

Core Knowledge Children's Literature Syllabus

Course Abstract:

This course provides an introduction to children's literature, from pre-school nursery rhymes and picture books that are read to children, to the stories, myths, legends, and other tales that children read on their own in the elementary grades. Among the topics the course addresses are: origins and development of literature for children; major works, writers, and illustrators in its development; distinctive genres and their characteristics; nature and function of illustrations; social issues addressed in children's literature today; problematic aspects of contemporary children's literature; critical approaches to children's literature; and uses of children's literature in the elementary curriculum. Requirements include reading a minimum of 90 children's books (including picture books), three short analytical papers, and one research project.

Objectives of the Course:

- To provide an overview of the history of children's literature from its origins as oral literature intended for adults to a written literature encompassing all major genres;
- To indicate historical shifts in the purposes for children's literature: as didactic literature intended to provide moral instruction, or as literature intended to stimulate the imagination or provide useful information in interesting ways;
- To show how different purposes are related to different ways of viewing childhood;
- To examine the history and characteristics of the various genres of children's literature;
- To examine the work of major illustrators of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the ways in which illustrations in a picture book convey meaning;
- To examine some of the social issues dealt with in contemporary works of children's literature;
- To explore the social, political, and literary issues raised by many contemporary works of children's literature;
- To describe possible uses of children's literature in the elementary classroom.

A Note on Student Readings:

Although almost all of the assigned readings are in print, asking students to purchase those that are in print is unrealistic. It is recommended that instructors place copies of all assigned books on reserve in an academic library or other holding area so that students can check them out as needed. However, each student should purchase a copy of Zena Sutherland's *Children and Books*, 9th Edition, because most of its chapters are assigned reading. The texts of many of the assigned children's books published before 1975 can be found in Johnson, Sickels, Sayers, and Horovitz's *Anthology of Children's Literature*, 5th edition. As this anthology is no longer in print, it should be placed on reserve. Most of the assigned works published before 1975 and most of the more recently published children's books assigned in this course can also be found, in toto or in abridged form, in the series of books for grades K to 6 authored by E.D.Hirsch, Jr., beginning with *What Your Kindergartner Needs to Know*.

Also recommended for reserve is Peter Hunt's *Children's Literature, An Anthology*. This anthology is a practical guide that offers a comprehensive introduction to English-language children's literature from the eighteenth-century to 2000. It includes critical surveys of the work of important authors in the field and over 20 texts, placing each in its historical/generic context. All entries include critical bibliographies.

It is recommended that students be required to complete three short written assignments and one research project during the semester. Three possible research projects are described below. Appendix B contains a number of other ideas for topics. Students should be introduced to the research assignment at the beginning

of the course in order to allow them maximum time to work on the project. Several short written assignments are integrated into the syllabus. Instructors should select three of them to assign to students.

Quizzes and Exams:

Some suggested essay questions for a final exam have been provided at the end of this syllabus. Instructors are, of course, free to supplement or replace these with questions of their own devising, or forgo a final exam altogether. As an alternative to a final exam, students might be given occasional quizzes on the reading assignments, or asked to fill out index cards recording their responses to 40 of the children's books read. If this last option is followed, instructors may wish to require students to annotate at least 4 or 5 books in at least 6 different genres, to prevent an overemphasis on any one genre.

Possible Research Projects:

Possible Research Project #1

Choose a topic and/or genre of interest to you and select fifteen books related to the topic from the same approximate reading level. Write a short (40-50 words) annotation of each paying special attention to "the power of the story to captivate readers and keep them racing along from page to page, while having sufficient literary distinction to develop children's taste" (Sutherland, *Children and Books*, p. 333). Plan to share your evaluations with the class.

Possible Research Project #2

Prepare a biocritical paper about one of the authors or illustrators studied during the course of the semester. Provide information on the life of the writer and suggest how the milieu during which he/she wrote may have shaped his/her writing. Study at least three of the author's works in depth and provide evidence from these works to support your suggestions.

Possible Research Project #3

Design two structured learning sequences, one for the lower elementary grades and the other for the middle elementary grades. Use the material from Sloan's *The Child as Critic* as models for your sequences. Based upon the literary theories of Northrop Frye, the sequences should show how the teacher can lead children to an understanding of the dialectical and cyclical structure underlying literary imagery.

Use of this Syllabus:

This syllabus was created by Mary R. Holt of the Center for the Study of Children's Literature, Simmons College, as part of *What Elementary Teachers Need to Know*, a teacher education initiative developed by the Core Knowledge Foundation. Although the syllabus is copyrighted by the foundation, and may not be marketed by third parties, anyone who wishes to use, reproduce, or adapt it for educational purposes is welcome to do so. However, we do ask individuals using this syllabus to notify us so we can assess the distribution and spread of the syllabi and serve as a repository of information about how they may be improved and more effectively used. Please contact us at <http://coreknowledge.org/CK/contact.htm>.

Class 1.1 What is Children’s Literature?

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 1: “Children and Books Today,” and Chapter 4: “The History of Children’s Books.” *Children and Books*
Peter Hunt, Chapter 1: “Beginnings of Children’s Literature to 1700.” *Children’s Literature: An Illustrated History*

Discussion Topics:

- The difficulty in defining children’s literature; it is the only literature defined by its audience, and it includes all major genres of literature (fiction, poetry, nonfiction, drama etc.)
- The shifts in the view of what childhood is as a state of being throughout history, and therefore in our sense of what constitutes children’s literature—and of what literature is “appropriate” or desirable for children
- How children’s literature is distinct from literature intended for adults—or is it? The derivation of literature for children from adult literature—from the epic, the folk tale, mythology, poetry, and romance. The idea that the difference between the two often lies in the subject matter—not in the depth of feeling or pleasure created by the reading
- The earliest books for children or read by children
- The syllabus—including reading and writing assignments

Class 1:2 Didactic Moral Literature for Children in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries

Readings: Cornelia Meigs, Anne Thaxter Eaton, Elizabeth Nesbitt, and Ruth Hill Viguers, “Part One: Roots in the Past up to 1840.” *A Critical History of Children’s Literature*, Revised Edition
Isaac Watts, “Against Idleness and Mischief” in *Divine and Moral Songs for Children*
John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (read the first ten pages of Part I)
Mary Sherwood, “Fatal Effects of Disobedience to Parents,” *History of the Fairchild Family*
Maria Edgeworth, “The Purple Jar,” in *The Parent’s Assistant*

Discussion Topics:

- Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* as a religious book that nevertheless drew on the old fairy tales and hence was loved by children
- How evangelical thinkers, influenced by John Locke’s ideas that children were individuals and rational creatures not miniature adults, came to believe (though perhaps this was not Locke’s intention) that children must be *taught* to be good (idea of original sin)
- Creation of didactic works for children in 18th and 19th centuries in order to inculcate religious values (especially the fear of God)
- Mary Sherwood’s “Fatal Effects of Disobedience” as example of a work meant to inculcate strict religious values
- A few works (e.g., by Isaac Watts and Maria Edgeworth) both didactic and enjoyable. An analysis of Edgeworth’s “The Purple Jar” as a story that preaches, but also inspires/delights

Class 1:3 The Puritan Tradition and Beyond

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 3: “The History of Children’s Books”
Peter Dickinson, *City of Gold and Other Stories from the Old Testament*
Walter de la Mare, *Stories from the Bible*

Discussion Topics:

- Chapbooks—cheap books that could be bought for a penny that retold legends, folk tales, and fairy tales in very condensed versions—and their mass consumption in the 18th century

- John Newbery’s role in creating chapbooks for young readers—some of the first literature intended specifically for children’s enjoyment; the Newbery Award named for him and its importance in the field of children’s books
- Among Newbery’s chapbooks were Bible stories for children. The Puritan emphasis on the Bible, especially in the New World (for example, the *New England Primer* and its famous rhyming alphabet)
- De la Mare’s and Dickinson’s treatment of Bible stories as exciting/entertaining tales.
- Importance of Bible stories for cultural literacy; distinction between familiarizing students with stories as mythology and teaching the Bible as theology; discussing Bible stories whose protagonists, events, places, or other features have become metaphors in the English language (e.g., David, Goliath, Noah, the Ark, the Flood, Jericho) as a way to understand literary allusions in other literature, especially African-American literature, as well as in common oral or written discourse
- The publication of Rousseau’s *Emile* and his idea that children needed to be raised in natural settings and be free to imagine (e.g., Emile is given only *Robinson Crusoe* to read)
- How Romantic thinkers such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and Robert Southey adopted the ideas of Rousseau—believed that child could be “father to the man” and that he came from Heaven “trailing clouds of glory.” How Lamb (the *Tales of Shakespeare*) and Southey (King Arthur tales) looked down upon the moralistic writers and created works they felt would stimulate the child’s imagination. The Romantic thinkers as inspiration for the children’s writers of the Victorian period who created works of fantasy (e.g., MacDonald, Kingsley, Thackeray)

Class: 2:1 Folk Tale Types and Traditions

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 6: “Folk Tales,” 164-188

Choose two to read from each of the six folk tale types defined below. All of these works can be found in the first three grades of the series by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., beginning with *What Your Kindergartner Needs to Know*. Many can also be found in the Johnson et al anthology.

