

The SCHOOL MAGAZINE

SINCE 1916



BOOKSHELF LIST 2009

Countdown



- 1 SUNDAY CHUTNEY** *Written and illustrated by Aaron Blabey* (Penguin 2008) ISBN: 978 0 670 07179 1

Sunday Chutney's life has been packed with remarkable experiences and hobbies; she's lived all over the world! But does that make it easier to be the 'new kid'? Aaron Blabey's paintings are bursting with humour and quirkiness—a perfect accompaniment to his understated text about the challenges of being a new kid at school. Don't be surprised if this charming and original picture book appears on the CBC list in 2009.

- 2 THE PENCIL** *Written by Alan Ahlberg and illustrated by Bruce Ingman* (Walker 2008) ISBN: 978 1 4063 0962 1

The pencil creates a whole world of people and animals, complete with names and colours. That is, until trouble arrives in the form of a rubber. Bruce Ingman's naïve style of illustration accompanies a text that is accessible and funny and will have children using their pencils in a whole new way. Another delightfully thoughtful book by the celebrated British children's author, Alan Ahlberg, who with his wife created the classics *Each Peach Pear Plum* and *The Jolly Postman*.

- 3 SADIE AND RATZ** *Written by Sonya Hartnett and illustrated by Ann James* (Puffin 2008) ISBN: 978-0-14-330355-8

Hannah's hands, named Sadie and Ratz, are rambunctious personalities and sometimes get Hannah into trouble. Things become more complicated when Hannah's little brother starts blaming Sadie and Ratz for mischief that *his* hands have orchestrated. Evocative drawings by Ann James add to the drama in this original, feisty chapter book by one of Australia's leading writers for children.

- 4 VIOLET THE PILOT** *Written and illustrated by Steve Breen* (Dial Books 2008) ISBN: 978 0 8037 3125 7

Violet is a brilliant inventor who is given a hard time at school. When she's called upon to perform a daring rescue in her homemade aeroplane, she finally receives the appreciation she deserves. This is a book with a strong protagonist, a compelling plot and bold, inventive pictures by an artist who has won the Pulitzer prize for editorial cartooning!

- 5 STICKY BURR: ADVENTURES IN BURRWOOD FOREST** *Written and illustrated by John Lechner* (Candlewick Press 2008) ISBN: 978-0-7636-3567-1

Sticky Bur, who lives in Burrwood Forest, is a Burr with great potential. He has exciting and amusing adventures with his friends. The comic-book format offers plenty of appeal to reluctant readers, but the strong story has solid literary merit as well. Overall, a perfect combination to explore the demands of visual literacy by the multi-talented American artist, designer, puppeteer and animator, John Lechner.

- 6 THE TWO-HEARTED NUMBAT** *Written and illustrated by Ambelin and Ezekiel Kwaymullina* (Fremantle Press 2008) ISBN: 978 1 9213 6123 4

Poor Numbat hates having two hearts, one of stone and one of feather. They make him behave in different ways. He does, however, have some interesting adventures as he struggles to make resolve his conflict with the hearts. Vibrant paintings capture the drama of this tale retold by an artist and writer team from the Bailgu and Nyamal peoples of the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

- 7 LEAF** *Written and illustrated by Stephen Michael King* (Scholastic 2008) ISBN: 978 1 7416 9116 0

In this wordless text, Australian author and illustrator Stephen Michael King offers whimsical pictures with a strong emotional impact and no hint of didacticism. The text is subtitled, 'Ideas, sounds and pictures' and offers plenty to explore in terms of visual literacy. The main character is resourceful, sensitive and cheerful and the book addresses the connections children have with the natural world.

- 8 THE MAGIC PILLOW** *Written and illustrated by Demi* (McElderry/Simon and Schuster 2008) ISBN: 1 4169 2470 1

Exquisite and sophisticated paintings illustrate this retelling of a Chinese short story, originally by Shen Jiji from the Tang Dynasty (700 CE). This tale of the poor boy Ping gently and effectively reminds readers that the key to true happiness may lie in unexpected places. The text includes endnotes about the derivation of the story.

