

Book Links

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS:
CALDECOTT IN THE CLASSROOM:
CALDECOTT BIOGRAPHIES
BY CYNDI GIORGIS

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The year 2013 will mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Caldecott Medal. This prestigious honor is awarded annually to the artist of the most distinguished picture book published for children in the U.S. during the previous year. The books that have received the Caldecott Medal have become part of our literary heritage and provide a historical overview of illustration techniques and styles. This article begins a four-part series in *Book Links*, “Caldecott in the Classroom,” which will celebrate this significant anniversary by featuring many of the award-winning books and their ongoing connections to the curriculum.

In this issue, we focus on picture-book biographies that have received the Caldecott Medal. These include complete biographies of a historical figure, partial biographies that focus on a portion of an individual’s life, and a collective biography that contains anecdotes and trivia about the U.S. presidents. We’ve paired these award-winners with listings of related titles, both fiction and nonfiction, as well as suggestions for response activities that correlate with the Common Core State Standards.

1940 Caldecott Medal

Abraham Lincoln. By Ingri Parin d’Aulaire and Edgar Parin d’Aulaire. Illus. by the authors. 1939. 64p. Beautiful Feet, \$21.95 (9781893103276); paper, \$17.95 (9781893103269). 973.7. Gr. 2–5.

The d’Aulaires’ biography of Abraham Lincoln was the recipient of the third Caldecott Medal and was illustrated with lithographs in five colors on stone. This tedious process required etching the drawings on individual stone slabs that weighed from 50 to 100 pounds. The artistic couple also spent a year researching and writing, resulting in a lengthy text that details the sixteenth president’s life, from boyhood to the conclusion of the Civil War. A facsimile reproduction of the biography, made by digital imaging, was reissued in 2008 during the bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth. A

publisher’s note recounts the d’Aulaires’ creative process as well as the rationale for retaining the original illustrations.

Books about Abraham Lincoln

Abe Lincoln Crosses a Creek: *A Tall, Thin Tale* (Introducing His Forgotten Frontier Friend). By Deborah Hopkinson. Illus. by John Hendrix. 2008. 40p. Random/Schwartz & Wade, \$17.99 (9780375837685); lib. ed., \$19.99 (9780375937682). PreS–Gr. 3.

When seven-year-old Abe falls into the turbulent waters of Knob Creek, his friend Austin saves his life.

Abe’s Honest Words: *The Life of Abraham Lincoln.* By Doreen Rappaport. Illus. by Kadir Nelson. 2008. 48p. Hyperion, \$16.99 (9781423104080). 973.092. Gr. 2–4.

Extraordinary oil paintings and elegant prose depict Lincoln’s life, from the Kentucky backwoods to his struggles to preserve the Union and abolish slavery.

Lincoln Tells a Joke: *How Laughter Saved the President (and the Country).* By Kathleen Krull and Paul Brewer. Illus. by Stacy Innerst. 2010. 40p. Harcourt, \$17 (9780152066390); e-book, \$17 (9780547770192). 973.7092. Gr. 2–4.

Our sixteenth president was known for his quips and quotes. This book focuses on the many challenges faced by Lincoln and how he would cope by sharing a joke or a sly smile.

Looking at Lincoln. By Maira Kalman. Illus. by the author. 2012. 32p. Penguin/Nancy Paulsen, \$17.99 (9780399240393). K–Gr. 3.

Vivid colors and a conversational text provide interesting tidbits about Lincoln, from his impoverished boyhood to his study of law to his election as president.

Our Abe Lincoln. By Jim Aylesworth. Illus. by Barbara McClintock. 2009. 40p. Scholastic, \$16.99 (9780439925488). 973.7092. PreS–Gr. 2.

Adapted from a song popular during Lincoln’s presidential campaign, this lively picture book tells of significant moments during the American leader’s life.

In the Classroom

Compare and Contrast

Compare the d’Aulaires’ biography of Lincoln, written in 1939, with other titles cited above, all published during and after the bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth. What does each book focus on? Is it Lincoln’s life or an event from it? What style of writing is used? How do the illustrations differ?

