What is the Children’s Choices project?

Each year 10,000 schoolchildren from different regions of the United States read and vote on the newly published children’s and young adults’ trade books that they like best. The Children’s Choices for 2005 list is the 31st in a series that first appeared as “Classroom Choices” in the November 1975 issue of The Reading Teacher (RT), a peer-reviewed journal for preschool, primary, and elementary levels published eight times a year by the International Reading Association (IRA). This list is designed for use not only by teachers, librarians, administrators, and booksellers, but also by parents, grandparents, caregivers, and everyone who wishes to encourage young people to read for pleasure.

Children’s Choices is a project of a joint committee supported by IRA and the Children’s Book Council (CBC). IRA is a nonprofit educational organization whose members include classroom and reading teachers, school administrators and supervisors, parents, college/university faculty, and others who are dedicated to improving reading instruction and promoting literacy worldwide.

The Children’s Book Council is the nonprofit professional association of U.S. publishers and packagers of books for young people. It encourages childhood literacy through sponsorship of national programs including Young People’s Poetry Week and the 86-year-old annual observance of Children’s Book Week, as well as working cooperatively with other professional associations.

In 1969, IRA and CBC formed a liaison committee to explore areas of mutual interest to reading teachers and publishers. Among the committee’s initial charges was the development of a core selection of trade books for the classroom. This list of Children’s Choices has remained an important activity of the committee, which each year produces this child-selected bibliography identifying titles that can be used successfully in reading programs, can be related to the classroom curricula, and are known to engage children.
How are books selected and annotated?

More than 460 books were evaluated by children for Children’s Choices for 2005. The books to be tested were selected by publishers from the books they published in 2004 and were sent to five review teams located in different regions of the United States. Each team consisted of a children’s literature specialist plus one or more classroom teachers who in turn worked with other classroom teachers, school librarians, and more than 2,000 children. Throughout the school year the books were in classrooms, being read to or by children.

Children’s votes were tabulated in March, and the top 103 titles for 2005 were announced at the annual International Reading Association convention in May. The review teams provided an annotation for each title on the list.

What bibliographic information is provided?

Books selected for the Children’s Choices list have been grouped by reading levels:

- Beginning readers (ages 5–7)
- Young readers (ages 8–10)
- Advanced readers (ages 11–13)

Users should note that many books read easily by beginning readers are also enjoyed by more advanced readers, and many titles for advanced readers are accessible to younger readers or can be read aloud in the classroom.

The title, author, illustrator, publisher, ISBN (International Standard Book Number), and price are provided for each book as well as a brief annotation prepared by a review team. All books listed are hardcover unless otherwise noted. Prices are accurate as of late spring 2005; they are subject to change without notice. These abbreviations are provided for easy reference:

- Ill. illustrator of the book
- Pb. a paperback book
- ISBN identifies books and facilitates purchasing titles from bookstores, wholesalers, or publishers
- (library) the ISBN, followed by the price, for the library edition of a book
- (trade) the ISBN, followed by the price, for the edition of the book available from booksellers

pp. page count
F. paperback is forthcoming but not yet available

All books on this list should be available through your local library or a local bookseller.

Beginning readers

Actual Size
Steve Jenkins. Ill. by the author.  
Children were fascinated by the life-size drawings of the animals contained in the book, some so large a fold-out section was necessary. Children measured their hands, feet, and faces against those of the animals. (Team 2)  

All Year Long
Kathleen W. Deady. Ill. Linda Bronson.  
This sensory poem describes the images the four seasons conjure up in the mind of a young girl. The rhythmic pattern of the language coupled with the colorful seasonal illustrations will appeal to young readers. (Team 4)  

And Here’s to You!
David Elliott. Ill. Randy Cecil.  
Full-color illustrations and a rhyming tribute to everything from frogs to dogs bound from each page of this salute to all creatures, whether scaled, feathered, or furred. An enthusiastic, rollicking repetition of “I love you!” sends an irrepressible message. (Team 5)  

Baby Brains: The Smartest Baby in the Whole World
Simon James. Ill. by the author.  
Baby Brains exceeds his parents’ expectations when he becomes a doctor within two weeks. But his space mission proves that all babies are alike in one way—they all want to be with their mommies. (Team 4)  

Beach Day!
Patricia Lakin. Ill. Scott Nash.  
Sam, Pam, Will, and Jill head to the beach—swimsuits, sun hats, sunscreen, and sunglasses in tow. Though temporarily sidetracked by a playground, a
picnic, and a nap, these comic alligators hit the shore in time to swim by moonlight. (Team 5)

Beatrice Doesn’t Want To
Laura Numeroff. Ill. Lynn Munsinger.
Beatrice doesn’t like books, reading, or the library. Forced to accompany her older brother to the library for three afternoons in a row, Beatrice discovers the magic of books after becoming entranced by a read-aloud. (Team 4)