“Why the Owl Has Big Eyes”

“El Paraju Cu”

“How Anansi Got Stories from the Sky God”

“Talk”

“How Iktomi Lost his Eyes”

“The Blind Man and the Elephant”

“The Tiger, the Brahman and the Jackal”

“Three Billy Goat’s Gruff”

“The Three Little Pigs”

“The Little Red Hen”

“The Bremen Town Musicians” Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

“The Fisherman and his Wife” Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

“The Tongue-Cut Sparrow”

“It Could Always be Worse”

“Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp”

“Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves”

“Gone is Gone”

“The Wolf and the Seven Kids” Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

“Medio Pollito”

“The Hunt for the Great Bear”

“Three Words of Wisdom”

Liang and the Magic Paintbrush, Demi, illustrated by Htiz Demi

Fire on the Mountain, Jane Kurtz, illustrated by Earl B. Lewis

The Magic Brocade: A Tale of China, Aaron Shepard, illustrated by Xiaojun Li

Peach Boy: A Japanese Legend, Gail Sakurai, illustrated by Makiko Nagano

Discussion Topics:

- How folk tale, fairy tale, myth, fable, legend, and romance originated as oral stories told to explain nature, to guide or inspire conduct, or to give voice to human beings' feelings of fear, pride, joy, grief, and wonder
- How folklore was meant for all people—for and from “the folk” or the common people.
- The qualities of a folk tale: quick beginning; filled with action; often has humor; rewards good and punishes evil; stock characters; often includes rhyme and repetition; satisfying, resolute conclusion; often includes magic; numbers 3 and 7 are often significant.
- Theories of folklore's origin: monogenesis, polygenesis, and a collective unconscious
- Characteristics of the folk tale, fairy tale, myth, fable, epic and legend
 - Folk tale: a characteristically anonymous, timeless, and placeless tale circulated orally among a people, featuring people or animals as characters.
 - Fairy tale: a narrative of adventures usually involving fantastic forces and beings (such as fairies, wizards, and goblins).
 - Myth: a (usually) traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the worldview of a people or explain a practice, a belief, or natural phenomenon. Often considered sacred in origin.
 - Fable: most often a brief narration intended to illustrate or enforce a useful truth—especially one in which animals speak and act like human beings
 - Epic: Long, episodic stories of adventure, grounded in mythology but starring a mortal hero.
 - Legend: a story coming down from the past—especially one popularly regarded as historical although not verifiable. Often based on supposedly real people and their heroic deeds and adventures.
(Definitions adapted from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* and Kathleen Horning's *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books*)
- The many types of folk tales: cumulative, talking-beast tales, pourquoi stories, humorous/trickster tales, realistic tales, and tales of magic (fairy tales).
 - Cumulative or Repetitional: e.g., “The Little Red Hen,” “The Three Little Pigs,” “The Bremen Town Musicians”
 - Talking-Beast: e.g., “The Three Billy Goats Gruff”
 - Pourquoi Tales: e.g., “Why the Owl has Big Eyes,” “El Paraju Cu,” and “The Blind Man and the Elephant”
 - Humorous/Trickster Tales: e.g., “How Anansi Got Stories from the Sky God,” “The Tiger, the Brahman and The Jackal,” and “How Iktomi Lost his Eyes”
 - Realistic Tales or Tales of Human Nature: e.g., “The Tongue-Cut Sparrow,” “The Fisherman and his Wife,” and “It Could Always be Worse”
 - Fairy Tales: e.g., “Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp,” “Liang and the Magic Paintbrush”
- A description of various fairy/folk tale traditions: French (Perrault's transcriptions of tales at the court of Louis XIV), German (the Grimm Brothers' collections), Norwegian, (Asbjornsen), *The Arabian Nights*, English, Scottish, and Irish, and others. Details on these and other traditions can be found in the assigned reading in *Children and Books* and in the assigned reading in *A Critical History of Children's Literature* for Class 1.2.
- How the assigned stories have characteristics of all fairy/folk tales, yet are part of distinct regional or cultural traditions.

Class 2.2

Folk/Fairy Tale Themes

Readings:

Hallett and Karasek, Introduction, *Folk and Fairy Tales*, 2nd Edition

Read one from each of the following categories. Selections can be found in the E.D.Hirsch, Jr. series, the Hallett and Karasek volume, the Johnson et al anthology, or the Grimm volume.

- Sleeping Beauties
 - “The Sleeping Beauty in the Woods” Charles Perrault
 - “Snow White” Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- Damsels in Distress
 - “Cinderella: or, The Little Glass Slipper” Charles Perrault
 - “Rapunzel” Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- Brain over Brawn
 - “Puss in Boots” Charles Perrault
- The Child as Hero
 - “Hansel and Gretel” Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
 - “Jack and the Beanstalk” Joseph Jacobs
- Villains
 - “Rumpelstiltskin,” Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- Animal Bridegrooms
 - “Beauty and the Beast” Madame Le Prince de Beaumont
 - “The Frog King or Iron Heinrich,” Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

Discussion Topics:

- Ways to categorize tales—by genre, structure within genre, regional or cultural tradition, or theme
- Tales organized by theme and the characteristic(s) of the protagonist/central figure in Hallett and Karasek
- Tales lending themselves to Freudian interpretations or sexual stereotypes: e.g., Perrault’s version of “Sleeping Beauty” and tales characterized as Damsels in Distress
- Tales in which the underdog overcomes odds
- Tales in which the underdog or trickster figure is wise, but not always good
- Child Hero tales in which the child outwits the adult despite the child’s inferior status, low birth, or other handicap
- Villain tales in which the villain reveals a flaw in the protagonist even as he gets his comeuppance: e.g., the lack of a real “hero” in “Rumpelstiltskin”
- Animal Bridegroom tales in which marriage is viewed by the female protagonist as a prospect both challenging and threatening; animal bridegroom stories as stories of personal growth.

Class 2:3 Folk/Fairy Tale Versions, Functions, and Purposes

Readings:

Hallett and Karasek, “Loss of Innocence” in *Folk and Fairy Tales*, 2nd Edition
 John Gough, “Rivalry, Rejection, and Recovery: Variations of the Cinderella Story,” in *Children’s Literature in Education*: Vol. 21, no.2, 1999, 99-107
 Bruno Bettelheim, “The Struggle for Meaning,” in *Folk and Fairy Tales*, 306-324

The Pied Piper of Hamelin, illustrated by Kate Greenaway
 Jon Scieszka, *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*, illustrated by Lane Smith
 Oscar Wilde, “The Happy Prince” (in Hallett and Karesek)

Choose two versions of each of the tales below to read.

