



Green Mountain Book Award

Handbook

2005-2006

**Compiled by
the Green Mountain Book Award Committee**



This program is supported in part by the
Institute of Museum and Library Services,
a federal agency, through the Library
Services and Technology Act.

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INTRODUCTION

What is the Green Mountain Book Award?

The Green Mountain Book Award is a new student-selected award for Vermonters in grades 9-12. It joins the other two Vermont child-selected book awards, The Red Clover Award, a picture book award for children in Kindergarten-grade 4, and the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award, a book award for students in grades 4-8.

How did the award start?

Librarians have been talking about the possibility of such an award for several years, but it was Marsha Middleton, the librarian at North Country Union High School in Newport, Vermont and Sybil McShane, the Vermont State Librarian, who made it a reality. Marsha had both the desire to start a young adult award and the knowledge of high school kids and their reading, and Sybil had strong interest in having the Department of Libraries better serve the teenagers of Vermont. Both librarians are passionate about young adult literature and bringing the best to kids, so it was a natural partnership.

The Department of Libraries agreed to fund a two year pilot project, and a group of excited volunteers formed a committee. The Vermont Educational Media Association contributed funding, and CAYAL, the Children's and Young Adult section of the Vermont Library Association, pledged support and recruited volunteers. The committee consisted of: Teri Austin, Assistant Director, Sherburne Memorial Library, Killington; Rebecca Brown, Librarian, Peoples Academy, Morrisville; Philip Charles Crawford, Library Director, Essex High School; Joyce DeForge, Language Arts Teacher, U32 High School; Mary Neville Hood, Retired School Librarian; Dollinda Lund, Librarian, Lyndon Institute; Hannah Peacock, Youth Services Librarian, Burnham Memorial Library, Colchester; Suzy Shedd, Librarian, Porters Point School, Colchester; Sharon Richards Weaver, formerly Youth Services Librarian, Charlotte Public Library; Beth Wright, Youth Services Librarian, Fletcher Free Library, Burlington; Marsha Middleton, Librarian, North Country Union High School, Chair; Grace Greene, Children's Services Consultant, Department of Libraries, Liaison to Committee.

Over the past year the committee wrote a mission statement, established the criteria for the selection, read MANY books, and then selected the first master list of fifteen titles.

Mission statement

The goal of the award is to select a list of books of good literary quality that

- Engages high school students.
- Represents a variety of genres, formats and viewpoints.
- May include books written both for young people and adults.
- Reflects the interests of high school students.

Criteria for choosing books

To be eligible for the Green Mountain Book Award list, a book must:

- Be available in paperback
- Have been published in the last 5 years (2000-2004 for the 2005-2006 list)
- Have received two favorable reviews in professionally recognized review sources (if possible)

In addition, there may be only one book by an author on any given list.

Timetable

To coincide with the calendars of the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award and the Red Clover Award, voting for the winner of the Green Mountain Book Award will be held in April. The committee recommends that in order to be eligible to vote, a student should read at least three books on the masterlist. The new list will be available in March, and will be sent out to all school and public libraries at that time.

Book Sets

The Department of Libraries has bought 20 copies of each book on the masterlist, and will house them at the two regional libraries, Midstate in Berlin and Northeast in St. Johnsbury.

Materials available

For the first year of the Green Mountain Book Award we have produced three things: this booklet, posters and bookmarks. We are very fortunate that Jon Fishman, the drummer for the former band, Phish, has agreed to appear on the posters and bookmarks. Jon is a passionate reader himself, and is thrilled to be involved in this effort to get teenagers to read more for pleasure. The bookmarks list the nominees for the 2005-2006 award, but the poster has no dates attached, so can be used in subsequent years. If you would like some of these materials, please call or email Grace Greene at the Department of Libraries: 828-6954; email grace.greene@dol.state.vt.us

Plans for the future

Website: There will not be a traditional website for the Green Mountain Book Award, but we will put resources on the Web Junction-Vermont site (www.webjunction.org). The GMBA resources will be available to access on WJ-VT in July of this year. The lists and information now available at:

http://dol.state.vt.us/GOPHER_ROOT5/LIBRARIES/gmba/gmba.htm will be on Web Junction, as will this booklet and any new information we have.

Logo: The Green Mountain Book Award needs a logo, and plans are underway to conduct a contest for students to design one for the program. The contest will be held in the 2007-2008 school year so that there will be some familiarity with the program before we ask for designs.

Green Mountain Book Award Master List 2005-2006

Anderson, M.T. *Feed*. Candlewick, 2002. \$16.99. ISBN 0-7636-1726-1 (PLB); 2004. \$7.99. ISBN 0-7636-2259-1 (pap.).

In a future where most people have computer implants in their heads to control their environment, a boy meets an unusual girl who is in serious trouble.

Donnelly, Jennifer. *A Northern Light*. Harcourt, 2003. \$17.00. ISBN 0-1521-6705-6 (PLB); 2004. \$8.95. ISBN 0-1520-5310-7 (pap.).

In 1906, sixteen-year-old Mattie, determined to attend college and be a writer against the wishes of her father and fiancé, takes a job at a summer inn where she discovers the truth about the death of a guest. Based on the true story that inspired Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*.

Efaw, Amy. *Battle Dress*. HarperCollins, 2000. \$16.99. ISBN 0-060-28411-0 (PLB); HarperTrophy, 2003. \$6.99. ISBN 0-060-53520-2 (pap.).

As a newly arrived freshman at West Point, seventeen-year-old Andi finds herself gaining both confidence and self esteem as she struggles to get through the grueling six weeks of new cadet training known as the Beast.

Gibson, William. *Pattern Recognition*. Putnam, 2003. \$25.95. ISBN 0-3991-4986-4 (PLB); Berkley, 2004. \$14.00. ISBN 0-425-19293-8 (pap.); Berkley, 2005. \$7.99. ISBN 0-425-198685.

Haunted by the memory of her missing father, who disappeared in downtown Manhattan on the morning of September 11, 2001, Cayce is soon traveling through parallel universes of marketing, globalization, and terror, following the implications of a secret as disturbing and compelling as the twenty-first century promises to be.

Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Doubleday, 2003. \$22.95. ISBN 0-3855-1210-4 (PLB); Vintage, 2004. \$12.00. ISBN 1-4000-3271-7 (pap.).

Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.

Jemas, Bill. *Ultimate Spider-Man, Vol. 1: Power and Responsibility*. Marvel Comics, 2002. \$14.95. ISBN 0-785-10786-X (pap.).

A timid high school student, Peter Parker, must learn to balance the pressures and responsibilities of school, work, and family with his secret life as the superhero, Spider-Man.