The Beetle Alphabet Book
Jerry Pallotta. Ill. David Biedrzycki.
An informative and fun way for the reader to learn what a beetle is and isn’t. Illustrations help the reader see the unique aspects of the featured beetles. Upper- and lowercase letters are included on each page, and there’s subtle humor throughout. (Team 3)

The Best Cat in the World
Victor knows that Charlie is the best cat in the world. He is heartbroken when Charlie dies. How can a new kitten possibly fill the void? Happily, he learns that different can also mean special. (Team 3)

Big Week for Little Mouse
Little Mouse spends all week planning a party. Children enjoy the predictability of the sequencing as they learn days of the week, opposites, and rhyming. The three-dimensional clay illustrations are appealing and detailed. (Team 2)

Billy Tibbles Moves Out!
Jan Fearnley. Ill. by the author.
Family members share, insists Billy’s father, and so will you. But rather than share his bedroom with his younger brother, Billy moves out. He returns and, through a predictable plot twist, proves to himself that all families do indeed share. (Team 4)

Boom Chicka Rock
John Archambault. Ill. Suzanne Tanner Chitwood.
When the birthday cake is left out and the cat is asleep, it’s time for the mice to rock and roll. Numbers and number words are reinforced as they bunny hop, tango, and electric slide until the cat wakes up. (Team 4)

The Cat Who Walked Across France
Kate Banks. Ill. Georg Hallensleben.
When his owner dies, a gray kitty is shipped north. Forgotten and longing for the sea, he walks across France to find home and the love of two children. Vibrant, museum-quality artwork honors the French landscape and one determined cat. (Team 5)

Clatter Bash! A Day of the Dead Celebration
Richard Keep. Ill. by the author.
El Día de los Muertos brings jaunty skeletons out of the graveyard for a night of singing, dancing, eating, and storytelling. A noisy rhyming banner at the bottom of each page leaves us smiling in two languages. (Team 5)

Cock-a-Doodle Moooo! A Mixed-Up Menagerie
Keith DuQuette. Ill. by the author.
In this beautifully illustrated book, cleverly rhyming couplets introduce such creatures as the cooster (cow and rooster) and the firefligeon (firefly and pigeon). Children of all ages are encouraged to “let your imagination run free; Create your own menagerie!” (Team 4)

The Copy Crocs
David Bedford. Ill. Emily Bolam.
Crocodile is frustrated by his companions, who constantly follow him wherever he goes—he cannot get a moment of peace! Children relate to crocodile’s frustration, as well as his ensuing loneliness when he finds a place of solace. (Team 1)

The Daddy Mountain
Jules Feiffer. Ill. by the author.
During a daring climb of Daddy Mountain, a little girl describes the process one must follow to successfully reach the top. Advice is shared to help the reader understand the pitfalls of such a mission. (Team 3)

Daffodil
Emily Jenkins. Ill. Tomek Bogacki.
Daffodil, Violet, and Rose are triplets whose mother can be forgiven for simplifying life by choosing their clothes. Daffodil’s rebellion against an icky yellow
TIPS FOR PARENTS, PRIMARY CAREGIVERS, AND EDUCATORS

Initial book activities
One of the easiest ways to begin telling the story of a book is through the use of illustrations. Most books for young children are illustrated in great detail, and noting important details related to the characters, plot, and setting will provide a wholesome first literacy activity.

• Set aside a regular time and place for books so that reading books becomes as natural as eating and sleeping.
• Browse through books to help the child become familiar with books and how they are handled.
• Read the story while the child points to the pictures. Adult and child can repeat interesting sounds, repetitive word patterns, and distinctive word features to the delight of both.
• Have the child tell the story using the illustrations, while the adult reinforces the telling. The two can predict outcomes, discuss how the characters feel, and relate the events to their own experiences.
• Read the book to the child and enjoy it together. Retell the story together and talk about the characters, setting, plot, and life experiences.
• Compare the similarities and differences of children’s books available as video productions.
• Have children make responses to the books read through art reproductions such as drawings, or by using clay, papier-mâché, dioramas, or fingerpaints.
• Make regular trips to the library and attend storytelling sessions. Visit bookstores together to begin a personal library for a child.

Beginning reading-level activities
Children at this level should be encouraged to browse through books and pretend to read the story, an initial step toward becoming an independent reader. Children may tell the story to themselves or attempt to read frequently highlighted words.

• Read the story as the child points to the pictures on each page.
• Let the child pretend to read the story as the adult points to the pictures.
• Read alternate pages, ask each other questions, and discuss the story. The adult models what he or she thinks of when reading the page so the child gets a variety of perspectives on the ways words have different meanings.
• Use computer programs to expand a child’s interest in specific topics and to provide valuable information for later curriculum study.
• Compare and contrast video adaptations of children’s books for this and more advanced literacy levels.

Primary-grade book activities

• Continue to spend time reading with the child; set aside a specific time and place.
• Be familiar with Children’s Choices books and other high-quality children’s literature.
• Become aware of the interests of your children and books that extend life experiences so they know what happens in the world around them.
• Encourage children to share books read in school with parents and caregivers at home. Parents and caregivers should encourage children to share books they’ve read at home with their teachers and schoolmates.
• Continue to extend the information and knowledge bases through computer programs and other technology that capitalize on topics initiated through reading.