- 9 THE NIGHT WE MADE THE FLAG: A EUREKA STORY** *Written by Carole Wilkinson and illustrated by Sebastian Ciffaglione* (Black Dog Books 2008) ISBN: 978 174203007 4

The creation of the Eureka flag is told through the eyes of Mary, a young girl whose mother is one of three women secretly sewing the flag. There is tension as the women race to finish the flag by morning, and also sadness, as Mary is called upon to sacrifice something special so that the flag can be completed. Atmospheric paintings and informative endnotes enhance this picture book about a significant cultural event in Australia's history.

- 10 THE LION DRUMMER** *Written by Gabrielle Wang and illustrated by Andrew McLean* (Puffin 2008) ISBN: 978 014 330313 8

Lulu has always felt the rhythms of life in her body and soul and she simply longs to be the lion drummer at the special Chinatown celebrations. As this short chapter book makes its way through tense moments to a satisfying conclusion, it also celebrates the contributions of Asian Australians. Simple yet evocative drawings help extend the text.

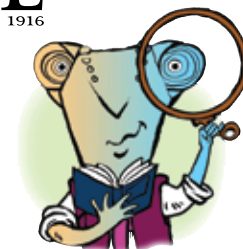
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BOOKSHELF LIST 2009

Blast Off



- 1 SAVING SWEETNESS** *Written by Diane Stanley and illustrated by G. Brian Karas (Puffin Books) ISBN: 0-399-23645-1*

When Little Sweetness runs away from the orphanage to escape mean Mrs Sump, it's the Sheriff who's sent hiking into the desert to bring her back. But just who has the resourcefulness, common sense and quick thinking to survive the dangers of the Wild West? First-person narration in the twangy dialect of the bumbling Sheriff adds to the gentle irony of this delightful role reversal drama. Mixed media illustrations blend gouache, acrylic, and pencil drawings with cyanotype photographs to make this a very sweet start to the year.

- 2 SNAKE AND LIZARD** *Written by Joy Cowley and illustrated by Gavin Bishop (Gecko Press 2007) ISBN: 978-0-9582787-3-7*

Snake and Lizard are very good friends—but they also argue all the time. These two squabblers can argue about anything: whose got the longest tail, where to spend the day, what to eat, *how* to eat. But Snake and Lizard know that when we argue with friends, we come to know each other a bit better—which usually makes us better friends. From New Zealand comes this charming episodic narrative on the theme of learning to value each other's differences, with delightful cameo illustrations of these two best friends.

- 3 AUNT NANCY AND THE BOTHERSOME VISITORS** *Written by Phyllis Root and illustrated by David Parkins (Walker Books 2008) ISBN: 78-1-4063-1058-0*

Aunt Nancy finds herself with visitors she'd like to say 'good bye' to very quickly! There's Old Man Trouble, Cousin Lazybones, Old Woeful and even Mister Death. But Aunt Nancy is cleverer than all of them, and finds ways to send them all packing in next to no time. Award-winning US writer Phyllis Root uses an American rural dialect that readers will find easy to understand and fun to mimic in this delightful collection of humorous short trickster tales, with silhouette illustrations.

- 4 WABI SABI** *Written by Mark Reibstein and illustrated by Ed Young (Little, Brown and Company 2008) ISBN: 978-0-316-11825-5*

Wabi Sabi is a Japanese cat who wants to know what her name means. "That's hard to explain," she's told by her master, her friend Snowball, Rascal the dog, and a blue wren. So Wabi Sabi sets off in search of the wise old monkey who may be able to tell her. Each page of this beautifully designed large-format picture book combines a short narrative text with a haiku poem, set against stunningly original mixed media illustrations by Ed Young. Final pages explain the history of Wabi Sabi and how the haiku form developed. Wabi Sabi is a complete aesthetic experience, offering sound, sense, visual and intellectual delight.