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Common Core Connection:

- **RI.4.5:** Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

Quotable Quotations

Lincoln was known for his memorable speeches as well as his humorous quotes. As students read about Abraham Lincoln in the recommended titles above, have them place a sticky note on pages that contain interesting quotations. Select a different quotation each day to discuss. Compile the quotes into a collage or write each one on a strip of paper and post around the classroom.

Common Core Connection:

- **RL.3.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

1984 Caldecott Medal

The Glorious Flight: *Across the Channel with Louis Blériot, July 25, 1909.* By Alice Provensen and Martin Provensen. Illus. by the authors. 1983. 40p. Viking, \$17.99 (9780670342594); paper, \$6.99 (9780140507294). 629.13. Gr. 1–5.

Out for a drive with his family, Louis Blériot hears a strange sound and looks above to see a man sitting in a basket driving a white airship over the buildings of Cambrai, France. Blériot decides that he must build a flying machine. After many failed attempts—not to mention a broken rib, black eye, and numerous breaks, sprains, and bruises—the motivated Frenchman successfully flies across the English Channel. Acrylic paintings display expansive landscapes that take readers back in time to when aviation was just beginning.

Books about Aviation

Cromwell Dixon's Sky-Cycle. By John Abbott Nez. Illus. by the author. 2009. 32p. Putnam, o.p. K–Gr. 3.

In 1907, 14-year-old Cromwell Dixon designed and built (with the help of his mother) a flying bicycle that soared above the highest buildings in his hometown of Columbus, Ohio.

The Fabulous Flying Machines of Alberto Santos-Dumont. By Victoria Griffith. Illus. by Eva Montanari. 2011. 32p. Abrams, \$16.95 (9781419700118). 629.130092. Gr. 1–3.

While the Wright brothers were gliding over Kitty Hawk, Alberto Santos-Dumont was floating over Paris in his own

flying machine, called a dirigible. He went on to become the first pilot to take off and land a self-propelled plane.

Hot Air: *The (Mostly) True Story of the First Hot-Air Balloon Ride.* By Marjorie Priceman. Illus. by the author. 2005. 40p. Atheneum, \$17.99 (9780689826429). 629.133. K–Gr. 3.

Combining fact with fancy, Priceman relates the story of the duck, sheep, and rooster who were “ballooning’s first brave passengers” in 1783.

Night Flight: *Amelia Earhart Crosses the Atlantic.* By Robert Burleigh. Illus. by Wendell Minor. 2011. 40p. Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman, \$17.99 (9781416967330); e-book, \$12.99 (9781442431201). 629.1309163. Gr. 1–4.

In May 1932, Amelia Earhart successfully flew her single-engine, red Lockheed Vega from Newfoundland to Ireland.

Wind Flyers. By Angela Johnson. Illus. by Loren Long. 2007. 32p. Simon & Schuster, \$16.99 (9780689848797). Gr. 1–3.

A young African American boy’s great-great-uncle was a Tuskegee airman who began flying off of haystacks (called “catching air”) as a boy and later took his first rides as a “flying barnstormer.”

In the Classroom

Aviation Time Line

Create a time line of the historic events in aviation presented in the books listed above. Have students research and add other significant flights, such as those by the Wright brothers.

Common Core Connection:

- **RI.2.1:** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

Cause and Effect

Assist students in recognizing how one experience in aviation informed or changed the next attempt. In *The Glorious Flight*, Blériot crashed numerous times. What did he learn from each calamity, and how did it assist him in designing his next flying machine? Have students generate a cause-and-effect list from other stories about early aviators.

Common Core Connection:

- **RI.3.3:** Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause and effect.

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1999 Caldecott Medal

Snowflake Bentley. By Jacqueline Briggs Martin. Illus. by Mary Azarian. 1998. 32p. Houghton, \$17 (9780395861622); paper, \$7.99 (9780547248295). 551.57. K–Gr. 3.