Independent reader activities

• Challenge readers to compare and contrast books.
• Encourage children to develop an interest in a variety of genres such as biography, historical fiction, and poetry.
• Encourage children to read books related to beginning career and vocational choices.
• Seek a balance between school book activities, home and school literature activities, and familiarity with newspapers, magazines, and other text media that address contemporary social, cultural, and civic issues.

Develop the desire to be a lifelong reader

• Have students bring what is read to bear on what is viewed on film, television, and computer and other media technologies.
• View technology in the reflection of the literature.
• Keep in mind that the most memorable conversations are often filled with anecdotes from literature.
• Relate what has been read to the solution of problems. By internalizing what has been read, we use knowledge and wisdom to solve personal problems, to make significant decisions related to career choices, to find solutions to community and social problems, and to develop healthy attitudes toward a positive world environment.

IRA/CBC Liaison Committee
Deborah Wooten, 2004–2005 Cochair
Phoebe Yeh, 2004–2005 Cochair
dress precipitates a new dress code for the lively red-heads that they like “very extremely hugely much!” (Team 5)

Dear Tooth Fairy
Alan Durant. Ill. Vanessa Cabban.
Holly attempts to trick the Tooth Fairy with plastic vampire fangs and finds a tiny letter under her pillow. Children enjoy the hands-on features of fairy-sized letters, posters, and brochures that each correspondence brings, with a special surprise at the end. (Team 1)

Don’t Forget to Come Back!
Robie H. Harris. Ill. Harry Bliss.
A plucky young girl is unhappy her parents are going out so she threatens to go to the South Pole, ends up having fun, and learns that it’s OK as long as they remember to come back. (Team 3)

Drumheller Dinosaur Dance
The dinosaur dig at the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller, Alberta, comes alive at night when pre-historic skeletons assemble to tango and fandango with a boomity-boom, rattely-clack, thumpity-thump, and whickety-whack. Their raucous nocturnal jive brings dinosaur dreams to children. (Team 5)

Enrico Starts School
Charlotte Middleton. Ill. by the author.
Enrico is good at riding his bike and making sardine-in-lobster-jelly sandwiches, but not at making friends at school. Timeless advice from his brother—to be himself—lets Enrico find his niche. Simple cartoon illustrations will please young readers. (Team 5)

Fairstyle News
Colin and Jacqui Hawkins. Ill. by the authors.
Revisit favorite fairy tales and nursery rhymes as Jack delivers newspapers to memorable characters including the fearsome giant who lives atop the beanstalk. Don’t miss the most recent edition of the Fairstyle News tucked into the back of the book. (Team 3)

Four Boys Named Jordan
Jessica Harper. Ill. Tara Calahan King.
Elizabeth is convinced that a third-grade class with four boys, all named Jordan, is too much. Wacky rhyme, big-headed kids, a frazzled teacher, and a new girl named—you guessed it, Jordan—make a plea for less trendy names. (Team 5)

The Friend
Sarah Stewart. Ill. David Small.
Belle believes she can do anything, and it’s only thanks to Bea, housekeeper and friend, that she doesn’t get herself into serious trouble. Children connect to the timeless message that a true friend is one who is there for you. (Team 3)

Gator Gumbo: A Spicy-Hot Tale
Candace Fleming. Ill. Sally Anne Lambert.
Monsieur Gator is getting old. He can no longer catch the fast-moving food he so loves. Children will enjoy how cleverly he lures possum, otter, and skunk into the delicious pot of sweet-smelling gumbo in this Cajun retelling of an old classic. (Team 4)
Goldilocks and the Three Martians

This fractured tale is about a girl who does not like the rules at home and decides to move to another planet. Children relate to the story line of things not always being pleasant and the occasional desire to escape. (Team 1)


Here They Come!
David Costello. Ill. by the author.

The green monster-like creatures on the cover draw students to the rhyming text, which assists early readers’ comprehension and enjoyment. The illustrations of creatures coming to a Halloween party keep children interested and wanting to reread this book. (Team 2)


Hot Hot Hot
Neal Layton. Ill. by the author.

Two woolly mammoths are having trouble adjusting to the warmth, until they come upon the perfect solution, starting a new fashion trend—short hair. Youngsters will enjoy the whimsical illustrations and learning about the one whose hair doesn’t grow back—the caveman. (Team 4)


How to Catch a Star
Oliver Jeffers. Ill. by the author.

The boy loves stars so much he tries to catch one of his own. He finds success after discovering an unexpected star in an unexpected place. Children connect with his heartfelt attempts to make a star his friend. (Team 1)


I Am TOO Absolutely Small for School
Lauren Child. Ill. by the author.