“The Story of Grandmother” (in Hallett and Karasek)
 “Little Red Riding Hood” Charles Perrault
 “Little Red Cap” Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
 “The Chinese Red Riding Hood” Isabelle C. Chang

Cinderella, C.S. Evan, illustrated by Arthur Rackham
Yen-Shen: A Cinderella from China, Ai-Ling, Louie, illustrated by Ed Young
Cinderella, by Patricia McKissack, illustrated by Dunnington
Sootface: An Ojibwa Cinderella Story, by Robert San Souci, illustrated by Daniel San Souci

The Way Meat Loves Salt: A Cinderella Tale from the Jewish Tradition, Nina Jaffe, illustrated by Louise August
Smoky Mountain Rose: An Appalachian Cinderella, Alan Schroeder, illustrated by Brad Sneed
Angkat: The Cambodian Cinderella, Jewell Reinhart Coburn, illustrated by Edmund Flotte
Cendrillon: A Caribbean Cinderella, by Daniel San Souci
The Golden Sandal: A Middle Eastern Cinderella, Rebecca Hickox, illustrated by Will Hillenbrand
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters, John Steptoe
Princess Furball, Charlotte Huck, illustrated by Anita Lobel
Baba Yaga and Vasilisa the Brave, Mariana Meyer, illustrated by Craft

Discussion Topics:

- Early versions of “Red Riding Hood” warned the female about a man as predator. The hints at rape in “The Story of Grandmother”
- How “Red Riding Hood” was sanitized over time (especially by the Grimms) in order to be made appropriate for child audiences
- The Chinese version of “Red Riding Hood” features a wise child protagonist
- The common themes/patterns in all Cinderella tales: the fall into poverty/servitude by the main character, the loss of the father figure and the gain of a husband at story’s end, the struggle to maintain character when others are spiteful/malicious, the acceptance/restoration of the central character into high society at story’s end, rivalry between siblings, a magical godmother figure who helps the main character to persevere and succeed
- How illustrations alter, enhance, or extend the Cinderella tales assigned
- John Gough’s observations on the number of Cinderella stories in modern literature for children
- No one “original” version of any of these tales (although theories abound). What to look for in a re-telling: strong plot, economy of language, adherence to folk tale conventions, the power of the symbol and depth of the emotional power, a satisfying resolution
- How illustrators use their art to extend the folk/fairy tale (e.g., Kate Greenaway)
- Importance of folk/fairy tales in the curriculum. How folk/fairy tales contribute to cultural literacy (characters and plots used as metaphors, e.g., the Pied Piper of Hamelin) and transmit a literary/cultural heritage
- Importance of folk/fairy tales in children’s lives (see Bruno Bettelheim)
- Oscar Wilde’s subversion of the fairy tale in “The Happy Prince”
- How Jon Scieszka plays with folk tale conventions to create humor in *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. Children must understand the conventions of the structure of a book and of the tales themselves in order to appreciate what Wilde and Scieszka have done.

Class 3:1 Aesop’s Fables as Transcribed for Children

Readings: Chapter 7: Sutherland, “Fables, Myths and Epics,” 205-209

Read a dozen or so fables from one of these volumes, and compare with the same fables in the other volume.

Aesop’s Fables, Aesop, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney
Anno’s Aesop, Mitsumasa Anno

Discussion Topics:

- The history of Aesop’s Fables—their origin in the 6th century b.c.e., the question of whether Aesop actually existed;
- How the tales were translated into Latin in the 1st and 3rd centuries and were later translated into several languages. Among the first books printed by Caxton in English;
- The characteristics of a fable: brief story, lead characters frequently animals acting as humans, the narrative focus singularly on a moral lesson, the nature of the moral lesson as not necessarily

“heroic” but of the folk—the virtues of “discretion, prudence, moderation, and forethought” (*Children and Books*, p. 206);

- The fables of La Fontaine—his use of the Latin tales and of the tales of Marie de France to create his own tales;
- An analysis of the two collections of fables assigned for class (especially Anno’s use of Mr. Fox) as well as discussion of other Aesop collections (many listed in *Children and Books*, p. 207)

Class 3:2 Greek Mythology as Transcribed for Children

Readings:

Chapter 7: Sutherland, “Fables, Myths and Legends,” 209-212

Ingri D’Aulaire, *D’Aulaire’s Book of Greek Myths*, illustrated by Edgar Parin D’Aulaire, 1-105

Rosemary Sutcliff, *The Wandering Odysseus: The Story of the Odyssey*

“The Sacker of Cities”

“The Cyclops”

William F. Russell, *Classic Greek Myths to Read Aloud*

“The Origin of Seasons”

“Icarus and Daedalus”

“Damon and Pythias”

“Cupid and Psyche”

“The Sword of Damocles”

“The Spinning Contest”

“The Story of Theseus” (Parts I and II)

“Perseus and the Gorgon’s Head”

Discussion Topics:

- Myth as embodying the sacred beliefs of a society—as accepted truth—as illustration of a culture’s values—as explanation of natural phenomena—as explanation of the origin of the universe
- Myths rich in complex symbolism—seek to explain life, or to explain the natural world, the ways of the gods with humans, the characteristics of man that lead to downfall (e.g. pride), the ways of gods with other gods;
- The Greek myths as available to us through the Greek poet Hesiod; the Roman myths available through Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*;
- Discussion of the assigned reading: D’Aulaire’s descriptions of the gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus, the types of myths assigned (e.g., “The Origin of Seasons” as pourquoi or origin myth, or “Icarus and Daedalus” as a myth dealing with the characteristics of man that lead to downfall);
- Reasons for teaching Greek/Roman mythology: for cultural literacy and because of “the beauty and imaginative qualities” of the myths themselves (*Children and Books*, 213).
- How to use myths in the classroom: presentations of myths by students, dressing as gods and goddesses from Mount Olympus, creating a Greek and Roman festival, acting in plays (see *Teaching and Dramatizing the Greek Myths*, Josephine Davidson), playing Holst’s “The Planets” and having students attempt to figure out which gods are represented in which pieces.

Class 3:3 Norse Mythology

Readings:

Sutherland, Chapter 7, “Fables, Myths, and Epics,” 212-213

Mary Pope Osborne, *Favorite Norse Myths*, illustrated by Troy Howell

Introduction,

“Creation: The Nine Worlds”

“Odin’s Three Quests”

Odin’s Family: Myths of the Vikings, retold by Neil Philip, illustrated by Mary Clare Foa

“The Creation”

“Who’s Who”

Afterword

Discussion Topics:

- The preservation of Norse myth in Iceland, which was settled by Norwegians and cut off from the rest of the world
- The two collections kept alive: *Elder* or *Poetic Edda* and the *Younger of Prose Edda*—told in the sing-and-say style. The Poetic Edda mostly in verse, the Prose Edda mostly in prose. The Prose Edda containing the stories of how the world was created and how the gods came into existence and how they fell
- Norse myth less graceful than the Greek/Roman myths, but nevertheless powerful—and important in terms of cultural literacy—e.g., the names of days of the week originating in Norse myth;
- Comparison of the two versions of “The Creation,” how the illustrations add to/detract from the stories
- How Norse myth might be brought into the classroom: students presenting myths, dressing as Norse mythological characters, enacting the myths in groups, reading the myths aloud

Class 4:1 Arthurian Legend/Epic as Transcribed for Children

Readings:

Sutherland, Chapter 7: “Fables, Myths and Legends,” 215-220

Kevin Crossley-Holland, *The World of King Arthur and His Court: People, Places, Legend and Lore*, illustrated by Peter Malone

Margaret Hodges, *The Kitchen Knight: A Tale of King Arthur*, illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman
Hudson Talbott, *King Arthur and the Round Table (Books of Wonder: Tales of King Arthur)*

Discussion Topics:

- Epic as a cycle of tales, centered on one hero. The hero pursues legendary feats that are often hindered by meddling gods;
- The epic as strongly national: Odysseus as the embodiment of Greek ideals of courage, wisdom; Sigurd as embodiment of Norse ideals; King Arthur as exemplar of chivalry; Robin Hood as spokesman for England’s ideals of freedom, justice;
- The creation of the figure of Arthur in English (as opposed to Celtic) by Geoffrey of Monmouth (1100-55) who wrote *History of Kings of Britain* in Latin. Claimed he “translated” stories of Arthur, but largely he invented them;
- How other poets/authors added to the “History” in numerous ways: Norman poet, Wace, for example, added the Round Table and Arthur’s departure for Avalon. Later, other aspects of the legends added: Tristram and Isolde, Lancelot du Lac and his adulterous love for Guinevere, the Holy Grail, the Round Table as a replica of the table of the Last Supper, the birth of Galahad and so on;
- The publication of Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte D’Arthur*, published by Caxton in 1498. Malory’s story, written in prose, can be credited with keeping the romances of Arthur alive;
- Versions adapted for children:
 - “The Story of King Arthur” by Sir James Knowles, was published in 1862 and intended to spur a revival of the tales that would put them into “boy’s libraries.”
 - The Boy’s King Arthur* by American Sydney Lanier was published in 1880. Based on Malory, but the adultery and fornications found in Malory’s tales were censored.
 - Since *The Boy’s King Arthur* the tales have been viewed as belonging to children as much as to adults—many, many versions have been written in the last 100 years. (The instructor may wish to bring in copies of pictures from Howard Pyle’s four-volume mock-medieval retelling of Malory’s text.)
- Readability/appropriateness of the assigned texts for children of different ages

Class 4:2 Mother Goose Rhymes and the Figure of Mother Goose

Readings:

Sutherland, Chapter 4: “Books for the Very Young,” 64-74

Select among two of the following collections.

The Real Mother Goose, illustrated by Blanche Fisher Wright

The Just Right Mother Goose, Arnold Lobel

The Inner City Mother Goose, Eve Merriam

Chinese Mother Goose Rhymes, illustrated by Ed Young

Here Comes Mother Goose, edited by Iona Opie, illustrated by Rosemary Wells

Discussion Topics:

- The theories as to how the Mother Goose figure came into existence:
 - Stock figure for a teller of tales at this time in France an old peasant woman who watched over the geese (suggested by Jacques Barchilon)
 - Counterpart in German—Fru Gosen. Compared to Mother Hubbard
 - Perrault's *Histoires, ou Contes du Temps Passé* (1697)—front piece showed an old woman telling tales to three children;
- The earliest known publications in English- Perrault's *Histoires, or Tales of Past Times* (1729)—translated as "Mother Goose's Tales;" 1768, John Newbery (actually his sons) issued *Mother Goose's Tales*; brought to America (1785) by Isaiah Thomas;
- How Mother Goose became viewed as an old lady with a witch's tall hat and hooked nose and chin came after the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden performed *The Golden Egg*, a pantomime of Mother Goose;
- Qualities that appeal to children (listed in *Children and Books*, page 83): people, children's pranks, animals, birds and fowl, finger play, games, riddles, counting rhymes, counting out, alphabets, proverbs, superstitions, time verse, days of the week, verse stories, dialogue, songs, street cries, weather, tongue twisters, cumulative stories, nonsense;
- Popular versions of Mother Goose. The instructor may wish to bring in out-of-print editions like Greenaway's *Mother Goose: The Old Nursery Rhymes*, or Rackham's *Mother Goose: The Old Nursery Rhymes*;
- Critical comment: Why Eve Merriam (*The Inner City Mother Goose*) thinks Mother Goose rhymes exclude poor, urban children. Contrast Merriam's ideas with those of Joan Bodger in "Mother Goose: Is the Old Girl Relevant?" in *Wilson Library Bulletin*, December 1969, p. 408, cited in *Children and Books*, 7th edition, Sutherland and Arbuthnot.

Class 4:3 Literary Tales: Hans Christian Andersen and Rudyard Kipling

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 8, "Modern Fantasy," 229-231

Hans Christian Andersen, *The Complete Fairy Tales*, translated by Erik Haugaard

Introduction

"The Princess and the Pea"

"The Little Match Girl"

"The Emperor's New Clothes"

"The Ugly Duckling"

Rudyard Kipling, "How the Camel Got His Hump," illustrated by Lisbeth Zwerger

Discussion Topics:

- The distinction between a folk tale and a literary tale (the literary tale as one written down/created—not from the oral tradition, though it has characteristics of the folk tale)
- Andersen and Kipling as examples of authors who used the folk/fairy tale as inspiration/model for their own original tales
- Andersen as a creator, not a collector; how his tales grew out of his own life/experiences. He emphasized re-creating the spoken tale—the sounds, the patterns and stories that he heard when he was growing up

- How Andersen used the conventions of folk tales (often his stories take place in an unspecified place, and his characters are often nameless). How he often explored the dark side of human nature in his tales—“The Little Match Girl” for example.
- Kipling’s *Just So* stories as pourquoi tales; how he uses animal figures to represent human characteristics, as in “How the Camel Got his Hump.” A master story-teller.

Class 5:1 Fantasy Literature for Children: Beginnings

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 8, “Modern Fantasy,” 236-237

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* (glance through this book)

Discussion Topics:

- Fantasy literature for children in the 19th century as new and unusual—stories were meant to foster imagination and delight;
- Carroll’s *Alice* as the first fantasy full of nonsense and humor—a story devoid of moral instruction.
- The life of Charles Dodgson: his friendship with the Liddell sisters, the origin of the story of Alice (sailing down the Thames—look at the acrostic poem that precedes the story), his friendship with George MacDonald and MacDonald’s children, his idealization of childhood (see poem that precedes *Through the Looking Glass*)
- A comparison of Watts’ “Against Idleness and Mischief” with Carroll’s version of the same poem as evidence of his disdain for the moralists and his love of nonsense
- *Alice* as a mockery of Victorian society—for example, “The House of Cards”
- A look at 19th century life, e.g., the fact that Victorian hatters often did go mad because of exposure to mercury. (Wonderful examples of such pieces of information are described in Gardner’s *The Annotated Alice*.)
- An examination of the logic puzzles in *Through the Looking Glass*
- The illustrations of John Tenniel as an essential part of the *Alice* experience. Examine other illustrated versions of *Alice*, e.g., those of Arthur Rackham, Lisbeth Zwerger, or Helen Oxenbury

Class 5.2 Beginning Fantasy Literature for Children: Continued

Readings:

James Barrie, *Peter Pan*

Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*

“The River Bank”

“The Open Road”

Ernest Shepard, “Illustrating the Wind in the Willows,” *The Horn Book Magazine*, April 1954, 83-86.

Beatrix Potter, “The Tale of Peter Rabbit”

Beatrix Potter, “The Roly-Poly Pudding”

Discussion Topics:

- Fantasy writing for children as the celebration of imagination, play, and nonsense
- How many of the great fantasies of the 19th/early 20th centuries were created with particular children in mind (Barrie’s friendship with the Llewelyn Davies boys as inspiration for the play “Peter and Wendy,” Carroll’s *Alice* (Alice Liddell), Grahame’s *Wind in the Willows* (his son, Alastair), and Potter’s *Peter Rabbit* (first created in a letter to a friend’s sick child.)
- The theme of home in *Peter Pan*: Never Never Land as safety from growth, from maturity—but how going home represents an acknowledgment that one must grow; *Wind in the Willows*: the warmth and comfort of home brought to life through Grahame’s exquisite prose—the idea that one

- can travel away from home (as Mole does) but that home always calls; the home-away-home structure of *Peter Rabbit*—movement away from home as adventurous, but dangerous to the child.
- Ernest Shepard’s illustrations of *The Wind in the Willows*; how, like Tenniel’s illustrations of *Alice*, Potter’s illustrations of *Peter Rabbit*, or Shepard’s illustrations of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, the illustrations are as much a part of the story as the text itself; Shepard’s relationship with Grahame as described in *The Horn Book* article;
 - Potter’s ideas about “little books for little people;” her refusal to publish her books unless they were made small and included her illustrations
 - Potter’s illustrations as the beginning of the modern picture story—a book with which the non-reading child learns “to read” by interpreting the pictures. “The Roly-Poly Pudding” as the first mystery story for young children.

Class 5:3 Modern Fantasy for Children

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 8: “Modern Fantasy,” 231-259
 Jane Langton, “The Weak Place in the Cloth: A Study of Fantasy for Children, Parts I and II,” *The Horn Book Magazine*: October 1973 and December 1973, 433-441 and 572-578

Read two of the following fantasies.