A Vermont farm boy, Wilson A. Bentley, was mesmerized by snowflakes and their unique designs. When he learned of a camera with its own microscope, Bentley begged his parents to purchase it. The camera magnified the tiny crystals, but, unfortunately, the snowflakes appeared as shadows when photographed. Eventually, the self-taught scientist perfected a technique for preserving the images. Narrative text and additional, informative sidebars combine with watercolor-tinted woodblock illustrations to tell Bentley's story in a variety of formats.

Books about Inventors

The Boy Who Invented TV: The Story of Philo Farnsworth. By Kathleen Krull. Illus. by Greg Couch. 2009. 40p. Knopf, \$16.99 (9780375845611); lib. ed., \$19.99 (9780375945618). 621.3880092. Gr. 3–5.

Farnsworth's young fascination with the stars provided the inspiration for inventing the television.

Electric Ben: The Amazing Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin. By Robert Byrd. Illus. by the author. 2012. 40p. Dial, \$17.99 (9780803737495). 973.3092. Gr. 1–4.

Benjamin Franklin was known as a prolific inventor who was deeply curious about the world around him.

Pop! The Invention of Bubble Gum. By Meghan McCarthy. Illus. by the author. 2010. 40p. Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman, \$16.99 (9781416979708). 664.6. Gr. 1–3.

In the late 1920s, accountant Walter Diemer was intrigued by the invention of gum. Through trial and error, he eventually created his own version of the chewy treat, which bubbled.

The Real McCoy: The Life of an African-American Inventor. By Wendy Towle. Illus. by Wil Clay. 1993. 32p. Scholastic, paper, \$5.99 (9780590481021). 608.72. Gr. 1–4.

The child of escaped slaves, Elijah McCoy patented more than 50 inventions, such as the portable ironing board and the lawn sprinkler.

A Wizard from the Start: The Incredible Boyhood and Amazing Inventions of Thomas Edison. By Don Brown. Illus. by the author. 2010. 32p. Houghton, \$17 (9780547194875); e-book, \$17 (9780547773117). 900. Gr. 1–3.

Thomas Edison was a poor student in school, and he was even described as addled by a teacher. However, Edison was a voracious reader and hard worker who eventually earned 1,093 patents during his lifetime.

In the Classroom

Text Features

Snowflake Bentley uses sidebars to provide factual information about the photographer, his process, and snowflakes. Generate a chart listing text features and graphic aids from informational books' text features and graphic aids, such as photographs, diagrams, captions, charts, and graphs. Starting with a discussion of *Snowflake Bentley's* format, discuss how these titles provide information and also add to a book's format.

Common Core Connection:

- **RI.1.5:** Know and use various text features (e.g., headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text.

Literary Letter

After reading about the accomplishments of an inventor, students can write literary letters detailing what they believe are the impacts that the inventions have had on society.

Common Core Connection:

- **W.3.1:** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

2001 Caldecott Medal

So You Want to Be President? By Judith St. George. Illus. by David Small. 2004; Rev. ed. 56p. Philomel, \$17.99 (9780399243172). 973. Gr. 3–5.

Humorous anecdotes and lighthearted trivia provide a glimpse into the quirks, oddities, and unique attributes of the men who have held the office of president of the U.S. Aspiring presidential hopefuls will learn that some presidents have been short (Madison), a few exhibited musical talent (Jefferson and Clinton), and many served in the army (Washington, Garfield, and Eisenhower). Small's delightful caricatures are rendered in a mix of watercolor, ink, and pastel chalk. This unique biography humanizes our American leaders while capturing their spirits of individuality.

Books about the Election Process

Grace for President. By Kelly DiPucchio. Illus. by LeUyen Pham. 2008. 40p. Hyperion, \$15.99 (9780786839193). Gr. 1–3.

When Grace's teacher reveals that the U.S. has never had a woman president, Grace sets out to be the first through hard work, determination, and individuality.

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If I Ran for President. By Catherine Stier. Illus. by Lynne Avril. 2007. 32p. Albert Whitman, \$16.99 (9780807535431); paper, \$6.99 (9780807535448). 324.70973. Gr. 3–5.