Lola is too little for school, or so she thinks. Many young students feel that way, too, so they empathize with her. Lola, with the guidance of her big brother, learns that she can go to school. (Team 2)


It’s Bedtime, Wibbly Pig
Mick Inkpen. Ill. by the author.

Good thing Wibbly is pink, cuddly, and cute, because he won’t go to bed. Bathtime, bedtime story, one more slurp of cocoa: At last Wibbly snuggles in with Flop and Dimple, and it’s off to Dreamland for all the little charmers. (Team 5)


Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale
Mo Willems. Ill. by the author.

Trixie and her inseparable Knuffle Bunny accompany Daddy to their neighborhood laundromat to do the family wash. This tale of woe begins when they return home and Mom asks, “Where’s Knuffle Bunny?” (Team 4)


Larabee
Kevin Luthardt. Ill. by the author.

Children immediately relate to Larabee the mail-dog, who loyally accompanies Mr. Bowman on his daily mail route through a dog-loving town. Larabee, however, longs for a letter of his own. Readers will want to know if dogs can get mail. (Team 1)


Mister Seahorse
Eric Carle. Ill. by the author.

Mr. Seahorse has a special job carrying his offspring in his tummy. He visits with other fish fathers who also care for eggs in unusual ways. Watch for cleverly camouflaged fish in this pleasing, informative book. (Team 3)


Most Loved Monster
Lynn Downey. Ill. Jack E. Davis.

Monster-ous expressions like hippity-clawed and roachberry-upside-down-cake will charm children as they hear what mama monster feels is most special about each of her children. The tenderness of the mother–child relationship is expressed in their proclamation of “mama” as the most loved monster. (Team 4)


No Laughing, No Smiling, No Giggling
James Stevenson. Ill. by the author.

The title of the book made children want to find out why they can’t laugh, smile, or giggle. The book contains short stories with a lovable character who pops up in each story to make children laugh, smile, and giggle. (Team 2)


Our Principal Promised to Kiss a Pig

A principal promises to kiss a pig if students read 10,000 books. But Hamlet, the chosen pig, wants nothing to do with the big smooch. Young readers relate to promises from enthusiastic principals and enjoy the pig’s point of view. (Team 1)

Over the Hills & Far Away
Chris Conover. Ill. by the author.

_Over the Hills & Far Away_ is the story of Tom, the piper’s son, a bagpipe-playing otter who journeys over the hills and far away, gathering a wildlife escort as he returns to Molly, his own true love. Black silhouettes and beautiful colors lead us to the musical conclusion. (Team 5)


The Pig Who Went Home on Sunday: An Appalachian Folktale
Donald Davis. Ill. Jennifer Mazzucco.

_Jackie, the youngest of Mama’s three little pigs, cleverly outsmarts Mister Fox by following his mother’s advice and returns home for Sunday dinner in this Appalachian version of the classic “Three Little Pigs.”_ (Team 4)


Prancing, Dancing Lily
Marsha Diane Arnold. Ill. John Manders.

_Lily’s passion for dance jeopardizes her future as the bell cow. She leaves Mamoo (and the herd, too) to hoof it as a squaredancer, Rockette, and ballerina, always sending messages home. A drum and a conga line solve Lily’s leadership quandary._ (Team 5)


Rooster Can’t Cock-a-Doodle-Doo

_When Rooster gets a sore throat everyone on the farm pitches in to help wake up Farmer Ted. Children will be delighted at the entertaining way the animals help the “eggz-hausted” “udderly-frustrated” rooster before things get “too baaaa-d.”_ (Team 4)


Show Dog
Meghan McCarthy. Ill. by the author.

_OK, Ed is no show dog. He’s scruffy, slobbery, and google-eyed, but his unkempt family, blinded by love, enters him in a dog show anyway. Ed loses the contest but wins the heart of Princess, the Best of Show._ (Team 5)


Smudge Bunny
Bernie Siegel. Ill. Laura J. Bryant.

_The true adventure of how Smudge and her sister bunny Snowflake, whisked from their loving home to the local pet store, are adopted by the author. Children will be drawn to this tale of how “troubles can turn into blessings.”_ (Team 4)


Someone Bigger
Jonathan Emmett. Ill. Adrian Reynolds.

_A collection of animals and people trying to rescue Sam’s dad from a fly-away kite gets children involved in this colorful book. The predictable and melodic language keeps children interested._ (Team 2)


Stinky Smelly Feet: A Love Story
Margie Palatini. Ill. Ethan Long.

_Douglas Duck’s stinky feet are a barrier to his romance with Dolores. Whenever he takes his shoes off, nearby critters drop like flies from the smell. True love succeeds when baths, powders, and spray fail our wacky beaked and web-footed couple._ (Team 5)


Super Sam!
Lori Ries. Ill. Sue Ramá.