- 5 THE TINDERBOX** *Written by Hans Christian Andersen, retold by Stephen Mitchell and illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline (Walker Books 2007) ISBN: 978-1-4063-1364-2*

One of Andersen's most famous tales, this re-telling preserves the extremes of the soldier's rises and falls in fortune, which all begin when a witch sends him in search of a tinderbox that is guarded by three huge dogs. The pen, ink and wash illustrations by Ibatoulline dominate every spread, with their warts-and-all detail and their arresting images of the dogs with eyes as big as dinner plates, clocks and cartwheels. A dramatic way to (re-)introduce students to the genius of Andersen's 19th century tales.

- 6 CROW AND THE WATERHOLE** *Written and illustrated by Ambelin Kwaymullina (Fremantle Press 2007) ISBN: 978-1-8636-8303-6*

A CBC notable book and winner of the Chrichton Award, this picture book by Indigenous author and illustrator Kwaymullina tells the story of Crow's search to be braver, kinder, wiser and more faithful than she thinks she is. As Crow searches to be the wonderful crow she sees each time she looks in the waterhole, she finds, to her surprise, that she has changed the world! A delightfully gentle but deep story about identity, with strong illustrations, rich in the colours and shapes of the Australian landscape.

- 7 68 TEETH** *Written by James Moloney and illustrated by Tom Jellet (Penguin Group Australia 2005) ISBN: 978-0-14-330191-2*

It's all action and drama in this our first short novel of the year. When Jack heads off fishing in the river on his family's property, he catches something unexpected: a crocodile! And it's lucky for everyone that Jack tags along when Nils, the tracker, arrives to capture the croc. Crocs don't have 68 teeth for nothing, and it's only Jack's resourcefulness and bravery that gets him and Nils home safely after an unexpected attack. A fast-paced and credible Aussie Chomp that students will find hard to put down.

- 8 MY PLACE** *Written by Nadia Wheatley and illustrated by Donna Rawlins (Walker Books 2008) ISBN: 978-192115065-4*

The 20th anniversary edition of this CBC award-winning book continues to combine interest and relevance long after the bicentenary it was produced to celebrate. The innovative format devotes a double-page spread to each decade, working backwards from 1988 to 1788. Each spread is 'spoken' by the different children who inhabited 'my place' across the two centuries. The historical details in the narrations and illustrations make this a fascinating way to introduce young readers to the social history of Australia.

- 9 WHERE I LIVE** *Written by Eileen Spinelli and illustrated by Matt Phelan (Dial Books for Young Readers) ISBN: 978-0-8037-3122-6*

A physically appealing book, *Where I Live* is a free verse novel that follows a young American girl's experiences when her family moves to live near Grandpa in Pittsburgh. Diana, a would-be poet, addresses readers directly through her short poems that are very accessible and effective in capturing the many different emotions of Diana's year. Pencil illustrations by Matt Phelan help keep the light touch and spaciousness that characterise this attractive book.

- 10 JACK PLANK TELLS TALES** *Written and illustrated by Natalie Babbitt (Michael di Capua Books Scholastic 2007) ISBN: 978-0-545-00496-1*

Any new book by American writer Natalie Babbitt, author of the classic *Tuck Everlasting*, is sure to be a rich delight, and *Jack Plank Tells Tales* is precisely that. Each night, out-of-work pirate Jack Plank explains to his landlady, Mrs Delfresno, and her boarders why—despite his best intentions—he can't work as a farmer, baker, fortune teller, fisherman, barber, goldsmith, actor or musician. As Jack's audience (and his readers) become caught up in his tales of life at sea, we gradually realise that Jack is already living his perfect career, as a gifted teller of tall tales. Pencil illustrations support the gentle humour and incredulity of Jack's stories.