Norton Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth*, illustrated by Jules Feiffer

Roald Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach* or *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

C.S.Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*

Lloyd Alexander, *The Book of Three*

Discussion Topics:

- The different forms of fantasy in children’s literature outlined in Langton’s article. The metaphor of a piece of cloth as a curtain establishing a dividing line between truth (the real world) and fantasy (the unreal world)
- Elements of inventiveness in the Juster and Dahl books
- Christian symbolism and elements of Norse mythology in *The Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe*
- Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia* published just after WWII—when children were sent to live with others. The effect of the war era on the story;
- Both C.S. Lewis’s work and *The Book of Three* as quests. Characteristics of quest: orphan hero, home/away/home structure, hero must prove himself on an adventure that deals with magic, journey involved—often a rite of passage or coming of age.

Class 6:1 Modern Fantasy: Continued

Readings: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*
 and several chapters of Natalie Babbitt, *Tuck Everlasting*

Discussion Topics

- Why the *Harry Potter* stories are so wildly popular. Rowling’s use of specific detail brings to life the magical world and allow readers to suspend their disbelief. Note her adherence to conventions of quest fantasy.
- The fairy tale elements in *Tuck Everlasting*: water of everlasting life, young heroine on a journey through the woods, archetypal elements such as the Earth mother in Mae
- How time is manipulated; the way the natural order of the cycle of life is disrupted. The images conveying the cycle of life (the image of the Ferris wheel in the prologue, the sun circling, ring of trees around the pond, the expanding ripples in the water, the repetition of the song of the music box)

- Whether Winnie’s journey is the journey of a hero
- How/whether Winnie grows: the moral choices involved in the novel. Does Winnie save Mae because of her love for her or because she understands the ramifications if she does not?
- Babbitt’s exquisite prose—its poetic quality, its rich imagery.

Class 6:2 First Adventure Stories

Readings: *Treasure Island*, Robert Louis Stevenson

Discussion Topics

- Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) as the first adventure stories, from Puritan England. Though intended for adults, they were also loved by children and are now considered children’s literature
- How *Treasure Island* resembles *Robinson Crusoe* stylistically
- How part of Stevenson’s success is that he did not condescend to his child-audience
- How, though Stevenson did not intend to be a writer of adventure stories, he is considered the greatest adventure writer of the 19th century; how he inspired others and his influence can be seen in works such as *Peter Pan*
- How Stevenson intended the story to be enjoyed by children, not analyzed
- The moral ambiguity in Stevenson’s text; Silver as ingenious and courageous, despite his being the “bad” character); the character of Jim in juxtaposition to Silver; Jim as a mere observer, a teller of the tale.

Class 6:3 Highlights of 19th Century American Children’s Literature

Readings: Gillian Avery, “Two Patterns of Childhood: American and English,” *The Horn Book Magazine*, November/December 1984, 794-808

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

Discussion Topics:

- How Americans valued “thrift, accumulation, money and industry” (“Two Patterns,” p. 801) and how this was reflected in literature for children
- How books such as Alcott’s *Little Women* and Wilder’s *Little House* books emphasized these values
- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* as a largely autobiographical work
- How Twain’s *Tom Sawyer* rejects the moral code of earlier 19th century books; it highlights Tom’s self-interest, his tendency towards dishonesty, and his desire to play rather than work
- How Tom’s moral code is eventually revealed in the novel: he keeps his word to friends, he sees things through, and he always protects the weaker person
- How the text rewards ingenuity and a sense of humor. How, in a comic way, Tom pursues the American dream

Possible Assignment:

Present an outline of the life and works of one of the following authors: Examine one of the author’s books in depth and show how the work reflects influences on the author life or thinking .(2-3 pages)

George MacDonald
 Lewis Carroll (Charles Dodgson)
 Robert Louis Stevenson
 Louisa May Alcott
 Kenneth Grahame
 Edith Nesbit

Frances Hodgson Burnett
Rudyard Kipling
Beatrix Potter
Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens)
Lucy Maud Montgomery

Class 7:1 Tall Tales

Readings: *John Henry*, Julius Lester, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney
Johnny Appleseed, Stephen Vincent and Rosemary Carr Benet, illustrated by Steven Schindler
Pecos Bill: A Tale Tale and *Paul Bunyan*, Steven Kellogg
Casey Jones's Fireman: The Story of Sim Webb, Nancy Farmer, illustrated by James Bernardin

Discussion Topics:

- The origin of the tall tale in the oral tradition among American settlers—later written down for children
- The essential characteristics of a tall tale; hero who is noble/brave—perhaps superhuman—of the folk—not of privileged birth, impossible events, use of blatant exaggeration for effect;
- Johnny Appleseed (John Chapman) and Casey Jones (John Luther Jones) as real Americans that inspired tall tales; the story of Chapman planting trees across the country and the story of Casey Jones as a railroad engineer who died in a railroad accident and the aspects of the tales that are hyperbolic;
- Pecos Bill, Paul Bunyan, and John Henry as creations; the way each of these heroes must accomplish a series of feats—each greater than the last
- The poems created in response to these tall tale heroes
- How illustrations highlight the exaggeration in the stories or (as perhaps is the case with Pinkney's illustrations in *John Henry*) add a sense of realism to the tale.

Class 7:2 African-American Folk Tales

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 6: "Folk Tales," 1189-190

"The Wonderful Tar Baby," Joel Chandler Harris. In Johnson, Sickels, Sayers, and Horovitz, editors, *An Anthology of Children's Literature*, 5th edition, 498-500. Place this anthology on reserve, or obtain a copy of this tale by Harris to place on reserve.

The Tales of Uncle Remus, Julius Lester, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney

Forward

"Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby"

"Brer Rabbit Gets Even"

The People Could Fly, Virginia Hamilton, illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon

"Doc Rabbit, Bruh Fox and Tar Baby"

"The People Could Fly"

The Knee-High Man, William Miller, illustrated by Roberta Glidden

Discussion Topics:

- How The Uncle Remus Tales, the largest existing collection of African American folktales, were collected by Joel Chandler Harris, a Georgian journalist in the late 1800s—similar to what the Brothers Grimm did in Germany
- How these tales have roots in India and Africa, but were created in America by American slaves
- How these are talking beast tales with a trickster main character, Brer Rabbit, who outwits and triumphs over the bear, the wolf, the fox—all predators, like the slave master
- How, in recent times, the figure of Uncle Remus came under attack by American blacks and how Lester retells the Uncle Remus tales without using the Uncle Remus figure

- A comparison of Harris's, Lester's, and Hamilton's versions of "Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby"
- How tales like "The People Could Fly" might have provided solace for the slaves

Class 7:3 Picture Books and their Illustrators

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 5: "Artists and Children's Books"

Goodnight Moon, Margaret Wise Brown
Millions of Cats, Wanda Gag
The Snowy Day, Ezra Jack Keats
Make Way for Ducklings, Robert McCloskey
Where the Wild Things Are, Maurice Sendak
Gorilla, Anthony Browne
Jumanji, Chris Van Allsburg
Grandfather's Journey, Allen Say

Discussion Topics:

*Note: For this class the instructor should provide examples of the works of Walter Crane, Randolph Caldecott, and Kate Greenaway for students.