- Johnson, Angela. *The First Part Last*. S&S, 2003. \$15.95. ISBN 0-689-84922-2 (PLB). Simon Pulse, 2005. \$5.99. ISBN 0-689-84923-0 (pap.).
Bobby's carefree teenage life changes forever when he becomes a father and must care for his adored baby daughter.
- Mackler, Carolyn. *The Earth, My Butt and Other Big Round Things*. Candlewick, 2003. \$15.99. ISBN 0-7636-1958-2 (PLB); Candlewick, 2005. \$8.99. ISBN 0-7636-2091-2 (pap.).
Feeling like she does not fit in with the other members of her family, who are all thin, brilliant, and good-looking, fifteen-year-old Virginia tries to deal with her self-image, her first physical relationship, and her disillusionment with some of the people closest to her.
- Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*. Harcourt, 2002. \$25.00. ISBN 0-1510-0811-6 (PLB); Harvest, 2003. \$14.00. ISBN 0-1560-2732-1 (pap.).
After a shipwreck, Pi finds himself alone on a lifeboat, his only companions a hyena, an orangutan, a wounded zebra, and Richard Parker, a 450 pound Bengal tiger.
- Oates, Joyce Carol. *Big Mouth and Ugly Girl*. HarperCollins, 2002. \$16.89. ISBN 0-066-23758-0 (PLB); HarperTempest, 2003. \$7.99. ISBN 0-064-47347-3 (pap.).
When sixteen-year-old Matt is falsely accused of threatening to blow up his high school and his friends turn against him, an unlikely classmate comes to his aid.
- Philbrick, Nathaniel. *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex*. Viking, 2000. \$24.95. ISBN 0-670-89157-6 (PLB); Penguin, 2001. \$14.00. ISBN 0-141-00182-8 (pap.).
In the middle of the South Pacific, the Essex was rammed by an angry sperm whale, leaving the crew to drift for more than 90 days, turning to drastic measures to survive.
- Pierce, Tamora. *Trickster's Choice*. Random, 2003. \$17.95. ISBN 0-3758-1466-3 (PLB); 2004. \$8.95. ISBN 0-3758-2879-6 (pap.).
Alianne must call forth her mother's courage and her father's wit in order to survive on the Copper Isles in a royal court rife with political intrigue and murderous conspiracy.
- Pratchett, Terry. *Wee Free Men*. HarperCollins, 2003. \$17.89. ISBN 0-060-01237-4 (PLB); \$16.99. ISBN 0-060-01236-6 (Tr.); HarperTrophy, 2004. \$6.99. ISBN 0-060-01238-2 (pap.).
A young witch-to-be named Tiffany teams up with the Wee Free Men, a clan of six-inch-high blue men, to rescue her baby brother and ward off a sinister invasion from Fairyland.

Roach, Mary. *Stiff: The Curious Life of Human Cadavers*. Norton, 2003. \$23.95. ISBN 0-393-05093-9 (PLB); 2004. \$13.95. ISBN 0-393-32482-6 (pap.).

From medicinal mummies to cadaver models for crash-test dummies, this is a well-researched, lively dissection of offbeat ways that the dead have served the living. It is informative and respectful as well as irreverent and witty.

Satrapı, Marjane. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. Pantheon, 2003. \$17.95. ISBN 0-375-42230-7 (PLB); 2004. \$11.95. ISBN 0-375-71457-X (pap.).

In graphic novel format, Satrapı tells the story of growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution.

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This program is supported in part by the
Institute of Museum and Library Services, a
federal agency, through the Library
Services and Technology Act.

How to Apply for the Committee

The Green Mountain Book Award Committee consists of 10 volunteers and the Children's Services Consultant from the Vermont Department of Libraries. There are currently two three-year openings on the committee, so we are recruiting for those positions. We are looking for people who work with high school students and are passionate about books. School librarians, public librarians, community members and teachers are all urged to apply. The chosen candidates will begin work immediately on the next list (2006-2007).

If you are interested in applying, please send a letter of interest, a resume and two reviews, one positive and one negative of any books of your choice to:

Grace Greene
Children's Services Consultant
Vermont Dept. of Libraries
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609
grace.greene@dol.state.vt.us

Deadline is June 30, 2005. Decisions will be made in the middle of July.

Guidelines for writing reviews

1. Book reviews should be between 200 and 1,000 words in length.
2. Each review should include a brief descriptive summary and an assessment of appeal to high school students.
3. Reviews should touch on the quality of the following features:

For Nonfiction:

- Authority and responsibility of the author
- Organization
- Writing style
- Illustrations
- Design
- Documentation of sources

For Fiction:

- Plot
- Integration of background material
- Pacing
- Mood
- Characterization

- Point of view
- Setting
- Writing style
- Theme

For Poetry:

- Sound (rhyme, meter)
- Imagery
- Ideas

Book Suggestion for the Green Mountain Book Award

Snail mail or email by October 1, 2005 to:

Grace Greene
Vermont Department of Libraries
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609
grace.greene@dol.state.vt.us

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Name _____

Grade (if a student) _____

School or library _____

Title of Book _____

Author _____

Publisher and date of publication _____

To be eligible for consideration by the Green Mountain Book Award Committee for the 2006-2007 masterlist, the book must have been first published in 2001-2005, and must be of interest to students in grades 9-12. Both adult and young adult books are eligible, and the authors can be of any nationality. The only other stipulation is that the book MUST currently be available in paperback in the US.

Please do not include plot summaries, but feel free to tell the committee why you think this book belongs on the GMBA list. Use as much space as you need.

This book should be on the list because:

FEED

by M. T. Anderson

Genre: Science Fiction

Themes: the power of technology; the power of advertising; the importance of critical thinking; the importance of language

Author information: M. T. Anderson lives in Boston and teaches at Vermont College's MFA Program in Writing for Children. His published books have included realistic fiction, science fiction, horror, fantasy, picture books, and biographies. He won a National Book Award honor for *Feed*.

Plot summary: Titus and his friends have never questioned the computer implants in their brains feeding them the latest music, news, and fashions, until they meet a girl who's determined to fight the feed.

Booktalk: "We went to the moon to have fun, but the moon turned out to completely suck." Titus and his friends should be happy: they've got a ton of credit from their rich parents and a ton of advice on how to spend it from the computer chips broadcasting "the feed" straight into their brains. What to do, where to go, how to dress, whom to like: the feed has told them all this and more, all their lives, and they've loved it up until now. But today they're bored because the no-grav Ricochet Lounge, where they're spending their school vacation, stopped being hip, like, a year and a half ago. Then they meet Violet, a beautiful girl who watches, and thinks, and asks questions about the feed. Soon Violet is in danger, first from a lunatic who jams her feed, and then from the feed operators who ignore her pleas to fix the ever-increasing malfunctions in her brain. Is the feed really good or evil? Will Violet survive? Can Titus and Violet fight the feed? Can anyone?

Curriculum tie-ins:

Creative Writing/Media Studies

Write advertisements to broadcast on the feed, using slang terms from the book.

Technology

How much of the communications technology in *Feed* relates to technology that already exists? (Examples: Internet user profiling and user-specific advertising; Internet map services; online dictionaries.) What advances would be needed before the technology in *Feed* could become a reality? (Example: connecting computer chips to brains)

If you loved this, you'll like:

Gibson, William. *Pattern Recognition*. Putnam, 2003. (also on the GMBA Masterlist)

Orwell, George. *Brave New World*. Signet, 1990. (originally published 1949)
Westerfeld, Scott. *So Yesterday*. Razorbill, 2004.

Additional resources:

Feed is available as an unabridged book on audiocassette and as an abridged book on compact disc. Both versions are fabulous because the advertisements are recorded like radio ads, complete with music and syrupy announcer voices.

Graydon, Shari. *Made You Look: How Advertising Works and Why You Should Know*. Annick Press, 2003.

Other books by M. T. Anderson:

Burger Wuss. Candlewick, 1999.

Thirsty. Candlewick, 1997.

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY

by Brian Michael Bendis

Illustration: Mark Bagley et. al.

Genre: YA superhero adventure (Graphic Novel)

Themes: Coming of age, family relationships, self-esteem, school life

Author information: Bendis is one of the most successful writers working in mainstream comics and has won 5 Eisner Awards, including “Best Writer of the Year” two years in a row. Brian was one of the central creative forces behind the creation of Marvel Comic’s “Ultimate” imprint, a line of superhero comics specifically created for a new generation of comic readers. He lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife and daughter.

Plot summary: Brainy teenager Peter Parker gains super-powers after being bitten by a spider, loses his likable Uncle Ben to a violent crime, becomes the superhero “Spider-Man,” and learns once again that "with great power comes great responsibility."

Booktalk: Brian Bendis revised and expanded the original *Spider-Man* story from *Amazing Fantasy # 15* (1962) as the launching point for the Ultimate Spider-Man series. While the original story is a comic book classic, some of the elements within the story have become somewhat dated. Bendis' rehash of Spidey's origin sets him in modern times with the look of a modern 15-year-old, and characters who speak in modern dialogue. The art is strong with good character expressions and good action sequences.