_The crayon-drawn pictures add to this colorful book about a little boy who pretends he is a “superpower.” How he “leaps tall bunkbeds” and “saves the day” for his little brother are things kids can imagine they can do._ (Team 2)

Ten Redneck Babies: A Southern Counting Book
David Davis. Ill. Sue Marshall Ward.
Readers will have a hoot counting from 1 to 10 and back again in pure southern style. From bluetick hounds to banjos and maw—this book has it all, redneck style. (Team 3)

That Dancin’ Dolly
Jennifer J. Merz. Ill. by the author.
A little girl pretends that her doll is a special friend who dances with her the whole day in her backyard. The illustrations look like felt cut-outs, collages that actually seem to jump out from the page. (Team 2)

This Is the Teacher
Rhonda Gowler Greene. Ill. Mike Lester.
The repeated pattern involved the students in the story immediately. Younger children who thought school was scary soon discovered that real life is much tamer than the school in this fiction book! (Team 2)

Tigress
Bold, enchanting pictures immediately draw readers into this nonfiction book. It holds the interest of all students with its two levels of text: One poetically describes a mother tiger’s daily activities, and the other, printed in italics, offers tiger facts. (Team 1)

Truck Duck
Michael Rex. Ill. by the author.
Truck Duck incorporates rhyming words in a book about types of transportation. Humor is used to show animals operating various types of transportation. Children respond positively to the rhyming words and the brightly colored illustrations. (Team 1)

Walter the Farting Dog: Trouble at the Yard Sale
William Katzwinckel and Glen Murray. Ill. Audrey Colman.
Flatulence makes Walter a social outcast. Sold to a scoundrel who uses his gas to rob a bank, Walter begins to pine for home. Smelly and unattractive, but honest, he leads the police to the thief and is paroled to his newly appreciative family. (Team 5)

What’s That Awful Smell?
Heather Tekavec. Ill. Margaret Spengler.
The poor pig is blamed for the awful smell that fills the barn. Nothing the animals try can eliminate it until cat shows them the source of the problem, and pig saves the day. (Team 3)

Who Will Tuck Me in Tonight?
Carol Roth. Ill. Valeri Gorbachev.
This is a whimsical poem telling how the other farm mothers try to tuck Woolly into bed, but Mrs. Cow doesn’t know how, and Mrs. Cat knows what she’s been missing—bedtime kissing. Nothing the animals do is just right until Mother Sheep comes to save the night. (Team 4)
MORE ABOUT CHILDREN’S CHOICES

Who is on the IRA–CBC Joint Committee and who are members of the review teams?

Cochairing the 2004–2005 IRA–CBC Joint Committee were Deborah Wootten, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Phoebe Yeh, HarperCollins Children’s Books, New York, New York. Representing IRA on the committee were Elizabeth Schmar Dobler, Colleen Gilbane, Donna L. Knoell, Teri S. Lesesne, Becky Rees, and Richard L. Allington; those representing CBC were Kathleen Calhoun Nettleton, Terry Borzumato, Sharon Hancock, Aimée Jackson, and Judy Zylstra. CBC administrative staff coordinated the teams’ work.

The review teams described below coordinated the project at each of the following five test sites:

**Team 1:** Knoxville, Tennessee, consisted of one inner-city middle school, one inner-city elementary school, two suburban elementary schools, and one rural elementary school. Team leaders: Deborah Wootten and Amy Broemmel. Support team leader: Susan D. Bishofberger.

**Team 2:** North Las Vegas, Nevada, consisted of two suburban elementary schools and one suburban middle school. Team leaders: Lorna Tobias and Michelle M. Truman. Support team leader: Linda Baum.

**Team 3:** Des Moines, Iowa, consisted of one parochial elementary school, six suburban elementary schools, one urban elementary school, and one rural elementary school. Team leaders: Jill Caton Johnson and Donna Merkley. Support team leaders: Carol J. Fuhler and DeDe Small.

**Team 4:** Briarcliff Manor, New York, consisted of seven inner-city elementary schools and three inner-city middle schools. Team leaders: Diane Mallett and Debra Conroy.

**Team 5:** Missoula, Montana, consisted of six suburban elementary schools; one suburban middle school in Missoula; and one middle school in Florence, a small town. Team leader: Jan LaBonty.

How can I become a team leader?

Team leaders are selected by the IRA–CBC Joint Committee based upon numerous factors such as location within the United States, cooperation between team leaders, school administrators, and library media specialists, and ability to attend orientation sessions at the International Reading Association’s annual convention. Information about how to become a team leader is available from the Children’s Book Council, Attn: Team Leader Information, 12 W. 37th Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10018-7480, USA. All applications remain on file, and periodically CBC reconfirms applicants’ interest. For additional information about this project and a downloadable application form, visit CBC’s website at www.cbcbooks.org.

How can I order copies of this list?