- Randolph Caldecott (1846-1886), Kate Greenaway (1846-1901), and Walter Crane (1845-1915) as the three Victorians who revolutionized the picture book as a source of delight for children
- The legacy of each of these artists:
 - Caldecott: timing, line, extension of story, entertainment;
 - Greenaway: line, decorativeness, nostalgia (early 19th century costume of children);
 - Crane: patterns, page design, traditional art
- Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* as a model of mastery of the combined art and text; special emphasis on his precision of language, and on the way he uses frames and borders to further tell his story--(Most important to get at is the way in which the border of each picture grows as the story progresses, culminating in the dramatic three double-page spreads of the monsters and Max. Likewise, the borders diminish as Max returns home from his adventure.);
- The appropriateness of illustrations to text
 - *Millions of Cats*: use of negative space to convey passage of time, varied page layouts, illustrations that break frame and extend across two pages, the effect of hand-lettering, the repetition of verse, the rhythm of language, the folk tale conventions
 - *Goodnight Moon*: repetition of words, rhyming couplets, the familiar objects of childhood in Hurd's illustrations, the details that delight children in the illustrations (mice, gradually darkening of room, intertextual references, clock changing time)
 - *The Snowy Day*: setting (one of first picture books to use an urban setting and African-American character), playfulness, medium (warmth in cold snow), sparseness of language, emotional quality of ending—line creates sense of closure, peace
 - *Make Way for Ducklings*: specific setting, the use of exaggeration/cartoon in the illustrations to create lightheartedness, use of perspective in the illustrations, the appeal of the actual story (it will bear repeated readings)
 - *Gorilla*: use of shadow to create a still, lonely mood, use of space/shape to convey protagonist's isolation, the connection of Hannah with the gorillas, orangutan, and chimpanzee by the use of bars
 - *Jumanji*: choice of medium—it sets the tone for the book, the use of borders to create photographic reality, the use of perspective and shadow to create a sense of danger
 - *Grandfather's Journey*: how illustrations extend the story, the authentic detail of the illustrations contributing to the story's meaning, choice of paper and colors to convey formality—matches the tone of the book, the story of being caught between two cultures conveyed by the illustrations, the illustrations as photographic—like a photo album

Possible Assignment:

*This assignment would require students to familiarize themselves with a variety of picture books and to look carefully at how art and text work together to convey meaning.

Choose 4-6 picture books that have not been discussed in class from the PreK-2 list in Appendix A and discuss how the author and illustrator have shaped each story. What does the illustrator add and why? How do her/his illustrations work to bring meaning to the story? What style does the author use and why? Examine the book for the appropriateness of the artwork for this story. (3-5 pages)

Week 8:1 Elements of Good Poetry for Children

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 9: "Poetry," 271-273 and 285-302

"Windy Night" Robert Louis Stevenson

"Dreams" Langston Hughes

"April Rain Song" Langston Hughes

"Eletelephony" Laura Richards

"Trees" Sergeant Joyce Kilmer

"By Myself" Eloise Greenfield

"Knoxville, Tennessee" Nikki Giovanni

"Rope Rhyme" Eloise Greenfield

Discussion Topics:

- The essence of excellent poetry: the crystallization of a mood, emotion, or experience; the reader's experience of a sharpened understanding of self, another, or the nature of life. Robert Frost's observation that a poem is "a momentary stay against confusion. Each poem clarifies something..." (quoted in *Children and Books*, page 274.)
- The idea that good poetry employs strong, precise words and has melody, rhythm and movement
- The elements of poetry: line, stanza and verse, rhyme, rhythm, repetition
- Literary devices used in poetry: simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, allusion, onomatopoeia
- The difference between free verse and form poetry
- An analysis of each poem assigned for class. Prior to analyzing each poem, a mention of key biographical information on each poet. (Information on each of these poets is touched on in the assigned reading in *Children and Books*.)
 - "A Windy Night" as an extended metaphor. Examine the use of alliteration, personification, and repetition
 - "Dreams" Examine the use of metaphor to create meaning and precision of language
 - "April Rain Song" Examine the use of personification and repetition
 - "Eletelephony" Examine the wordplay/made up words to create humor
 - "Trees" as an extended metaphor. Examine personification
 - "By Myself" Examine the use of list/repetition
 - "Knoxville, Tennessee" Examine specificity of image, use of rich language
 - "Rope Rhyme" Examine the use of rhythm

Possible Assignment:

Analyze in depth one of the poems in the Core Knowledge curriculum not examined in class (or by one of the poets listed in Appendix A whose work is not in the Core Knowledge curriculum). Identify the literary devices employed by the poet and how these devices work to convey meaning in the poem. Comment on the poem's theme, placing special emphasis on what is "clarified" for the reader of the poem.

Class 8:2 Nonsense/Humor and Narrative Poetry

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 9: "Poetry" 274-281

“There Was an Old Man with a Beard” Edward Lear
 “The Crocodile” Lewis Carroll
 “Father William” Lewis Carroll
 “Smart” Shel Silverstein
 “The Adventures of Isabel” Ogden Nash
 “The Rhinoceros” Ogden Nash
 “The Owl and the Pussycat” Edward Lear
 “A Visit from Saint Nicholas” Clement C. Moore
 “Lincoln” Nancy Byrd Turner
 “Harriet Tubman” Eloise Greenfield
 “First Thanksgiving of All” Nancy Byrd Turner
 “Paul Revere’s Ride,” Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Discussion Topics:

- The distinction between form, type and theme. Various forms: sonnet, ballad, ode, syllabic poetry (haiku, for example), limerick. Various types of poetry: nonsense/humorous, lyric, and narrative. Various themes in poetry: nature, celebration of everyday things, examination of human nature, crystallization of a mood or emotion, etc.
- Nonsense/Humorous poetry as poetry that uses wordplay, exaggeration, absurdity, and/or mockery to create humor
- An analysis of each of the humorous poems assigned for class. Brief discussion of each of the poets. (Information on these poets can be found in the assigned reading in *Children and Books*.)
 - “There was an Old Man with a Beard:” an example of a limerick
 - “The Crocodile:” a poem in which Carroll mocks Watts’ “Against Idleness and Mischief”
 - “Father William:” examine the contrast of logic and nonsense to create humor
 - “Smart:” examine Silverstein’s use of exaggeration
 - “The Adventures of Isabel:” a narrative poem that uses surprise (the doctor as more scary than a bear, a witch, or a giant) and exaggeration
 - “The Rhinoceros:” examine wordplay
- Narrative poetry as poetry that tells a story using plot, characters, and occasionally dialogue;
- An analysis of each of the narrative poems assigned for class. Examine how the story is told in verse and the literary devices employed. Brief discussion of each of the poets. (Information on these poets can be found in the assigned reading in *Children and Books*.)

Class 8:3 Lyric Poetry and Poems about Nature or Everyday Things

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 9, “Poetry,” 281-282

“Dream Variations” Langston Hughes
 “The Swing” Robert Louis Stevenson
 “My Shadow” Robert Louis Stevenson
 “Things” Eloise Greenfield
 “Caterpillar” Aileen Fisher
 “Hurt No Living Thing” Christina Rossetti
 “Bee! I’m Expecting You!” Emily Dickinson
 “The Pasture” Robert Frost
A Child’s Calendar, John Updike, illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman

Discussion Topics:

- Lyric poetry as poetry that expresses the poet’s feelings and/or observations. A musical poem that generally focuses on a single strong emotion or observation
- “Dream Variations” as an example of a lyric poem
- “The Swing,” “My Shadow” as poetry that celebrates everyday things

- “Things” as a celebration of poetry itself
- Nature as an inspiration to many poets. Brief mention of lives of Rossetti, Dickinson, and Frost, three poets who often examined/celebrated/contemplated nature in their poetry.
- Analyze each of the poems assigned that look carefully at nature
 - “Caterpillar” Look at use of couplets/sound to convey first the smallness of the caterpillar and then the greatness of what the caterpillar is able to create
 - “Hurt No Living Thing” Look at attention to detail
 - “Bee! I’m Expecting You!” Look at Dickinson’s close observation of the natural world, point of view
 - “The Pasture” Look at direct address
 - “A Child’s Calendar” Look at rhyme, playfulness of language, and at the distinct mood Updike creates in each poem.

Class 9:1 More Genres for Young Children: Alphabet, Counting, and Concept Picture Books

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 4: “Books for the Very Young,” 74-84

Choose two from each category to read.