Curriculum tie-ins:

Science

Discuss genetic manipulation and its impact on society.

Websites: http://classbrain.com/artmovies/publish/article_72.shtml

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/hottopics/superheroes/spiderman.shtml>

Language Arts / Social Studies

Discussion Questions:

What does Power and Responsibility mean to you?

What qualities does it take to be a hero? A superhero?

Create a new Superhero. How old would he/she be? What kind of super power will he/she have?

Website: www.emints.org/ethemes/resourses/s00001516.shtml

Civics/ Social Studies

Superheroes as Philanthropists: Students will identify themes in Spider-man, the reasons that people choose to give to their communities, and why Spider-man chooses to do so.

Website: <http://www.learningtogive.org/lessons/index.asp?unit=106&2&print=yes>

If you loved this, you'll like:

Bendis, Brian Michael. *Ultimate Spider-Man Vol. 2: Learning Curve*. Mark Bagley, Illustrator. Marvel Comics, 2002.

Lee, Stan, and Peter David, eds. *The Ultimate Hulk*. Berkley, 1998.

Websites about comic books:

Secret Origin of Good Readers: A Resource Book. 69 pages.

<http://night-flight.com/secretorigin/SOGR2004.pdf>

This booklet explains how comic book reading should be encouraged since the result is often avid readers.

C.O.M.I.C.S. Curriculum (Challenging Objective Minds: an instructional Comicbook Series

<http://nyccomicbookmuseum.org/education/education.htm>

Comics in the classroom

A NORTHERN LIGHT

by Jennifer Donnelly

Genre: Historical Fiction

Themes: Feminism; racism; familial responsibility versus responsibility to oneself; importance of education; moral and legal responsibility; appearance versus reality; confronting choices and challenges.

Author information: Jennifer Donnelly grew up in New York State and attended the University of Rochester, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude in English Literature and European History. She also lived in England as a college student, and credits London as the inspiration behind her desire to become a writer. Before becoming a novelist, Jennifer worked as an antiques dealer, reporter and copywriter. She currently lives in Brooklyn, New York with her husband, their daughter, and two greyhounds.

A Northern Light is Jennifer Donnelly's debut novel for young adults. For this novel, she drew on stories she heard from her grandmother while growing up in upstate New York. *A Northern Light* is a Carnegie Medal winner and a Printz Honor book. Jennifer has previously authored a novel for adult readers, *The Tea Rose*, and a picture book, *Humble Pie*.

Plot summary: Based on a real-life murder which shocked turn-of-the-century America, this is the story of the coming of age of the strong, selfless heroine Mattie Gokey. In 1906, seventeen year-old Mattie is torn between her familial responsibilities, her desire to be a writer, and the excitement of a first romance. Her dilemmas and choices are merged with the life of Grace Brown, a young woman found drowned in a lake, whom Mattie gets to know only through a bundle of letters left in her possession. Mattie comes to see her own life reflected in that of the drowned woman, ultimately giving her the courage to define her own future.

Booktalk: Is our responsibility to our families greater than to ourselves? Is a promise made to an individual more important than our own well-being and future? In this book, we are left to wonder whether the main character's promise to her mother and responsibility for her father and siblings are more important than her own future.

Is a promise made to an individual greater than a moral or legal responsibility? Under what circumstances is it better *not* to tell the truth? Mattie, the main character, is entrusted with a secret and needs to answer this very question. When Grace Brown's body is discovered, Mattie must ponder whether her moral responsibility overrides her promise to Grace. Does she have an obligation to burn the letters as Grace asked her to?

What is more important to our lives in the long run, the love of an individual or the pursuit of a dream? Mattie thinks she is in love with Royal Loomis. Can she combine that love with her love of books and education?

In *A Northern Light*, the author asks all these questions, the same ones you will ask yourself after you close the book.

Curriculum tie-ins:

Language Arts

Mattie and her siblings choose a “word of the day” to learn from the dictionary as part of their routine. The chapters begin with these words.

First, test student memories to see how many definitions they remember of these chapter headings. Discuss the parallels between these headings and the story line.

Next, working from dictionaries, have students select their own vocabulary word(s) as obscure as some Mattie has chosen to share with the class.

Social Studies

Listen to the transcript of the trial of Chester Gillette on the web:

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/history/gillette.htm>

What are the differences and similarities between the real story and Donnelly’s fictionalized version?

If you loved this, you’ll like:

Abraham, S. & D. Gonzales. *Cecelia’s Year*. Cinco Puntos Press, 2004

Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. Penguin Putnam, 1968.

Atwood, Margaret . *Alias Grace*. Doubleday, 1997.

Bray, Libba. *A Great and Terrible Beauty*. Random House, 2003.

Namioka, Lensey. *Ties That Bind, Ties That Break*. Bantam, 1999.

Rees, Celia. *Pirates*. Bloomsbury, 2003.

Taylor, Mildred. *The Land*. Dial, 2001.

Additional resources:

Available on Audio-Unabridged, Listening Library, Inc., 2003.

www.bloomsbury.com/AGatheringLight

www.harcourtbooks.com/bookcatalogs/bookpages/0152053107.asp

<http://www.jenniferdonnelly.com/>

Other books by this author:

The Tea Rose. St. Martin’s, 2002.

BATTLE DRESS

by Amy Efaw

Genre: Realistic fiction

Themes: Interpersonal relationships, family dynamics, self-esteem, the power of cooperation and teamwork

Author information: Amy Efaw graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1989. She is now a Captain in the U. S. Army Reserves and lives with her husband and four children in Tacoma, Washington.

Plot summary: When Andi Davis arrives at West Point, she knows her endurance will be tested again and again in her struggle to make it through her first six weeks as a new recruit.

Booktalk: For Andi Davis, the elite Military Academy at West Point is her escape. Surely “Beast,” the grueling six-week training program, can’t be any worse than dealing with her dysfunctional family and the humiliation and degradation she has endured at their hands. Can being a plebe, a new recruit, be worse than being a “nobody” at home? As one of only two females in her platoon, Andi is not prepared for the rigid commands, insults and taunts dished out by the upperclassmen or by the rigorous physical training and torturous mental exercises that make up “Beast.” She knows a third of her class will drop out before the end, but will she have what it takes to make it through? As the days turn into weeks, Andi endures push-ups, pre-dawn runs, lack of sleep, “square” meals, and mind games, all crafted to demoralize and break the new recruits. What keeps Andi going as the ranking cadets spend weeks tearing her down? Is it her mother’s words, “You’ll never make it there,” or something deep inside herself?

Author Amy Efaw, who was once a plebe herself, gives the reader a glimpse of what happens during “Beast,” and through Andi’s narration she draws the reader into the world of West Point. Andi gains confidence and self-respect as she learns that she must depend on her own strength and will to make it through the ordeal. Ultimately she also learns to trust and respect her fellow platoon mates bringing her to the realization that she is an integral part of something greater than herself. Once a loner, Andi now is part of a community.

Battle Dress is a powerful read. It will attract teens planning to go into the military, but it will also appeal to those who enjoy a fast paced story of a teen who is determined to survive.

Curriculum tie-ins:

Social Studies/Career Planning

Choose a 4-year college that you might be interested in attending. Compare and contrast this college with West Point. Include requirements for admission, course offerings, social aspects, ratio of men to women, and statistic regarding completion of the program. A summary should include possible reasons for choosing one over the other.

Social Studies

Women were not always able to gain admittance to West Point. Find out when the first woman was admitted and what cultural changes were taking place in the United States at that time that helped or hindered this process?

If you loved this, you'll like:

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Speak*. Puffin, 2001.

Oates, Joyce Carol. *Big Mouth and Ugly Girl*. HarperTempest, 2003. (also on the GMBA Masterlist)

Additional resources:

Barkalow, Captain Carol. *In the Men's House: An Inside Account of Life in the Army*. Poseidon, 1990.