Offprints of this annotated 2005 Children’s Choices list (publication #9106) are available from the International Reading Association. Single copies are US$1.00 when you send a self-addressed 9” × 3½” envelope to the attention of Department EG. Single copies of each Choices list may also be downloaded as a PDF file at 9” × 3½” envelope stamped with 76¢ U.S. postage to CBC, 12 W. 37th Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10018-7840, USA; Attn: Social Studies List, or Attn: Science List. Multiple copy rates are available on the CBC website www.cbcbooks.org.
 MORE ABOUT CHILDREN’S CHOICES (continued)

How can I use these books in my classroom?
The International Reading Association has a publication full of ideas for making the most of these books. Celebrating Children’s Choices: 25 Years of Children’s Favorite Books (2000, ISBN 087207-276-2) is a collection of practical classroom applications of books from the lists. The book can be purchased through the Order Department for US$19.16 for members, US$23.95 for nonmembers. To order a copy by phone with a credit card (from within the United States and Canada only), call the International Reading Association at 1-800-336-7323, ext. 266, or call (from outside North America) 1-302-731-1600, ext. 266. This publication is also available through the Association’s online bookstore at www.reading.org. Book rate shipping is US$3.00 for orders under US$25.00.

How do publishers obtain information about submitting titles for future lists?
The Children's Choices project is open to all U.S. publishers of children's books. Publishers who are not members of CBC pay a per-title administrative fee to submit books for consideration. Submission information is available in early April. Publishers may request submission notification by filling out a form at www.cbcbooks.org/readinglists/bibliosubs.html.

CBC welcomes publishers, large and small, to join its diverse membership. For membership information, write to CBC, 12 W. 37th Street, New York, NY 10018-7840, USA.

How can I find out more about the Children’s Book Council?
For a complete listing of CBC’s activities and publications, visit their website at www.cbcbooks.org.

Widget and the Puppy

Widget the dog has to babysit a puppy that unexpectedly shows up at his home. The puppy gets into all kinds of trouble, and Widget is held responsible. Older students can relate to this scenario. (Team 2)


Worm Gets a Job
Kathy Caple. Ill. by the author.

The cartoon-strip organization of the book guides young readers through the text. They enjoyed following the word bubbles to find out what job the young worm would take on. Children giggled at the results of the worm’s search for employment. (Team 2)


Young readers

Abby’s Chairs
Barbara Santucci. Ill. Debrah Santini.

Why don’t Abby’s chairs look right in her new house? She paints, reupholsters, rearranges, and even considers selling some of her favorites. Friendship, an important theme to children, is ultimately the answer to Abby’s dilemma. (Team 1)


ABC All-American Riddles

The cover art grabs students’ attention. The rhythmic pattern of the prose draws students into the text. Another great aspect of this book is the riddles. Children must use a combination of picture clues, word knowledge, and prior knowledge to solve the riddles. (Team 2)


Atomic Ace (He’s Just My Dad)
Jeff Weigel. Ill. by the author.

This book tells the story of a young boy whose Dad just happens to be a superhero. His friends don’t understand, but when his Dad “saves the day,” he is truly a hero. Children really like the cartoon illustrations. (Team 2)


The Bee-man of Orn

This beautifully illustrated retelling follows the Bee-man’s search for his original form. The Sorcerer hopes the poor shriveled man living among bees will make something better of his life next time. Students can predict what he will become years later. (Team 4)

Bronco Charlie and the Pony Express
Marlene Targ Brill. Ill. Craig Orback.

With authentic facts, this story tells of Bronco Charlie, the youngest Pony Express rider, who braved the wilderness to bring news to the western United States. Through simple sentences and vivid illustrations, the adventurous spirit of young Charlie is brought to life. (Team 4)

Crocodiles
Sandra Markle. Ill. with photographs.
Avoid the Nile if you don’t want to become a crocodile snack. This perfect predator can see in the dark, hold his breath for an hour, and hear a dragonfly land. Full-color photographs should convince anything tasty to stay ashore. (Team 5)

Dogs: How to Choose and Care for a Dog
Laura S. Jeffrey. Ill. with photographs.
The puppy on the front made the children want to pick up the book. The chapters use actual pictures of pets and their owners to assist with the context of choosing and caring for a dog that is right for an individual. (Team 2)

Duck for President
Duck brings democracy and elections to the farm in a bid to avoid work. Unfortunately, it’s campaigning, not serving, that captivates Duck. He abdicates the presidency to return to the farm and write his memoirs. A red, white, and blue delight! (Team 5)

Great White Sharks
Sandra Markle. Ill. with photographs.
The nonfiction aspect of this text appealed to many students, especially male students, because of the ferocious-looking shark on the cover and the many details on these predators of the deep, including their feasts on other ocean life. (Team 2)

Halloween Crafts
Fay Robinson. Ill. with photographs.
Whether it’s a hairy tarantula, a ghoulish helping hand, or a trick-or-treat coffin, this book contains step-by-step directions and colorful examples of decorations guaranteed to spook-if you any party. The appendix lists additional sources for those who can’t get enough Halloween. (Team 5)

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The Harmonica
Tony Johnston. Ill. Ron Mazellan.
In Nazi-occupied Poland, a boy is separated from his parents and sent to a concentration camp. A harmonica, a gift from his father, keeps his hope alive amidst the terrible reality that surrounds him, and ultimately ensures his survival. (Team 1)