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Orbit



- 1 EMMY AND THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING RAT** *Written by Lynne Jonell and illustrated by Jonathan Bean* (Random House 2007) ISBN: 978-1-74166-327-3

Emmy, Joe and their friend, a talking rat, have a mystery—or several—on their hands. Why do Emma's parents travel overseas all the time? Why does Emma's sinister nanny, Miss Barmy, force her to drink horrible concoctions every day? And why does the evil Professor Vole keep a caged collection of remarkable rodents in his dingy shop? A humorous plot and well-constructed characterisation, combined with mystery and magic, make this a lively novel with which to start the year.

- 2 KASPAR: PRINCE OF CATS** *Written by Michael Morpurgo and illustrated by Michael Foreman* (HarperCollins Children's Books 2008) ISBN: 978-0-00-728469-6

London, 1912: three lives become unexpectedly intertwined. Johnny Trotter (a Savoy Hotel bell-boy), Prince Kaspar (a distinguished Russian cat) and Lizziebeth Stanton (a rich young American) find themselves headed across the icy Atlantic Ocean to New York, aboard the new super-liner, the *Titanic*. Morpurgo's writing is excellent, as always, and Foreman's richly coloured illustrations enhance a novel that gives historical background to early 20th-century England and depicts the harrowing final hours of the *Titanic*.

- 3 OCTAVIUS O'MALLEY AND THE MYSTERY OF THE CRIMINAL CATS** *Written by Alan Sunderland and illustrated by Ben Redlich* (HarperCollins Publishers Australia 2008) ISBN: 978-0-207-20050-2

When strange events start happening in the shady alleys of Rodent City, it's up to Octavius O'Malley—self-confessed finest detective in the city—to save the day. Ably assisted by Spencer, his diminutive mouse offsider, Ocko twitches his whiskers into what appears to be a cat conspiracy ... or is it? Another very funny instalment in Alan Sunderland's Octavius O'Malley series, made even funnier by Ben Redlich's hilarious illustrations. The book introduces young readers to the detective genre in a playfully clever way.

- 4 SAMURAI KIDS: WHITE CRANE** *Written by Sandy Fussell and illustrated by Rhian Nest James* (Walker Books Australia 2008) ISBN: 978-192115020-3

Niya Moto yearns to be a samurai, but with only one leg, what chance does he have? None—until the legendary samurai warrior Ki-Yaga, sensei of the Cockroach Ryu, offers him training. Together, Niya and the other Cockroaches—one-armed Mikko, blind Taji, six-fingered albino Kyoko and other unlikely apprentice samurai—train to defeat the fierce Dragon Ryu at the Samurai Trainee Games. Set in feudal Japan, this lively adventure novel shows that the journey is as important as the destination, and strength of character more important than outward appearance.

- 5 THE ROBE OF SKULLS** *Written by Vivian French and illustrated by Ross Collins* (Walker Books 2007) ISBN: 978-0-7445-8361-8

Evil sorceress Lady Lamorna has her heart set on a new robe—but kidnapping, blackmail and more than a little black magic are needed to pay for it! With brave Gracie Gillypot who is running for her life, a gallant prince who doesn't mind getting his hands dirty, two chatty bats, three ancient crones, one woolfishy evil stepsister, and a rather dim-witted troll, you have all the ingredients for a rip-roaring adventure! French avoids clichés, instead playing with the fantasy genre in interesting and unexpected ways. Well-rounded and often very funny characters will delight young readers who enjoy adventures.

- 6 THE MOST STUPENDOUS ATLAS IN THE WHOLE WORLD by the Brainwaves** *Written by Simon Adams and illustrated by Lisa Swerling and Ralph Lazar* (Dorling Kindersley 2008) ISBN: 978-1-40533-196-8

Meet the Brainwaves, diminutive daredevils who lead us on an amazing journey to discover our planet. Explore every continent in seven large fold-out spreads, interspersed with fascinating explanations of such important processes as erosion, climate, the water cycle, the planet's composition, oceans, peoples of the world and more. This fun atlas is jam-packed with information and is a terrific tour of our world. The lively illustrations, combined with numerous bite-size facts, make this an excellent geography text, accessible to students of all reading levels.

