

Book Links

UNPACKING A STANDARD:
SUMMER READING AND THE
COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
BY JULIE GREEN

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It's almost summer—a time to celebrate the reading skills and strategies that students have acquired and practiced all year long. And, of course, it's also a time to simply enjoy books—to let them excite us, inspire us, teach us, and push us to new ways of thinking. Included below are suggestions of ways that students can extend their reading experiences—and their love of reading—throughout the summer months. Teachers may also encourage students to share those experiences in September, when the new school year starts. These activities, and the independent reading they involve, address Common Core State Standards RL.1.10–RL.6.10.

RL.1.10. *With prompting and support, read prose and poetry of appropriate complexity for grade 1.*

Penny and Her Song. By Kevin Henkes. 2012. 32p. Greenwillow, \$12.99 (9780062081957). PreS–Gr. 2.

In Kevin Henkes' first early chapter book for beginning readers, young Penny isn't allowed to sing because she'll wake up her infant siblings. Children will easily recognize Penny's frustration, and they will also love the singing party that her family holds at the end of the story. The lyrics to Penny's song are included in the text, but the tune is not. Readers could make up their own melody for Penny's song and then dress up, dance, and sing, just as Penny and her family do.

Stars. By Mary Lyn Ray. Illus. by Marla Frazee. 2011. 32p. Simon & Schuster/Beach Lane, \$16.99 (9781442422490). PreS–Gr. 2.

True to the title, this picture book is all about stars—how they are special and where you can find them, which turns out to be everywhere. After reading the story's message that having your own star in your pocket means that you'll always have one close by, children could design their own stars to carry with them. They could also follow the story with a book, such as Dandi Daley Mackall's *Seeing Stars* (2006), which introduces the constellations to young children.

Me . . . Jane. By Patrick McDonnell. 2011. 40p. Little, Brown, \$15.99 (9780316045469). 599.885092. PreS–Gr. 2.
Booklist's 2011 Top of the List Winner for Youth Picture

Book, this delightful biography presents many interests and dreams that Jane Goodall had as a child. Encourage students to share Goodall's sense of wonder and curiosity by visiting Wonderopolis, a fantastic website that will get them thinking and wondering with questions that explain their everyday world, from "What makes a nose run?" to "Why are school buses yellow?"

RL.4.10. *By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.*

Because of Mr. Terupt. By Rob Buyea. 2010. 296p. Delacorte, \$16.99 (9780385738828). Gr. 4–6.

Told from the points of view of seven different fifth-graders throughout the school year, this moving story leads up to an accident involving a beloved teacher and its repercussions for everyone in the class. After reading the story, students could write a letter to a past or future teacher and describe something that they liked about Mr. Terupt's teaching style or the projects that the students did in his class. Student could then discuss something that they hope they'll be able to do or experience in their own class next year.

The Other Half of My Heart. By Sundee Tucker Frazier. 2010. 296p. Delacorte, \$16.99 (9780385734400). Gr. 4–6.

During a summer vacation with their grandmother in North Carolina, biracial twin sisters Keira and Minni enroll in the Miss Black Pearl Preteen of America Pageant. The girls have always been best friends, but this summer brings out the previously undiscussed fact that Keira has darker skin, like their mother, while Minni has lighter skin, like their father. The story, which explores themes of racism and young activism, prompts readers to think about instances in which they would just have to stand up and speak out. Students could make a list of those important issues and discuss them with a parent.

RL.6.10. *By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.*

Liesl and Po. By Lauren Oliver. Illus. by Kei Acedera. 2011. 320p. Harper, \$16.99 (9780062014511). Gr. 4–7.

In this magical story about loneliness, ghosts, adventure, letting go, and true friendship, Liesl explains that she likes the word *ineffable* because it means "a feeling so big or vast that it could not be expressed in words." After finishing the novel, students could list or illustrate two ideas: Which events in the story do they think that Liesl might describe as ineffable? and Which events in their own lives would they describe as ineffable?

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Countdown. By Deborah Wiles. 2010. 400p. Scholastic, \$17.99 (9780545106054) Gr. 5–7.

This exciting story is set during the societal and political turmoil of the early 1960s in the U.S. Photographs and quotes from the era are included throughout the novel. After receiving permission from their parents, if necessary, students could visit the *Life* magazine photo archive. The site is organized by decades, people, and events. Students could peruse the site to delve further into any individuals or issues in the book that grabbed their interest.

Around the World: Three Remarkable Journeys. By Matt Phelan. 2011. 235p. Candlewick, \$24.99 (9780763636197). 741.5. Gr. 4–7.

This compelling nonfiction graphic novel will draw readers into the around-the-world adventures of Thomas Stevens, Nellie Bly, and Joshua Slocum. After reading the book, students could plot out their own trip around the world, either on a paper map or with an online program, such as Google Maps. What vehicle would they use? At what places would they stop? What people would they hope to meet?

Savvy. By Ingrid Law. 2008. 342p. Dial, \$16.99 (9780803733060). Gr. 5–7.

This is a story about a family whose members gain a special kind of power when they turn 13, and the protagonist, Mibs, can't wait to find out what her talent will be. Then her dad gets in a car accident, and Mibs, along with a group of friends and family, embarks on a crazy adventure to reach her father, whom she is convinced she can help. After finishing the story, students can think about what superpower, or "savvy," they might choose if they could. Students could then write their own story about themselves and their savvy, and those who prefer the comics format could use websites, such as Bitstrips.

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