Anno’s Counting Book, Anno
Pigs from 1-10, Arthur Giegert
The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Eric Carle
Seven Blind Mice, Ed Young
My Little Sister Ate One, Bill Grossman
Hare, Kevin Hawkes
Alligators All Around, Marurice Sendak
The Handmade Alphabet, Laura Rankin
Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions, Margaret Musgrove, illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon
Aardvarks, Disembark!, Ann Jonas
Antics, Cathi Hepworth
A Apple Pie, Kate Greenaway
The Z was Zapped, Chris Van Allsburg
Alpha, Beta, Chowder, William Steig
Shapes and Things, Tana Hoban

Discussion Topics:

- How counting/ABC/concept books help not only with identification of letters, numbers, and shapes, but also with visual literacy and the identification of other familiar objects
- How illustrators make dramatic a single letter, number, or shape; examine each assigned book for consistency of theme and dramatization of letter, number, and shape
- The need for clarity in an alphabet book; the objects should be identifiable to the young child, the theme of the book should be consistent throughout, the illustration should match the key word, and the word should use the letter in the most common way it is pronounced
- Likewise, the need for clarity in the counting book; the numerals should be clearly represented, the text should be closely related to the picture, and the objects that are to be counted should be clear and identifiable
- The way the best concept books reinforce ideas without becoming boring, how they should move from the simple to complex, and how they should help children see relationships between objects or see more than one side to an idea.

Class 9:2 Informational Books: Science

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 13: “Informational Books,” 463-468

Any *Magic Schoolbus* book, Joanna Cole, illustrated by Bruce Degen
Volcano: The Eruption and Healing of Mount St. Helens, Patricia Lauber
The News about Dinosaurs, Patricia Lauber
Our Solar System, Seymour Simon
The Way Things Work: From Levers to Lasers, Cars to Computers—A Visual Guide to the World of Machines, David Macaulay
The Red-Eyed Tree Frog, Joy Cowly, pictures by Nick Bishop
Top of the World: Climbing Mt. Everest, Steve Jenkins

Discussion Topics:

- Informational books as sources of pleasure and inspiration/imagination for children
- What to look for in a nonfiction text for children: authority of the author on the subject matter presented, documentation, clear organizational structure (either by enumeration or chronology), illustrations that help to explain and inspire, design that helps to clarify rather than confuse (look at typography, layout, and style), clear, engaging writing style, a narrative voice that respects, rather than condescends to young readers;
- Patterns of similarity in the *Magic Schoolbus* books in terms of content, style, audience, appeal, illustration, and organization
- The design of the *Magic Schoolbus* books: too busy? Just busy enough?
- Lauber's *Volcano* as the first photo-essay for children. The importance and appeal of illustration/photography in informational books for children
- Lauber's use of illustration to draw attention to the scientific process in *Dinosaurs*
- The use of NASA photographs to convey information in *Our Solar System*
- David Macaulay's humorous tone in *The Way Things Work*. How he is both funny and respectful of his audience
- *Red-Eyed Tree Frog* as example of non-fiction for the youngest readers
- The use of paper collage (exquisite art work) in *Top of the World*

Class 9:3 Informational Books: Biography and History

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 12: "Biography," 420-426

Any biography by Jean Fritz
Eleanor Roosevelt, Lincoln: A Photobiography, or *Martha Graham*, Russell Freedman
So You Want to Be President, Judith St. George, illustrated by David Small
 "Pursuing the Pleasure Principle," Russell Freedman in *The Horn Book Magazine*:
 January/February 1986, pages 27-32.

Discussion Topics:

- Freedman's belief (in "Pursuing the Pleasure Principle") that nonfiction should enlighten, and provide a sense of discovery and genuine pleasure
- The qualities that make a biography good: a compelling narrative voice, whether the author is able to gain the reader's trust, the author's ability to reveal human nature while simultaneously celebrating the heroism of his subjects; proper documentation, the use of rich, specific detail to illuminate character, proper authorial objectivity
- The use of humor, specific detail, and fictionalized dialogue to bring character to life in the Fritz biographies
- Freedman's narrative voice—his ability to gain the reader's trust, his ability to tell a good story
- The appeal of trivia in *So You Want to be President*

Possible Assignment:

In an article about his writing, titled "Pursuing the Pleasure Principle," Russell Freedman claims

We take for granted that good fiction will be a pleasure to read. Nonfiction is supposed to be utilitarian. It's expected to do its duty—to inform, instruct, and enlighten. The idea that a hard working, nose-to-the-grindstone nonfiction book also should be a pleasure to read is provocative enough to inspire a panel discussion.

He concludes:

“But most of all, I want to write a book that will be read willingly, read from beginning to end with a sense of discovery, and yes, with a feeling of genuine pleasure.”

Discuss pleasurable aspects of three works from the list below: How do these authors combine information, instruction, and enlightenment, to use Freedman's terms, with the literary elements that make a book also a pleasurable reading experience?

One of the Russell Freedman books
One of the Jean Fritz books
So You Want to Be President

Class 10:1 Origin and Purpose of the Easy Reader

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 4: “Books for the Very Young,” 86-88

Little Bear, Else Minarik
The Cat in the Hat, Dr. Seuss
Frog and Toad are Friends, Arnold Lobel
My Brother, Ant, Betsy Byars

Discussion Topics:

- The characteristics of the easy reader: sight vocabulary, short sentences, repetition, pictures to help put words in context;
- The purpose of easy reader as the first books for beginning or emerging readers (as opposed to picture books, which are generally read to children);
- Beginning reading instructional textbooks: for example, the Dick and Jane books used to teach reading several decades ago
- Theodor Seuss Giesel's decision to publish for young people: his acquiring of a limited vocabulary list from Houghton Mifflin and the result, *Cat in the Hat*, with 237 words. How Seuss's book is engaging while still using a limited vocabulary;
- Ursula Nordstrom's publication of Minarik's *Little Bear*, which became the model for books in the “I Can Read” series and set the standard for that form
- How Lobel's *Frog and Toad* books have been awarded both the Newbery and Caldecott Awards, attesting to their excellence in illustration and text. How Lobel's illustrations don't necessarily extend the story, but help to explain it to the beginning reader
- The thematic appeal of the Lobel books: friendship, loneliness, love of stories, strong emotion

Class 10:2 Books for Beginning Readers

Readings: Read selections from the first two.
Winnie-the-Pooh, A.A. Milne
The House at Pooh Corner, A.A. Milne
The Velveteen Rabbit, Margery Williams Bianco

Discussion Topics:

- How Milne’s son, Christopher, was the inspiration for these Christopher Robin books—how the bear and toys were actually a part of his son’s life and how the setting of the book is Milne’s real home;
- The source of the names: Pooh came from a swan the family met on vacation, and Winnie from the American black bear cub who came to the London Zoo in 1914
- How the original toys (Piglet, Eeyore, Kanga, Roo, and Tigger) were brought to America during WWII and are now housed in the offices of E.P.Dutton;
- How Milne’s stories continued the fantasy tradition in children’s literature
- How the Christopher Robin books celebrate the simple joys of life
- Christopher Robin as the savior of Pooh—the child reader’s identification with Christopher Robin
- Ernest Shepard’s illustrations and how they make clear that Pooh is a toy
- Christopher Robin as the character that brings the child reader back to reality—e.g., with a trip to the bath
- The tone of Milne’s prose: childlike, innocent, not condescending
- *The Velveteen Rabbit* as a story that calls on children’s empathy

Week 10:3 First Chapter Books

Readings: Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House in the Big Woods*
 E.B. White, *Charlotte’s Web*
 Anne Carroll Moore, Review of *Charlotte’s Web*, *The Horn Book Magazine*: December 1952, 394

Discussion Topics:

- The *Little House* books’ evocation of the homesteading life. The series provides a rare sense of progress and continuity
- The narrative emphasis in *Little House* on mood and setting as opposed to an emphasis on character
- How the *Little House* books celebrate “the heroics of a common life” (See possible in-class writing or take home assignment below).
- A critical look at Anne Carroll Moore’s review of *Charlotte’s Web*. The question of whether Fern is the central character—or whether the story is really about Wilbur’s transformation and Charlotte’s heroism
- The startling opening line of the novel and how Fern’s saving and care-taking of Wilbur mirrors that of Charlotte’s saving and care-taking of Wilbur later in the novel
- The themes of friendship and devotion in the novel
- The way that White deals with the death of Charlotte. Look carefully at her death speech and its matter-of-factness, its tragedy. Contrast this to the subsequent focus on the cycle of life as opposed to death’s permanence
- The lyrical nature of White’s prose. His balance of exquisite description and dialogue.
- How White moves a realistic story into fantasy in Chapter Three and the shift in tone that accompanies this transition

Possible Assignment or In-Class Writing:

In her acceptance speech, Patricia MacLachlan, author of *Sarah Plain and Tall*, recalls the magic and reality she experienced upon learning that she had won the 1986 Newbery Medal:

...it is the sturdy shoes that happily endure; those ground-gripper truths that reassure us that with the champagne comes tuna noodle surprise for dinner. The old dog is fed or shame makes your life miserable; the familiar bank teller hands you a congratulatory flower the next morning and tells you that you’re overdrawn—evidence of life, both the magic and the muck or it. After all, the muse whispers to me, you were a full-blown adult, a wife and mother, long before you ever became a writer. Just what is the magic—the literature or the life from which it grows?