Hoop Kings
Charles R. Smith, Jr. Ill. with photographs.
Striking digital artwork portrays 12 basketball superstars. Rap-style poetry describes the fast-paced game: “opponents freeze/ as you do what you please/ with ease/ like step back/ and drain threes.” Children are fascinated by the pull-out of Shaquille O’Neal’s actual shoe size. (Team 1)
I and You and Don’t Forget Who: What Is a Pronoun?
Brian P. Cleary. Ill. Brian Gable.
This book tells a story in rhyme, using different types of pronouns, leading children to become more apt to remember what pronouns are. The colorful illustrations feature funny monsterlike creatures taking part in everyday activities. (Team 2)

It’s Test Day, Tiger Turcotte
Pansie Hart Flood. Ill. Amy Wummer.
Tiger Turcotte is nervous about taking a standardized test. His biggest problem, though, is filling out the racial identification section of the test because he is multiracial. Themes of racial or ethnic identity and pride are incorporated in the plot. (Team 1)

Killer Whales
Sandra Markle. Ill. with photographs.
Slip beneath the waters to hunt with a pod of orcas, fearsome predators of the deep. Watch them spy-hopping, breaching, and communicating as you become familiar with another skilled hunter from the top of the food chain. (Team 3)

Lions
Sandra Markle. Ill. with photographs.
Slashing claws and snapping jaws signal a successful hunt as lionesses work together, feeding the pride on the African plains. Young cubs practice their skills, stalking imaginary prey. Stunning photography takes readers right into the world of big cats. (Team 3)

Mr. Maxwell’s Mouse
Frank Asch. Ill. Devin Asch.
Dark illustrations dramatize the macabre tale of Mr. Maxwell’s plan to celebrate his promotion with a tasty lunch of raw mouse. He isn’t prepared to be outsmarted by the main course, who escapes and frees the rest of the mouse menu. (Team 5)

Monkey Business
Wallace Edwards. Ill. by the author.
The text uses similes and metaphors as part of the business described in the book. Students can compare the words with the detailed pictures for a literal meaning of the similes and metaphors for a good giggle. (Team 2)

Oliver’s Game
Matt Tavares. Ill. by the author.
Oliver Hall loves baseball and helping out at his grandfather’s memorabilia store. Oliver finds an old Chicago Cubs jersey and learns that Grandpa Hall has a baseball story of his own. Children are drawn into Grandpa’s personal story of a dream. (Team 1)

The Pepins and Their Problems
Polly Horvath. Ill. Marylin Hafner.
Whether it’s waking up to find toads in their shoes or searching for cheese when their cow makes lemonade, the Pepin family’s endless tangles entertain the reader. Lucky for them they have the author, whose insight into their hilarious misfortunes helps guide them in problem solving. (Team 4)
**Polar Bears**
Sandra Markle. Ill. with photographs.

Did you know that a polar bear can swim 60 miles in search of food? Readers will be fascinated with both text and superb photographs as they learn about the Arctic world’s powerful, ferocious predators. (Team 3)


**Poop: A Natural History of the Unmentionable**
Nicola Davies. Ill. Neal Layton.

Poop is not just revolting and embarrassing but in fact is scientifically useful. Did you know that animal latrines send messages about group dynamics and population statistics? Through the child-like illustrations, children can enjoy exploring the mystery surrounding poop. (Team 4)


**Rainbow Soup: Adventures in Poetry**
Brian P. Cleary. Ill. Neal Layton.

This is a very cleverly written and illustrated book about all kinds of poems, limericks, and rhymes. From alliteration to simile, readers found this book most interesting! This book would also be a great teaching aid. (Team 2)


**Roger the Jolly Pirate**
Brett Helquist. Ill. by the author.

Roger isn’t like the other pirates. He longs to be accepted and finally manages a way to earn their favor with quite a bang. This is a delightful glimpse into the life and vocabulary of a pirate. (Team 3)


**The Schoolchildren’s Blizzard**
Marty Rhodes Figley. Ill. Shelly O. Haas.

Readers follow two sisters through one of America’s most dangerous storms, along with the teacher who saved them. Children respond to the danger faced by the children and to the afterward, which informs readers of the story’s historical accuracy. (Team 1)


**Something to Tell the Grandcows**

Emmadine, the cow, wants to be able to tell her grandchildren something special about her life. So she embarks on a trip to the South Pole. Children have a strong connection to animal books and adventures. (Team 2)


**There Once Was a Very Odd School and Other Lunch-Box Limericks**
Stephen Krensky. Ill. Tamara Petrosino.

Filled with funny twisting limericks, this book celebrates familiar school topics ranging from the lunch lady to the playground bully. With a child’s eye for entertainment, the pages come alive with humorous rhyming, analogies, and colorful illustrations. (Team 4)


**The Trial of Cardigan Jones**
Tim Egan. Ill. by the author.

Cardigan Jones, clumsy new moose in town, finds himself in the middle of the case of a missing apple pie. As he moves past many misperceptions, all is resolved in court in this Law & Order take-off for kids. (Team 3)