Lipsky, David. *Absolutely American: Four Years at West Point*. Vintage, 2004.

Mace, Nancy. *In the Company of Men: A Woman at the Citadel*. Simon Pulse, 2002.

Websites:

www.usma.edu

www.authorchats.com/archives

www.harpercollins.com/authors.asp

Author's email:

Aefaw@aol.com

PATTERN RECOGNITION

by William Gibson

Genre: Science Fiction

Themes: Global economy, marketing, consumerism, internet culture, and fashion.

Author information: William Gibson's first novel *Neuromancer* (1984) is considered the most influential science fiction novel of the 1980's; it introduced the concept of cyberpunk and received both the Hugo and Nebula awards for best novel. His subsequent works include *Count Zero* (Arbor House, 1986) and the short story collection *Burning Chrome* (Arbor House, 1986). He currently resides in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Plot summary: Set in the present day, this suspenseful, action-oriented sci-fi mystery focuses on Cayce Pollard, a "cool hunter," renowned in her ability to locate and predict the latest trends. While in London evaluating a new redesign of a famous corporate logo, she is hired to locate the creator of a series of controversial video clips that are being uploaded on the Internet. Her search for answers takes Cayce from London to Tokyo to New York and Moscow where she learns about the author of the videos as well as the truth about her father who has been missing since September 11, 2001.

Booktalk: *Pattern Recognition* is a fast-paced science fiction thriller that follows Cayce Pallard around the world from London to New York to Tokyo, and Moscow. Cayce Pollard is a "cool hunter," someone who is hired by large corporations to discover the latest trends. While in London, Cayce is hired to secretly investigate some intriguing snippets of video that have been appearing on the Internet. Like the film, *The Matrix*, *Pattern Recognition* explores the secret world of corporations and cyberspace. Anyone interested in fashion, cyberspace, marketing, and the corporate world will enjoy this story

Note: This novel is a challenging read and is best suited for strong readers and older teens.

Curriculum tie-ins:

Economics/Social Studies

Discuss and analyze the global marketplace and economy. What role do "cool hunters" play in the international business world? How does the fashion industry use the internet to market merchandise in urban cities?

English

How does Gibson use the language and metaphors of cyberspace in his writing? What aspects of this novel make it a work of science fiction and what aspects make it a mystery novel?

If you loved this, you'll like:

Delany, Samuel R. *Dhalgren*. Vintage, 2001.
Dick, Philip K. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Del Rey, 1996.
Otomo, Katsuhiro. *Akira*. Dark Horse, 2000. (series)
Westerfeld, Scott. *So Yesterday*. Razorbill, 2004.

Other books by this author:

Neuromancer. Berkley, 1984.
Count Zero. Arbor House, 1986.
Idoru. Berkley, 1997.
All Tomorrow's Parties. Putnam, 1999.

Additional resources:

William Gibson website: <www.williamgibsonbooks.com>

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

by Mark Haddon

Genre: Realistic fiction

Themes: the uniqueness of human beings; the value of every individual; the world's wonders that make life worth living; the transforming and enriching power of good teachers.

Author information: Mark Haddon is British and lives with his wife and son in Oxford. He has had many careers since receiving his undergraduate degree from Oxford in 1981, including working in a theater box-office, working with children and adults with disabilities, creating and writing children's television programs, and being a cartoonist and magazine illustrator. He has written and illustrated numerous children's books. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is his first book for older readers. In his spare time, Mark engages in "masochistic sports activities" such as marathon canoeing.

Plot summary: Christopher John Francis Boone, a high functioning autistic teenager (whose condition is also known as Asperger's Syndrome), tells the story of his murder investigation which begins the night he finds that a neighbor's dog has been killed. Solving this mystery takes him through a series of challenges where he uses the coping skills his teacher has taught him to deal with new situations.

Booktalk: Suppose one evening as you are taking a walk in your neighborhood, you find your neighbor's dog dead -- not only dead, but with a garden fork protruding from its side. Obviously, the dog has not died of natural causes. When Christopher, a high functioning autistic teenager, is confronted with this spectacle, his response plunges him into increasingly challenging situations as he attempts to find out the identity of the murderer, in defiance of his father's wishes. Will he be able to navigate successfully and safely in a world which does not understand him and his unique way of processing what he sees and hears? Will he solve the mystery of the dog's murder? Or will he be defeated?

Curriculum tie-ins:

Writing

What is in store for Christopher in his future? What career path do you think he will follow? What challenges will he face? How well will he succeed?

An article helpful to students considering this is:

Grandin, Temple. "Making the Transition from the World of School into the World of Work ." www.autism.org/temple/transition.html

Mathematics

Christopher is not alone in his love of prime numbers. The University of Tennessee has an excellent web site devoted to prime numbers: <http://www.utm.edu/research/primes/> Besides explaining what prime numbers are, the home page offers hundreds of links to related sites – many of which are interactive.

Have math students write a paper beginning "Prime numbers are important because..."

If you loved this, you'll like:

- Ames, Mildred. *Anna to the Infinite Power*. Scholastic, 1981.
- Brown, Dan. *Digital Fortress*. Thomas Dune Books, 2004.
- Karasik, Judy and Paul. *The Ride Together: A Brother and Sister's Memoir of Autism in the Family*. Washington Square Press, 2003.
- Lasky, Kathryn. *Home Free*. Macmillan, 1985.
- Steward, Ian. *Flatterland: Like Flatland, Only More So*. Perseus, 2001.

Additional resources:

Edwards, Michele Engel. *Autism*. Lucent, 2001.
This book offers a very simple and complete discussion of autism and Asperger's Syndrome.

Grandin, Temple. "An Inside View of Autism."
www.autism.org/temple/inside.html
Temple Grandin, an autistic who has a Ph.D. and is an assistant professor at Colorado State University, explains simply and clearly what it is like to be autistic.

Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.
Recorded Books, 2003. (CD)

The largest known prime (found by GIMPS [Great Internet Mersenne Prime Search] in February 2005) is the 42nd [Mersenne](http://www.mersenne.org/prime.htm) prime: M25964951 which has 7816230 decimal digits
<http://www.mersenne.org/prime.htm>

Another interesting site for prime number lovers is:

http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/HistTopics/Prime_numbers.html
In addition to giving the history of prime numbers, this site discusses 14 unsolved problems relating to prime numbers.

RAIN MAN (1988) This film, starring Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise offers insight into the world of an autistic man and his relationship with his brother. (Available in DVD and VHS)

THE FIRST PART LAST

by Angela Johnson

Genre: YA realistic fiction

Themes: Growing up; responsibility; fatherhood; male family members; adolescence.

Author information: MacArthur Fellow Angela Johnson is the prolific and award-winning author of several books for children, including *Toning the Sweep*, which was a Coretta Scott King Award winner, a *School Library Journal* Best Book, and a *Booklist* Editor's Choice. Before becoming a writer, she worked with children in day care, a summer camp and as a VISTA worker. Born in Alabama, Johnson now lives in Ohio with her family.

Plot summary: Bobby is smart, an artist, likes hanging with his friends, is close to his family. But he's also a father, not yet out of high school, scared, bewildered and exhausted. Can he grow up fast enough to take care of his daughter and himself?

Booktalk: Begin with a section of the last chapter, "heaven." "I won't talk about the goodbyes..." Bobby is smart, talented, and set to graduate early. How did he get to a place where leaving his family seems like the only right option, and why isn't he going alone? Bobby's a teen father, and he has lots to think about, lots to do, and little time or energy available. How do you do the right thing when no one you talk to can agree what the right thing is?

Curriculum tie-ins:

Language Arts

The then/now format could be used as an exercise in writing technique.

Art

Is "tagging" (graffiti) art or a crime? Check out www.graffiti.org for pictures of graffiti, articles and related links.

Sociology/Health/Human Sexuality

Do research and/or persuasive writing papers on the topic of contraception, abortion, adoption, teen parents.