- 7 DEEP WATER** *Written by Ann Turnbull* (Walker Books 2007) ISBN: 978-1-4063-0964-5

When Jon and Ryan wag school, their boat capsizes in a remote spot and Ryan breaks his arm. It's up to Jon to go and get help—but does he? Jon is terrified of the trouble he'll get in and convinces himself that someone will soon find Ryan. With locals searching, the police involved, and crucial time passing, hopes of finding Ryan fade. Will Jon do what he knows he must—and will he do it in time? Gripping from start to finish, this is a thrilling and suspenseful story of a young boy's moral dilemma from an acclaimed British children's author.

- 8 RATWHISKERS AND ME** *Written by Lorraine Marwood* (Walker Books Australia 2008) ISBN: 978-1-921150-39-5

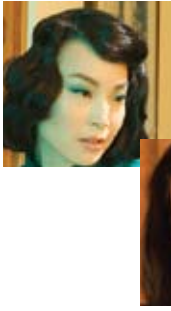
On the Victorian goldfields in the mid-1850s, young Lin has been forced to take on a new identity, following the traumatic fire in which his family perished. Sun Song, a Chinese market gardener, is the only person who shows any kindness towards Lin, while Ellery, a man with links to Lin's past, has evil plans. Only friendship and loyalty will help Lin and his dog, Ratwhiskers, survive and make sense of his past. A uniquely Australian verse novel, both powerful and atmospheric, *Ratwhiskers and Me* is historically informative and socially relevant in its explorations of identity and racism.

- 9 THE SECRET GARDEN** *Written by Frances Hodgson Burnett* (Puffin/Penguin UK, 2008) ISBN: 978-0-141321-06-6

Following the death of her parents in India, sour-faced and very spoilt Mary Lennox is sent to live with her reclusive widower uncle in his isolated Yorkshire mansion. With the help of a local boy, Dickon, and her sickly cousin, Colin, Mary learns how to coax an unused garden back to life. As the garden blooms, so do Mary's humanity, Colin's health and, finally, Uncle Archibald's spirit. 2009 marks the 100th anniversary of this children's classic, which offers an historical perspective on late 19th century Britain and celebrates determination, persistence and the power of positive thinking.

- 10 THE GAME** *Written by Diana Wynne Jones* (HarperCollins Children's Books 2008) ISBN: 978-0-00-726713-2

Hayley never knew her parents, and when her grandparents pack her off to Ireland to live with her aunts and cousins, she is introduced to 'the game'. This involves adventures in the forbidden 'mythosphere', where myth and reality meet and where Hayley discovers the truth about her family. Another wonderful book by this prolific and well-loved author, where common sense is as important a tool in survival as magic. Bringing concepts from mythology into modern life, *The Game* is an excellent introduction to many ancient stories and includes a useful section of activities and background information on mythology.



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Touchdown



1 THE NAME OF THIS BOOK IS SECRET

Written by Pseudonymous Bosch (Allen & Unwin 2007)
ISBN: 978-1-74175-431-5

Narrated by the humorous and mysterious Pseudonymous Bosch, this is the adventurous story of Cass and Max-Ernest—two social misfits who find their quirky qualities surprisingly complementary when they team up to solve a mystery involving crime, magic, codes, puzzles, word games—and of course—secrets. An action-packed book that is sure to intrigue even the most reluctant reader.

2 THE FAMOUS FIVE'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

Based on *The Famous Five* books by Enid Blyton (Hodder 2008)
ISBN: 978-0-340-97083-6

A big book packed with survival tips, based on Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* books and including a new mystery that the Famous Five never managed to solve. Filled with maps, diagrams, photos and handy tips to help readers survive any situation, including how to make fire, how to read a compass, how to perform the Heimlich Manoeuvre, how to find your way by the stars and First Aid advice. Fun and informative.