Advanced readers

**Blackjack: Dreaming of a Morgan Horse**
Ellen F. Feld.
Heather has dreamed of a horse that, to her amazement, is real. Heather must save the horse from a cruel trainer. Children will connect to the friendship of a cherished animal in danger and the need to rescue it. (Team 1)

**Death By Eggplant**
Susan Heyboer O’Keefe.
Bertie is overwhelmed by his secret desire to become a Master Chef; by his clueless parents; and by his mortal enemy, Nick. Add in caring for a flour-sack baby for 10 days, and it’s a recipe for laughter and self-discovery. (Team 3)

**Dream: A Tale of Wonder, Wisdom, & Wishes**
Susan V. Bosak. Ill. various artists.
Children are whisked away on a vibrant journey of hopes and dreams. The book’s message, to embrace your dreams, is told through poetic verse and the beautiful artwork of 15 celebrated illustrators. (Team 1)

**Edgar & Ellen Under Town**
Charles Ogden. Ill. Rick Carton.
The cover art on this book immediately draws children’s attention. The concept of twins and the mystery of a prankster draw students into the story plot. (Team 2)

**Faraway Worlds**
Paul Halpern. Ill. Lynette R. Cook.
Think about the intriguing possibility of the existence of other planets outside of our solar system. What might life be like there? Informative, colorful illustrations fill the pages and extend the text for readers fascinated with outer space. (Team 3)

**Holding at Third**
Linda Zinneen.
This is the touching story of Mike Bainter, a top-notch baseball player who switches middle schools to support his brother during one final cancer treatment. Mike faces not only the challenges of the new middle school, but also the fears cancer instills in family members. (Team 4)
How to Train Your Dragon
Cressida Cowell. Ill. by the author.
This story of Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III, son of a Viking chief, is filled with slightly rude humor that often appeals to preadolescent boys. Clever wordsmithing engages readers in the plight of a scrawny boy and his extraordinarily small dragon. (Team 1)

Lionboy: The Chase
Zizou Corder.
This is the first novel in a trilogy. Charlie Ashanti goes in search of his kidnapped parents with the assistance of speaking feline friends. Children will be drawn to the adventure and mystical appeal of this book. (Team 1)

Murder, My Tweet: A Chet Gecko Mystery
Bruce Hale. Ill. by the author and Brad Weinman.
Chet Gecko plunges into another troublesome case when his mockingbird sidekick, Natalie, is suspended for a crime she didn’t commit. Bullying, blackmail, and tongue-in-cheek humor run rampant at Emerson Hickey Elementary in this 10th installment of these private-eye mysteries. (Team 1)

My Curious Uncle Dudley
Barry Yourgrau. Ill. Tony Auth.
When 11-year-old Duncan Peckle’s parents take an unexpected vacation, he is left in the temporary care of his curious, definitely eccentric Uncle Dudley. There are adventures ahead that include enchantments, elixirs, and a few amusing goblins. (Team 3)

101 Ways to Bug Your Teacher
Lee Wardlaw.
Steve Wyatt is in crisis. His scheme to not skip the eighth grade isn’t working, he’s failing history, and he’s worried he’ll never think of a new invention. Advanced readers connect with laugh-out-loud humor about school and life. (Team 1)

The President Is Shot! The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln
Harold Holzer.
What really happened on the night President Lincoln was shot? Step back in time as you read the accounts and study the pictures and prints to learn more about the president’s last hours and the man focused on killing him. (Team 3)

The Red Kayak
Priscilla Cummings.
When a mean-spirited prank goes awry, a toddler dies and Brady has to choose between telling the truth and covering for his friends and himself. His courageous decision allows a grieving mother to heal and his own family to mend. (Team 5)

Show; Don’t Tell! Secrets of Writing
This nonfiction text offers older students the chance to explore the genres of writing in an easy-to-use format. The characters and illustrations were found to be intriguing enough to make students want to finish the book. (Team 2)
**Top Secret: A Handbook of Codes, Ciphers, and Secret Writing**  
*This book has everything a budding spy or cryptographer wants to know about creating codes, ciphers, and the methods of concealment. An answer key provides a great opportunity to practice new skills from pictographs to Igpay Atinlay. (Team 3)*  

**The Top 10 Ways to Ruin the First Day of 5th Grade**  
Kenneth Derby.  
*Tony Baloney is obsessed with David Letterman and is determined to be a guest on his show. This fast-paced, action-packed story is sure to keep the reader amused—top 10 lists and all! (Team 3)*  

**Tripping Over the Lunch Lady and Other School Stories**  
Nancy E. Mercado (Ed.).  
*This collection of 10 short stories about the trials and tribulations of middle school resonate with advanced readers. Laugh-out-loud narratives by authors such as Avi and Angela Johnson keep readers captivated. School photos of authors personalize the anthology. (Team 1)*  