Biology/Health

Research persistent vegetative state and eclampsia. Two related websites are:

www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/coma/coma

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000899

If you loved this, you'll like:

Bechard, Margaret. *Hanging on to Max*. Simon Pulse Reprint Edition, 2003.
Head, Ann. *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones*. Signet Reissue, 1990.

Editions available:

Hardcover, paperback, paperback large print, audio CD (unabridged), audio download (Amazon.com).

Other books by this author:

Bird. Dial, 2004.
Gone from Home. DK Ink, 1998.
Heaven. Simon Pulse, 2000.
Toning the Sweep. Point Reissue, 1994.

THE EARTH, MY BUTT, AND OTHER BIG ROUND THINGS

by Carolyn Mackler

Genre: YA realistic fiction

Themes: Feeling different; weight/body image; family problems; becoming one's true self; adolescence; romance; coming of age.

Author information: Carolyn Mackler is also the author of VEGAN VIRGIN VALENTINE, her fourth novel for teenagers. She is a graduate of Vassar College and lives with her husband in New York City. Visit her at www.carolynmackler.com.

Plot summary: Virginia Shreves is dangerously close to accepting all the devaluation she encounters – from her family, the kids at school, and our culture's judgment of fat people. Fortunately, she's also smart, funny and stubborn, with a great best friend, a wonderful former teacher, and a thoughtful new doctor. Can she free herself from her self-imposed, "Fat Girl Code of Conduct," and take on the midget-brains around her before she loses herself altogether?

Booktalk: What would it take to get YOU to publish a list entitled: "The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things" on your school's webzine? Have you ever charted your position on a graph that ranges from "Popular" to "Regular" to "Dorky?" Have you ever felt that aliens implanted you in your family? Do you like the way people judge your body? You probably have a lot in common with Virginia Shreves – blond & chubby in a family of thin, French-fluent brunettes. You'll probably want to shake her, though, because she's just so *clueless* when the book starts – she's so busy feeling guilty about what she's *NOT*, that she doesn't know what she *IS*. Being smart and stubborn, she figures a lot of things out – and you just might get some VERY useful ideas from her.

Curriculum tie-ins:

Language Arts

Use the list format as a writing exercise.

Sociology/Health

Discuss/research cultural attitudes toward size and beauty.

Physical Education

Some schools have sponsored Model Mugging (self defense that works!) classes for female students or for female students and their mothers.

If you loved this, you'll like:

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Speak*. Puffin Reprint, 2001.
McCormick, Patricia. *Cut*. Push Reprint, 2002.
Roberts, Nancy. *Breaking All the Rules*. Viking, 1986.

And a DVD:

Babycakes (1989). Starring Rikki Lake and directed by Paul Schneider.

Editions available:

Hardcover, paperback, audio cassette.

Other books by this author:

Love and Other Four-Letter Words. Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2005.
Vegan Virgin Valentine. Candlewick, 2004.

LIFE OF PI

by Yann Martel

Genre: Survival stories.

Themes: Religion, survival, voyages, hope/despair, storytelling, imagination, animal/human behavior, turning points.

Author information: Born in Spain in 1963 to traveling Canadian parents, Martel grew up in Alaska, Costa Rica, British Columbia, France, Ontario and Mexico. As an adult he continued to travel, spending time in Iran, Turkey and India. After studying philosophy at Trent University, he began to make a living from writing at the age of 27. He currently lives in Montreal. *Life of Pi* was the winner of the 2002 Man Booker Prize.

Plot summary: Pi Patel, a zookeeper's son, is sixteen when his family and their zoo animals emigrate from India to North America aboard a Japanese cargo ship. The ship sinks and thus begins Pi's epic voyage across the Pacific in a lifeboat. With his only companion a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker, Pi faces immeasurable hardships on the high seas, ultimately setting upon a grand and ordered plan of survival.

Boottalk: The ability to adapt is crucial not only to animals but to humans as well, originating from the will to survive. In what ways do human beings reflect animal behavior in adapting in order to survive? In this book, the main character Pi undergoes many transformations which help with his survival. How does someone who has lost everything, and faces seemingly insurmountable obstacles (how about a 450 pound Bengal tiger?) rise up to master his circumstances? Pi Patel accomplishes this by drawing upon all he has been taught about religion, animals and humans and applying it to every situation he encounters. Would you be able to survive by doing the same?

The author, Yann Martel, spends a great deal of time exploring Pi's early experiences and beliefs in order to show us how Pi may have arrived at his decisions and course of action later on that lifeboat. How do you think that your life so far would affect your decisions in a similar situation?

Curriculum tie-ins:

Religion

A study of comparative religions, especially Judaism (Kabbal), Christianity (Catholicism), Islam, and Hinduism, can be tied to this book, especially examining the concept of God in each religion.

Debate (Social studies, English, or Science)

Are zoos beneficial or harmful? Research both sides of the issue and hold a debate. There are many animal rights books and articles opposed to zoos, as well as books and

articles on the other side of the issue.

Creative Writing/English

Take an incident from your life and turn it into a fable.

If you loved this, you'll like:

- Coelho, Paulo. *The Alchemist: A Fable About Following Your Dream*. Harper, 1995.
- Comyns, Barbara. *The Juniper Tree*. St. Martin's Press, 1985.
- Datlow, Ellen and Terri Windling, eds. *Silver Birch, Blood Moon*. Avon Books, 1999.
- de Saint-Exupery, Antoine. *The Little Prince*. HBJ, 2000.
- Hemingway, Ernest. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Scribner, 1995.
- Heyerdahl, Thor. *Kon-Tiki: Across the Pacific by Raft*. Pocket, 1990.
- Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner*. Riverhead Books, 2003.
- Kidd, Sue Monk. *Secret Life of Bees*. Penguin, 2003.
- Orwell, George. *Animal Farm*. Signet, 1996.

Additional resources:

- Aesop. *Aesop's Fables*. Selected and adapted by Jack Zipes. Signet Classic, 1992.
- Henderson, Carol E. *Culture and Customs of India*. Greenwood, 2002.
- Nirgiotis, Nicholas. *No More Dodos: How Zoos Help Endangered Wildlife*. Lerner Publications, 1996.

Editions available:

- Martel, Yann. *Life Of Pi*. Highbridge Audio, 2003. (cassette tape & CD)

Another book by this author:

- The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios*. Harcourt, 1993.

BIG MOUTH & UGLY GIRL

by Joyce Carol Oates

Genre: Realistic fiction

Themes: The value of self-knowledge and friendship, the problems with peer pressure and gossip, and teens' insecurities about themselves and their place in the world.

Suggested reading level: Grades 9-12

Author information: An award-winning and very prolific adult author, Joyce Carol Oates has written many books centered on young characters, but has only now written a book specifically for young adults. *Big Mouth & Ugly Girl*, a portrait of an awkward friendship between a loner school athlete and a boy she defends for joking about killing people in his school, is based on several post-Columbine newspaper accounts of students reporting on each other out of fear and paranoia. In addition to her writing career, Oates is currently a Professor of Humanities teaching creative writing at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey.

Plot summary: Matt's "big mouth" and habit of speaking impulsively have entertained his friends until the day detectives escort him out of his classroom for questioning. He has been accused of planning to blow up the school. The only person who can help Matt is self-proclaimed "ugly girl" Ursula, a loner who prefers to mind her own business.

Booktalk for adults: "Big Mouth" Matt Donaghy has always used humor to be accepted at school, but that penchant for jokes gets him into big trouble when witnesses report him for threatening to blow up the school. "Ugly Girl" Ursula Riggs doesn't have time to worry about normal high school stuff like dating and friends, and prefers to keep her distance from everyone, her family included. This unlikely pair are brought together when Ursula comes forward to support Matt's innocence. Ugly Girl is the one student who stands up for Matt, even though dozens of people heard his joke, laughed at it, and knew Matt was hardly a danger to society.