3 MY SECRET WAR DIARY

Written and illustrated by Marcia Williams (Walker Books 2008) ISBN: 978-1-4063-0940-9

A follow-up to *Archie's War*, Marcia Williams's World War I diary, this time the diary is written by Archie Albright's young daughter, Flossie, and is set during the years of World War II. Flossie is a spirited, brave girl, living in the English countryside with her uncle and little brother. Her diary details the war years from the outset to the final conclusion. Beautifully (hand)written and illustrated, it is filled with humour, sadness, tragedy, the uncertain turbulence and the strong spirit that characterised these years.

4 HOW NEARLY EVERYTHING WAS INVENTED by the Brainwaves

Written by Jilly MacLeod and illustrated by Lisa Swerling and Ralph Lazaar (Dorling Kindersley 2006)
ISBN: 978-1-4053-329-2

A colourful, instructive, information-packed nonfiction book that looks at the history of inventions, how they came to be, and their role in modern society. Guided by a group of cartoon characters called The Brainwaves, the reader explores the who, what, where, when and how of key inventions in an accessible, fun and dynamic way.

5 RHYMING BOY

Written by Steven Herrick (UQP 2008)
ISBN: 978-0-7022-3673-0

Award-winning poet Steven Herrick's first prose novel tells of Jayden Hayden (aka Rhyming Boy) and his search for the father he has never known. Deftly written, the novel deals with friendship and the search for identity. As with much of Herrick's work, this funny, poignant and appealing quest story also celebrates the richness of language.

6 US MOB WALAWURRU

Written by David Spillman and Lisa Wilyuka (Magabala Books 2006) ISBN: 1-875641-87-4

Set in the 1960s in an Aboriginal community in Central Australia, the story is told through the eyes of Ruby—a young Liritja girl who attends the new 'silver bullet' school. It's here that Ruby's close relationship with her family and her non-Aboriginal school teacher, Mr Duncan, provokes questions about the difference between 'whitefella' and Aboriginal culture. Ruby experiences an awakening as she seeks to understand why the two cultures are so at odds with one another. Raising issues of culture, ownership and reconciliation, this book provides valuable historical insights, while also exploring Indigenous issues that are still pertinent today.

7 THE WORD SPY

Written by Ursula Dubosarsky (Penguin 2008)
ISBN: 978-0-6700-7227-9

A witty, entertaining journey through the English language, *The Word Spy* had its genesis in the pages of *The School Magazine*. Ursula Dubosarsky tells us much about words and phrases and their idiosyncrasies and quirks. Covering such topics as palindromes, mondegreens, Pig Latin, and more, this is a delightful and interesting insight into the words we use.

8 MAHTAB'S STORY

Written by Libby Gleeson (Allen & Unwin 2008) ISBN: 987-1-74175-334-9

Inspired by a true story, *Mahtab's Story* captures the anxious voyage of young girl fleeing Afghanistan with her family in search of freedom, safety and hope in Australia. A compelling realist story that is powerfully and beautifully written by an award-winning Australian children's author.

9 100 CUPBOARDS

Written by N.D. Wilson (Random House 2008) ISBN: 978-1-74166-323-5

Cousins Henry and Henrietta discover 99 cupboard doors hidden behind the walls of the attic of their old family farmhouse. When these cupboards are found to be portals into other worlds, secrets are unlocked and mystery brews, leading Henry and Henrietta into a fantastical adventure. The novel offers interesting and complex characters, an unusual, eerie setting and an alluring and suspenseful plot that is both complex and accessible.

10 THE AMAZING MIND OF ALICE MEAKIN

Written by Alan Shea (Chicken House 2008) ISBN: 978-1-904442-32-5

Set in London about ten years after World War II, Alice is a clever girl who loves writing and making up stories. Sometimes she uses these stories to escape the difficult world in which she lives—an abusive step-father, a withdrawn mother, financial deprivation and run-down accommodation in a bombed out urban slum. But when a new boy comes to live in her building, she finds that the fine line between reality and fantasy starts to blur, and that the war that still haunts the physical surroundings of Alice's life reveals special meanings for her own identity. An engrossing tale, full of surprises and a compelling sort of magic.