–12) Nancy has to prove to the irritating boys in her class that a footprint found on the school grounds was really made by a dinosaur. If she proves the case, the annoying boys promise to leave Nancy and her friends alone.

*The Egypt Game* by Zilpha Keatley Snyder

(Ages 9–12) Two girls, who both love ancient Egypt, begin a fantasy game. Soon there are six Egyptians instead of two. They meet in a garage, where they wear costumes and carry out secret ceremonies. Soon, strange things begin to happen. This book is a Newbery award winner.

*From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E. L. Konigsburg

(Ages 9–12) In this 1968 Newbery Award-winning book, a young girl and her brother run away to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and solve a mystery with the help of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler.

## LAUNCH A STUDY OF MYSTERY SERIES

*A to Z Mysteries* by Ron Roy

(Ages 7–10) Read about the adventures of third-graders Dink, Josh, and Ruth Rose as they solve a collection of mystery stories with alphabetical titles from *The Absent Author* to *The School Skeleton*.

*Cam Jansen Series* by David A. Adler

(Ages 9–12) Read more about Cam Jansen, a red-haired girl with a photographic memory, and her friend, Eric. Cam and Eric solve many mysteries together. The Cam Jansen books also include a series of easier readers called *The Young Cam Jansen* series.

*Encyclopedia Brown Series* by Donald J. Sobol

(Ages 7–11) Leroy Brown, better known as Encyclopedia Brown, is the son of a police chief in Idaville. Leroy helps solve his father's mysteries. The reader can attempt to solve the crimes with him. Each book contains mystery stories, and the answers to the cases are found in the back of the book.

*Hardy Boys Series* by Franklin W. Dixon

(Ages 9–12) The Hardy Boys, brothers Frank and Joe, work together to solve many mysteries. This is a favorite, classic mystery series.

*Nancy Drew Mystery Stories* by Carolyn Keene

(Ages 9–12) Though the plots may be predictable, Nancy Drew, the amateur girl detective, has been a favorite mystery heroine for years. Nancy Drew books come in different series with different readability levels.

## LAUNCH A STUDY OF DINOSAURS

*Dinosaur (DK Eyewitness Books)* by Dr. David Norman and Dr. Angela Milner

(Ages 9–12) This book has photographs of dinosaur skeletons. It focuses on dinosaur anatomy, such as feet and eyes, as well as topics like eggs and fossils.

*DK Guide to Dinosaurs: A thrilling journey through prehistoric times* by David Lambert

(Age 8 and up) This oversized book is a beautifully illustrated volume that shows all types of dinosaurs, in situations of hunting and family life. It is particularly good at illustrating the size of dinosaurs in relation to our present city environment.

## Heroes

### LAUNCH A STUDY OF OTHER HEROES

*Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride: Based on a True Story* by Pam Muñoz Ryan

(Ages 4–8) This book is based on true facts of a night when Eleanor Roosevelt and Amelia Earhart slipped away from a formal dinner at the White House to take an impromptu flight. The picture book includes background information about these two political activists and role models.

*Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth* by Anne Rockwell

(Ages 9–12) This picture book biography conveys the poignant story of Sojourner Truth's life as a brave civil rights leader.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF JACKIE ROBINSON

*I Never Had It Made: An Autobiography (Dark Tower Series)* by Jackie Robinson

(Mature Ages) This is a candid autobiography that clearly relays Jackie Robinson's struggles and years of frustration. This is a mature book with 275 pages, so it may be best implemented on a chapter by chapter basis.

*Stealing Home: The Story of Jackie Robinson* by Barry Denenberg

(Ages 9–12) This biography details the struggles of Jackie Robinson, a man who overcame great obstacles to play baseball and pave the way for others to follow.

*Teammates* by Peter Golenblock

(Ages 4–8) This picture book about Jackie Robinson not only tells his story, but also the story of others overcoming their fears and prejudices. PeeWee Reese, one of Jackie's teammates, respected Jackie and publicly stood by his side.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF IMMIGRATION

*Jar of Dreams* by Yoshiko Uchida

(Ages 9–12) *Jar of Dreams* is the story of an eleven-year-old Japanese American girl growing up in California in the 1930s. The story chronicles her encounters with racism.

#### LAUNCH A STUDY OF OVERCOMING DIFFICULTY IN SCHOOL

*Loser* by Jerry Spinelli

(Ages 9–12) This is a story of a fourth-grade boy who enjoys school and has a general zest for life. He is seen as a loser in the eyes of his classmates but he's oblivious to all of their insults. This story of nonconformity shows that a person's own self-image can make a difference.