This is just the beginning of the story of Matt and Ursula and the continuing consequences of the incident. The real story is what happens when Big Mouth becomes suicidal and Ugly Girl decides to be vulnerable, to have a friend, maybe even a boyfriend. Matt and Ursula's characters are completely believable, without being stereotypical or ordinary. The rapport that builds between them is based on their desire to be real and while they are definitely adolescents, Oates shows them capable of growth and change. Big Mouth has been shocked out of his immature male teen behavior and is beginning to value qualities in people that he might not have noticed before. Ursula's basic integrity and self-reliance begin to appeal to him more than the standard pretty girl facade from other girls. Ursula, for her part, is scared-to-death and begins to lose some of the tough girl exterior that's kept her from being close to anyone.

Booktalk for kids: Witnesses report a threat to blow up the school and police detectives pull “Big Mouth” Matt Donaghy out of study hall to question him. Soon, the entire school is ready to believe the worst and Matt can’t seem to convince authorities he was only joking. Matt’s friends don’t want to get involved and things aren’t looking good until an unexpected witness comes forward. Self proclaimed “Ugly Girl” Ursula Riggs prides herself on being tough and minding her own business, but she overheard Matt’s comments and knows he was just joking. Ursula has no choice but to become involved and both she and Matt must deal with the repercussions of their choices.

Curriculum tie-ins:

Creative writing

Create alternate endings for this story. What could have happened if Ursula hadn’t come forward to support Matt?

Language Arts

This story is told from several different perspectives. Analyze the use of first person vs. third person in specific parts of the book, and describe how a change in voice impacts the story.

Social Studies

This book was based in part on newspaper accounts of students reporting on each other after the Columbine incident. Discuss the climate of fear and paranoia that would trigger such reports. Research events and/or time periods when a similar climate of paranoia resulted in tragedy.

If you loved this, you’ll like:

Avi. *Nothing but the Truth*. Avon, 1991.

Brooks, Martha. *True Confessions of a Heartless Girl*. FSG, 2003.

Bunting, Eve. *Jumping the Nail*. Harcourt, 1991.

Korman, Gordon. *Jake, Reinvented*. Hyperion, 2003.

Other books by this author:

Foxfire: Confessions of a Girl Gang. Dutton, 1993.

Freaky Green Eyes. Harper Tempest, 2003.

We Were the Mulvaney. Plume, 1996.

“Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” Rutgers Univ., 1994.

IN THE HEART OF THE SEA

by Nathaniel Philbrick

Genre: Nonfiction survival story

Themes: The horror of shipwreck, castaways and cannibalism. Man overcoming a seemingly hopeless situation.

Suggested reading level: Grades 9 - 12

Author information: Nathaniel Philbrick is the Director of the Egan Institute of Maritime Studies on Nantucket Island where he has lived with his wife and two children since 1986. *In the Heart of the Sea* is the winner of the 2000 National Book Award. He adapted this book in a title for young people called *Revenge of the Whale*. When thinking about writing a book on the Essex, he was at first going to focus on the whale attacking the ship. However, he soon realized that he should focus less on the whale and more on what happened to the men after the attack. "Then it hit me, the scene with which I would begin...two emaciated survivors found sucking the marrow from the bones of their dead shipmates."

(Smithsonian Institution Libraries. Press Room: News: Backgrounder - Nathaniel Philbrick: 7 April 2005 http://www.sil.si.edu/Press/backgrounder-nathaniel-philbrick_12_03.htm)

Plot summary: The true story of an 1820 whaling-ship disaster, in which a large angry sperm whale rams the whaleship Essex. The author chronicles the surviving crew's three-month journey across open seas where the men eventually turn to drastic measures to survive. The story includes much whaling lore and a vivid depiction of life in 19th century Nantucket.

(Powells' Books - In the Heart of the Sea - 7 April 2005 <http://www.powells.com/cgi-bin/biblio?inkey=63-1568959443-0>)

Booktalk: This booktalk material for "In the Heart of the Sea" is from a book review by Ann L. Burns on Teenreads.com. <http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/0141001828.asp>

"The tragic story of the whaleship Essex and her crew is the real life event that inspired Herman Melville to write his renowned 19th century classic *Moby Dick*. In 1820, when the Essex set sail from Nantucket on a routine whale hunt, the crew of 20 men had no idea that 15 months later they would find themselves adrift in the vast Pacific at the mercy of the elements and their own human failings. Able to salvage only 3 small harpoon boats and a few meager supplies, they made the fateful choice to sail back east to South America rather than west to any of several Pacific islands. With an innate fear of

cannibalism rumored to exist among native tribes, they preferred to brave the familiarity of the ocean. For the next 93 days they would come to question the wisdom of that decision as the trade winds and storms blew them farther and farther from their destination. The sad irony is that many times during their 3,000-mile ordeal of hunger, thirst and death they would have been within reach of a lifesaving island, if they had only turned west.

Full of more detail than some may want to know, the author covers every aspect of whaling, sailing, and the grim techniques of how some of these men survived on the open seas. It's a spectacular....adventure; but it's also the savage, gritty, heart wrenching perspective of life aboard a whaleship.

Philbrick also provides a multifaceted study of Nantucket society during the height of its whaling industry, including the remarkable women who became the backbone of the town's businesses and kept everything functioning while their men were at sea. Many families were left fatherless, many mothers lost their sons; but the vitality of these people to endure generation after generation is a true testament to the character of the Nantucketers."

--- Reviewed by Ann L. Burns (BkPageWC@aol.com)
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As part of booktalking this true survival adventure, reading one or more of these sections of the book, might be helpful in introducing the book.

Reading aloud: (All Page References are to the Hardcover edition)

Preface on page xii, starting with the first paragraph at the top of the page. "It was a Nantucket whaleship, the Dauphin....First they saw bones-human bones - littering the thwarts and floorboards....Then they saw the two men...They were sucking the marrow from the bones of their dead shipmates."

The first two pages of Chapter Two, "**Knockdown**," set the stage for the beginning of the fateful voyage of the Essex. (pp. 28 and 29)

In Chapter Five, "**The Attack**," (bottom of p. 79 to p. 82), they saw "a huge sperm whale - ...a male about eighty-five feet long, and approximately eighty tons... This whale wasn't just large. It was acting strangely. ...It was aimed at the Essex's port side."

In Chapter Eleven, "**Games of Chance**," (pp. 164 - top of p. 166) the men in Chase's boat must decide "whether they should eat, instead of bury, the body." (pp. 174 -175) "On February 6, the four men on Pollard's boat, having *consumed "the last morsel" of Samuel Reed,..... the youngest of them, sixteen-year-old Charles Ramsdell, uttered the unspeakable, They should cast lots, he said, to see who would be killed so that the rest could live.*"

Finally, in Chapter Twelve, "**In the Eagle's Shadow**," the description of the rescue of

Chase's whaleboat (top of p. 185 - 187) and the condition of the survivors, "Their raw, ulcerated skin hung from their skeletons like noxious rags."

Curriculum tie-ins:

American Literature

Herman Melville based the climax of *Moby Dick* on the Essex story.

View the scene of the whale attacking the ship in the video movie of *Moby Dick*. (United Artists, California, 1956). ISBN: 0792892462.

Creative writing

Have students pretend to be one of the men on the whaleships and keep a diary for a week of what happens to them. Base this on one of the chapters of the book, for example Chapter 8 or Chapter 9.

Social Studies

Write about the treatment of the black sailors. Read pages 105 - 113 in:

McKissack, Patricia and Fredrick L. McKissack. *Black Hands, White Sails: The Story of African American Whalers*. Scholastic, 1999.

Compare the survival techniques of the Essex crew to the Donner Party disaster.

Science/Math

Draw a map showing where the whale ships traveled in their desperate search for survival. The map on page 178 will help and so will some of the sections of the book which talk about how they miscalculated their positions.