Six children explain the election process, from campaigning, primaries, debating, meeting the public, and voting to being sworn in on Inauguration Day.

Presidential Elections and Other Cool Facts. By Syl Sobel. 3rd ed. 2012. 48p. illus. Barron's, paper, \$6.99 (9780764147975). 324.973. Gr. 2–5.

This book provides fascinating facts about presidential campaigns, such as who can run for president, who can vote, and how the electoral college works.

VOTE! By Eileen Christelow. Illus. by the author. 2003. 48p. Clarion, \$16 (9780618247547); paper, \$7.99 (9780547059730). 324.973. Gr. 2–5.

This upbeat and informative introduction to voting explains the process of voter registration, rallies, debates, and Election Day.

In the Classroom

Wordle Word Clouds

Wordle is an online tool for generating word clouds from text inserted on the website (www.wordle.net). The more times a word is inserted, the larger it grows. After reading *So You Want to Be President?*, students can generate lists of words that describe the presidents to generate their own word clouds.

Common Core Connection:

- **RL.5.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

Election Campaign

Divide the class into two groups. Have each group select one person to run for office by discussing and selecting a list of traits that good leaders possess. Next, have the groups develop a campaign slogan and the candidate's platform using information from the suggested books. Have the candidates speak to another same-grade class, which will then vote for their preferred politician.

Common Core Connection:

- **RI.3.1:** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

2004 Caldecott Medal

The Man Who Walked between the Towers. By Mordicai Gerstein. Illus. by the author. 2003. 40p. Roaring Brook, \$17.95 (9780761317913); paper, \$7.99 (9780312368784). 791.3. PreS–Gr. 3.

French aerialist Philippe Petit loved to walk and dance on a rope tied between two trees. His goal was to determine a way to suspend a tightrope between the towers of Manhattan's World Trade Center. In the middle of the night, Petit and a friend hauled a 440-pound reel of cable onto the roof of the south tower and began the arduous task of attempting to carry out their clever but dangerous plan. As the rising sun lit up the towers on August 7, 1974, Petit stepped out onto the tightrope and realized his dream. Gerstein's dramatic paintings present dizzying perspectives, from the small, framed close-up of Petit's foot on the wire to the three-page foldouts of his aerial feat.

Books about Daredevils

Mirette on the High Wire. By Emily Arnold McCully. Illus. by the author. 1992. 32p. Puffin, paper, \$7.99 (9780698114432). PreS–Gr. 2.

Set in nineteenth-century Paris, this 1993 Caldecott Medal-winner follows a young girl who helps a daredevil known as the Great Bellini regain his confidence in walking the high wire.

Queen of the Falls. By Chris Van Allsburg. Illus. by the author. 2011. 40p. Houghton, \$18.99 (9780547315812). 971.33. Gr. 3–5.

In 1901, 62-year-old charm-school-teacher Annie Edson Taylor needed a way to "strike it rich," so she decided to be the first person to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel.

Sam Patch: Daredevil Jumper. By Julie Cummins. Illus. by Michael Allen Austin. 2009. 32p. Holiday, \$16.95 (9780823417414). 791. Gr. 2–4.

Early-nineteenth-century stuntman Sam Patch performed showstopping feats throughout his brief but world-famous career.

Women Daredevils: Thrills, Chills, and Frills. By Julie Cummins. Illus. by Cheryl Harness. 2008. 48p. Dutton, \$17.99 (9780525479482). 791. Gr. 3–6.

Cummins profiles 14 spunky females, ranging in age from 15 to 63, who performed death-defying acts that generated heart-stopping moments for spectators.

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Character Traits

Determine the character traits of the daredevils from some or all of the books above by having students write down what each individual thought, said, felt, and did. Students should support their claims by referring back to the text.

Common Core Connection:

- **RL.4.3:** Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Point of View

The authors and illustrators of the books about daredevils above provide the reader with a sense of the danger, adventure, and exhilaration the characters experienced in their attempts to complete a stunt. Discuss the daredevil's point of view, presented both visually and textually.

Common Core Connection:

- **RL.3.6:** Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

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