Research navigation methods of the time (1820's). Explain how they attempted to figure out where they were. View the video, *The Whalers*. Arts and Entertainment, 1996.

Create a three dimensional model of the Essex (see page opposite the start of Chapter 1), and use, if possible,

Murphy, Jim. *Gone A-Whaling: The Lure of the Sea and the Hunt for the Great Whale*. Clarion Books, 1998.

Research whales and especially a sperm whale which attacked the Essex. Include drawings or pictures of the different types of whales and information that explains how they are different. View the video, *In the Company of Whales: Gentle Giants of the Watery Realm*. Discovery Channel, 1997. ISBN: 1568121784.

Additional resources:

Philbrick, Nathaniel. *Revenge of the Whale*. Grosset & Dunlap. \$16.99. ISBN: 039923795X (PLB), Puffin Books, 2002. \$7.99, ISBN: 0142400688. Named a Best Book for Young Adults by ALA and a 2003 Boston Globe Horn Book Honor

Book, this adaptation by the author of *In the Heart of the Sea* is reviewed for ages 9 to 12. However, this book would also be excellent for lower level high school readers.

In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex. Books on Tape, 2000. ISBN: 0736655042 (audiocassette). Isis Publishing, 2000 ISBN: 0753110334 (audio CD).

Websites:

Whaling Links on the Web:

"An excellent site with a first-class "Exhibits" section on various aspects of whaling. The 'Research' section provides a very good overview of the history of American whaling.
http://www.salariya.com/web_books/whaling/links/links.html

This **History Channel Study Guide** for the Video and DVD on **Great Ships and The Whalers** has many ideas for extending the book in a classroom situation.
http://www.historychannel.com/classroom/admin/study_guide/archives/thc_guide.0249.html

The **New Bedford Whaling Museum** has an excellent overview of American Whaling in the Nineteenth Century.
http://www.whalingmuseum.org/kendall/amwhale/am_index.html

From the **PBS special** on *The Essex and Moby Dick*.
<http://www.pbs.org/odyssey/class/mobydick.html>

If you loved this, you'll like:

Alexander, Caroline. *The True Story of the Mutiny on the Bounty*. Viking, 2003.
Chase, Owen. *The Loss of the Ship Essex, Sunk by a Whale*. Penguin, 2000.
Lansing, Alfred. *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*. Carroll & Graf 1999.

Other books by Nathaniel Philbrick:

Away Offshore: Nantucket Island and its People. Mill Hill Press, 1993.
Sea of Glory: America's Voyage of Discovery, the U.S. Exploring Expedition, 1838-1842. Viking, 2003.

TRICKSTER'S CHOICE

by Tamora Pierce

Genre: Fantasy

Themes: Tolerance, self-knowledge, female empowerment, overcoming odds.

Suggested reading level: Grades 9-12

Author information: Born in Pennsylvania in 1954, Tamora Pierce worked in many different fields before the writing she started as a youngster became her full time career. First published in 1983, Tamora has written over 20 books and numerous short stories. The main character, Aly, in *Trickster's Choice* is actually the daughter of the heroine of her first published book.

Plot summary: Young Aly, daughter of the famous Lady Knight Alanna and her spymaster husband, has spent her life trying to live up to her mother's expectations, while secretly desiring a career as a spy. As she sails off to escape her problems, Aly is captured by pirates and sold as a slave to the Balitang family in the neighboring Copper Isles. Here she finds herself the participant in an ancient prophecy and must use everything she has learned from both parents to survive the attentions of the trickster god Kyprioth.

Booktalk for adults: Sixteen-year-old Aly, daughter of Alanna the Lioness (whose story is told in a previous series of books by Pierce), longs to be a spy, just like her father. Her often-absent mother does not approve and wants Aly to pick a safer career. When Aly impulsively runs away, she is captured by pirates and sold into slavery to the Balitangs, a noble family who live in the Copper Isles. There the trickster god Kyprioth strikes a bargain with Aly: in exchange for keeping her charges, the two Balitang daughters, safe for the summer, he will arrange for her freedom. Aly disguises her own skills in magic and weapons, as well as her innate talent for spying, in order to accomplish her task. Many interesting and memorable characters, including a crow who takes human form for Aly's sake, come to life in this story that combines magic with a complex web of political and racial tensions.

Booktalk for kids: It's not easy to be singled out by a god for special attention. In Aly's case, it is especially risky because she has been chosen by the trickster god Kyprioth to participate in the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy. Captured by pirates and sold as a slave, Aly becomes involved in the lives of her owners, especially the two daughters Kyprioth wants protected. But can she trust this trickster god, who promises her freedom if she is successful?

Curriculum tie-ins:

Language Arts

Students can compare this book with other stories involving gods and prophecies, especially those that manipulate humans to their own ends. (Example: the Anansi stories)

Social Studies

Connect this book to current events involving ethnic conflicts, as well as historic examples of political and racial conflicts.

If you loved this, you'll like:

Black, Holly. *Tithe: A Modern Faerie Tale*. S&S, 2002.

Calhoun, Dia. *Aria of the Sea*. FSG, 2003.

Feist, Raymond and Janny Wurts. *Daughter of the Empire*. Bantam, 1987.

Nix, Garth. *Lirael : Daughter of the Clayr*. HarperCollins, 2001.

Other books by this author:

Alanna, the First Adventure. Atheneum, 1983.

Lady Knight. Random House, 2002.

Trickster's Queen. Random House, 2004.

THE WEE FREE MEN

by Terry Pratchett

Genre: Fantasy

Themes: Coming of age, good vs. evil, self-empowerment, responsibility and honor.

Author information: Regarded as one of the most significant contemporary English-language satirists, Terry Pratchett published his first novel, *The Carpet People*, in 1971 and *The Color of Magic* (HarperTorch, 2000), the first in his popular Discworld series, in 1983. Pratchett has received numerous awards including the British Fantasy Award for his novel *Pyramids* (HarperTorch, 2001) and the 2001 Carnegie Medal for his young adult novel, *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* (HarperCollins, 2001). He was named an Officer of the British Empire "for services to literature" in the Queen's Birthday Honors of 1998. Terry Pratchett lives in England with his family.

Plot summary: Armed only with a frying pan and a hundred or so little blue men, Tiffany Aching, a young witch in training, travels to Fairyland to recover her kidnapped brother. Together they battle evil flying fairies, dream-spinning dromes, grimhounds, and the Queen of the Elves.

Booktalk: Tiffany Aching's life changes when she meets the Nac Mac Feegle (aka the Wee Free Men) a clan of sheep-stealing, sword-wielding, six-inch-high blue men who are as fierce as they are funny. Together they travel to the realm of Fairyland to save her little brother from the clutches of the evil Queen of the Elves. There they meet all sort of creatures from the pack of black dogs with eyes of fire and teeth of razors known as the grimhounds to landscapes that change shape and direction. Equal parts satire and fantasy, this humorous story will be welcome by fans of fantasy and Pratchett's popular Discworld series.

Anyone who likes stories about witches, fairies, or little blue men will like this story. -to-be, is all that stands between the monsters of Fairyland and the warm, green Chalk country that is her home. Forced into Fairyland to seek her kidnapped brother, Tiffany allies herself with the Chalk's local Nac Mac Feegle -- aka the Wee Free Men -- a clan of sheep-stealing, sword-wielding, six-inch-high blue men who are as fierce as they are funny.

Curriculum tie-ins:

English

What aspects of Celtic mythology does Pratchett use in this story? How does Pratchett use humor in this story? What are some of the Britishisms that Pratchett used in the novel?

If you loved this, you'll like:

LeGuin, Ursula K. *A Wizard of Earthsea*. Parnassus, 1986.

Pullman, Philip. *The Golden Compass*. Knopf, 1996.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. Houghton, 1984.

Other books by this author:

The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents. HarperCollins, 2001.

The Bromeliad Trilogy: Truckers, Diggers, Wings. HarperCollins, 2003.

Good Omen. (with Neil Gaiman). Ace, 2001.

A Hat Full of Sky. HarperTrophy, 2005. (sequel to *Wee Free Men*)

Additional Resources:

The Discworld Companion (with Stephen Briggs). Books Britain, 1997.

The Discworld Mapp (with Stephen Briggs). Corgi, 1995.

Author's website:

Terry Pratchett Books: Official website from publisher HarperCollins. Includes excerpts, interviews, contests, newsletter and a message board.

<www.terrypratchettbooks.com>

STIFF: THE CURIOUS LIVES OF HUMAN CADAVERS

by Mary Roach

Genre: Nonfiction

Themes: Mortality, humor

Author information: Journalist and former *Salon.com* columnist Mary Roach has written for *Outside*, *GQ*, *Vogue*, and *The New York Times Magazine*. She writes the humor column "My Planet" in *Reader's Digest* and is a contributing editor for the science magazine *Discover*. She lives in San Francisco with her husband, Ed. (from Booknoise.net)

Plot summary: With quirky humor and unexpected insights, the author explores what happens to human bodies after their original owners are done with them.

Booktalk: Has anyone ever said you have a sick sense of humor? Then *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers* might be just the book for you. It's all about dead bodies and how we've used them throughout history: in medical science, in crash tests of cars and planes, in weapons tests, in outdoor laboratories where forensic scientists study the process of decay...the list goes on and on. Did you know that in the 17th and 18th centuries there was an entire black market in dead bodies? Medical schools needed cadavers, but it was illegal at that time to dissect humans, so the schools had to resort to all kinds of underhanded methods to get bodies. And then there's the chapter on cannibalism. If you're a fan of "Six Feet Under" or any of the CSI shows, give this book a try. Author Mary Roach has a quirky and, yes, sick sense of humor, and she's put together a book that's disgusting, surprising, and very, very funny. (Booktalk written by Vermont librarian Christine Eldred and used by permission).

Curriculum tie-ins:

Science

The chemistry of decomposition

Writing

Humorous nonfiction; finding your voice.

If you loved this, you'll like:

Bass, Bill and Jon Jefferson. *Death's Acre: Inside the Legendary Forensic Lab the Body Farm*. Putnam, 2003.

Carter, Albert Howard. *First Cut: A Season in the Human Anatomy Lab*. Picador, 1998.

Additional Resources:

Stiff is available unabridged as a book on compact disk.

Information on forensics: <http://www.cbs.com/primetime/csi/handbook/>

Another book by this author:

Spook: Science Tackles the Afterlife (to be published by Norton in 2005)

PERSEPOLIS: THE STORY OF A CHILDHOOD

by Marjane Satrapi

Genre: Autobiography in graphic form

Themes: Life during a time of political upheaval and war; rebellion against injustice; religious intolerance; the importance of family

Author information: Marjane Satrapi was born in 1969 in Rasht, Iran. She grew up in Tehran, where she attended the Lycee Francais before leaving Iran for Vienna. She studied illustration in Strasbourg. Satrapi speaks Iranian, French, English, German, Swedish, and Italian and presently lives in Paris with her second husband, a Swede. Her illustrations appear regularly in newspapers and magazines, and she is also the author of several children's books. Although she is a princess, she laughingly points out that her great-grandfather, the last Emperor of Iran, was married to over 500 wives and probably had at least 2,000 children, so considering the number of descendants there are now, the term "princess" is meaningless.

Book summary: *Persepolis* is told episodically and covers Satrapi's life in Iran between 1979 and 1984. It begins with the Islamic Revolution when Marji is ten and forced to wear the veil, then flashes back to life under the Shah, and then moves forward in time until she is fourteen. Marji becomes so rebellious in nature that her parents fear it is too dangerous for her to remain in Iran, so they send her to live in Vienna. The book focuses more on small everyday life than on the big news stories of the time. The drawing style is very simple in black and white, with the drawings resembling woodcuts. Sometimes the background is white with the details in black; other times the background is black and the details are in white. The stark contrasts make the unfolding story quite gripping. The title of the book comes from the ancient city Persepolis which was built by Darius I (the Great) beginning in 518 B.C.

Booktalk: Think back to life when you were ten and in fourth grade. Think about the typical concerns of children at that age – school, sports, relationships with friends and family, video games, television, homework. Now imagine all that is upset by a radical change in government. Boys and girls can no longer attend school together. Girls are forced to wear head scarves. People protest in the streets, and sometimes these protests become violent. Family members and friends are imprisoned, and some are put to death. Soon another nation attacks, and bombs begin falling. How would you react to this radical disruption of your life? Would you welcome change? Would you be compliant? Would you be angry? Would you rebel against your teachers? Would you take out your frustrations on your parents? Would you be depressed? Would you retreat into your room? In *Persepolis*, Marjane Satrapi uses graphic images and words to describe her traumatic childhood during the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Curriculum tie-ins:

Social Studies

Traditionally American schools have focused on western civilization and neglected a study of the Mid-East. *Persepolis* offers insight into this overlooked region. Students could be assigned to research topics and then write a paper relating the topic to Satrapi's autobiography. Topics include:

Iranian food	Daily life in Iran
Teachings of Islam	The Iran-Iraq War
Role of women in Islamic society	Islamic Revolution
SAVAK	The Peace Accords
Iran hostage crisis	Iranian immigrants to the U.S.
Marxism	Azerbaijan
Student demonstrations	

Many famous people are mentioned in the book. Research one or more of the following and write a paper:

Mohammed Mossadeq, Reza Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Fidel Castro, Cyrus the Great, Descartes, Che Guevara, Trotsky, Marie Curie, Anwar Al-Sadat, Ataturk, Gandhi, Ali Ashraf Darvishian, Dr. Hossein Fatemi, Jimmy Carter.

Art/Writing

Students choose an incident in their lives and graphically illustrate it in the style of Satrapi and in the manga style.

Write an essay comparing and contrasting the style and impact of *Persepolis* compared to the style and impact of a graphic book in the manga style.

Writing/Response to literature

Compare and contrast the subject matter, themes, style of writing and art, and emotional impact of *Persepolis* and *Maus* by Art Spiegelman.

If you loved this, you'll like:

- Ansary, Tamim. *West of Kabul, East of New York: An Afghan-American Story*. FSG, 2002.
- Clavell, James. *The Children's Story*. Delacorte Press, 1981.
- Dumas, Firoozeh. *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America*. Villard, 2003.
- Hakakian, Roya. *Journey from the Land of No: A Girlhood Caught in Revolutionary Iran*. Crown, 2004.
- Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner*. Riverhead Books, 2003.
- Jiang, Ji-li. *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution*. HarperCollins,

1997.

Ung, Loung. *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers*, HarperCollins, 2000.

Another book by this author:

Persepolis 2: The Story of a Return. Pantheon, 2004.

Additional resources:

Daniel, Elton L. *The History of Iran*. Greenwood Press, 2001.

Hart, Christopher. *Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics*. Watson-Guptill, 2001.

Kheirabadi, Masoud. *Iran*. Chelsea House, 2003.

Lyga, Allyson A. W. *Graphic Novels in Your Media Center: A Definitive Guide*. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale 1 & 2*. Pantheon Books, 1986.

Marooned In Iraq. (2002). During the Iran-Iraq war, an aging Iranian-Kurd musician hears that his wife, a singer with a magical voice who deserted him for his best friend and fled Iraq, is in trouble. He cons his two sons into accompanying him on his search for her, and they embark on an adventure filled with music, romance and danger. (DVD and VHS)

Noy Thrupkaew, "Graphic Equalizer: How a comic-book novelist is capturing the essence of a charged moment in Iran," The American Prospect Online, June 20, 2003. <http://www.prospect.org/webfeatures/2003/06/thrupkaew-n-06-20.html>