Sarah Plain and Tall grew out of these same experiences, what my mother used to call the heroics of the common life. When Julius Lester praises children's literature as the "the literature that gives full attention to the ordinary," he echoes my parent's belief that it is the daily grace and dignity with which we survive that children most need and wish to know about in books." (The *Horn Book Magazine*, July/August 1986, 410).

Think about the books that you read for today's class. How do they exhibit the heroics of a common life?

Class 11: 1 Realistic Fiction: The New Realism

Readings: Sutherland, Chapter 10: "Modern Fiction"
Katherine Paterson, "Where is Terabithia?" In *Innocence and Experience: Essays and Conversations in Children's Literature*, Harrison and Maguire, eds., 224-233

Louise Fitzhugh, *Harriet the Spy*
Katherine Paterson, *Bridge to Terabithia*

Discussion Topics:

- Realistic fiction for children in the last half of the 20th century: stories with social goals—to help readers better understand their own problems, to help them empathize with others, and to help them see the complexities of their relationships with others
- It should "...captivate readers and keep them racing along from page to page, while having sufficient literary distinction to develop children's taste" (*Children and Books*, page 333)
- *Harriet* as a touchstone in children's realistic fiction—first example of "new realism." Reviewers' original dislike for the novel because of its critique of parents and Harriet's personality traits (she's mean and doesn't change by novel's end)
- The reasons for having children confront death in children's fiction: the hope that it will bring understanding to loss and place a value on the preservation of memory
- The theme of the beauty of friendship in *Bridge to Terabithia*
- Jesse's recovery from the loss of Leslie in *Bridge to Terabithia*: Is it too quick? Or does Jesse's recovery bring a necessary hope to the reader?
- Where is Terabithia as discussed in Paterson's article?

Class 11: 2 Racism as a Theme in Realistic Fiction

Readings: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, Mildred Taylor
The Watsons Go to Birmingham, Christopher Paul Curtis

Discussion Topics:

- Children's fiction that addresses difficult social issues as means to arouse children's empathy and understanding of the world. The purpose of this genre of children's literature—at times to delight, at times to enlighten—the best children's fiction as works that do both;
- Taylor won the Newbery Award for *Roll of Thunder* in 1976. Novel still significant after 25 years in print: unflinching look at racism, good and evil are clear-cut, family is strong and unified;
- Does the portrayal of the Logan family reach beyond stereotype?
- The nature of coming of age for the Logan children. They must learn unfairness, entrapment, determination;
- The importance of Cassie's talk with her mother about Lillian Jean, and the way Papa, in spite of everything TJ has done to harm the family, sets fire to his own crops to stop (even if temporarily) the violence against him
- How the spiritual song prefaced in Chapter 11 of *Roll of Thunder* reveals the essential aspects of the novel (pride, strength, determination against evil)
- How Curtis balances humor and seriousness for effect in *The Watsons Go To Birmingham*

- How Curtis allows the reader to get to know and like the Watsons before he brings them to Alabama and has them witness the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church
- The nature of the coming of age for Kenny and for Byron. Kenny must learn to cope with the evil that exists in the world and Byron must become serious and responsible in order to survive as a black man

Class 11:3 Addressing Evil in Historical Fiction

Readings: *Number the Stars*, Lois Lowry
 Boy of Old Prague, Shulamith Ish-Kishor

Discussion Topics:

- Historical fiction as a branch of realistic fiction—fiction that is based in history and sometimes on actual historical events, but which uses fictional characters and story;
- *Number the Stars* as an introduction to the Holocaust and *Boy of Old Prague* as an introduction to the historical background to the Holocaust. What are the effects of such stories? Do they inspire hope in a world in which evil can triumph, give insight into evil, or elicit compassion—or simply sadness?
- Whether *Number the Stars* conveys the horror of the Holocaust—and whether or not horror should be conveyed in a children’s book. What prevents it from being horrifying: “relocation” but no direct mention or description of death camps, the warmth of family and friends, and Kristi’s childishness. What makes it scary: the description of the soldiers from a child’s point of view (the shiny boots), the terror of being taken from bed, the separation of the child from parents, and the chance that the plan won’t work.

Class 12:1 Dystopia in Children’s Literature; Children’s Science Fiction

Readings: “Newbery Medal Acceptance,” Lois Lowry, Reprinted in *The Horn Book Magazine*, July/August 1994.
 “The Child and the Shadow,” Ursula K. LeGuin, in *The Language of the Night*, 1979, pp. 49-61.
 The Giver, Lois Lowry

Read one of the following
A Wrinkle in Time, Madeleine L’Engle
The Diamond in the Window, Jane Langton

Discussion Topics:

- *The Giver* as an allegorical novel, one which comments on the necessary balance between freedom and security
- The importance of memory in the novel—how it makes life richer and allows us to grow and to love
- The presentation of “elsewhere” in the novel. What Lowry has to teach readers about Elsewhere (see p. 131, hardcover edition);
- The enigmatic ending of the novel, especially in light of what Lowry says about it in her Newbery acceptance speech.
- LeGuin’s Jungian ideas about the “shadow self” and the aspects of the shadow self brought to bear in *The Giver*
- Comparison of science fiction for children (e.g., *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Diamond in the Window*) with the modern fantasies read earlier in the course with respect to distinguishing features of science fiction

Possible Assignment:

Select one aspect of LeGuin's essay "The Child and the Shadow" that intrigues you. Use this aspect of the essay to organize your ideas for a short paper about one of the novels read for this course. (2-3 pages)

Class 12:2 The Return of Moral Instruction and Social Goals in Children's Literature: A Critical Perspective

Readings: Sandra Stotsky, *Losing Our Language*, chapters 4, 5, and 10
Anne Scott MacLeod, "Writing Backward: Modern Models in Historical Fiction." *The Horn Book Magazine*, January-February, 1998, 26-33.

Hiroshima No Pika, Toshi Maruki
Journey to Topaz, Yoshiko Uchida
Farewell to Manzanar, Jeane Wakatsuki Houston and James Houston (read one or two chapters)

Discussion Topics:

- The differences in literary quality and tone between *Journey to Topaz* and *Farewell to Manzanar*
- Is *Hiroshima No Pika* a picture book for children? What might be its author's purpose?
- Using *Crickets in Times Square* for discussion of the homeless, or *Mary Poppins* for discussion of child care and working mothers: pros and cons
- Effects of pairing stories about the settling of the West by European immigrants with stories/articles about loss of land by Indian tribes
- Should historical fiction written for children be historically accurate (e.g., *Phoebe the Spy*)?
- Should parents be told about and asked to give permission to today's moral instruction and social goals?
- Literary trade-offs in using children's literature for teaching about social issues

Class 12.3 Children's Literary Preferences; Censorship in Children's Literature

Readings: M. Jean Greenlaw and O. Paul Wielan, "Reading Interests Revisited." *Language Arts*, 56 (April 1979): 432-434.

Discussion Topics:

- Differences in reading preferences between boys and girls over the century: stable or changing?
- Should any children's books be censored? What are possible criteria? How can a teacher decide what's appropriate for children in his/her class?
- Children's books and topics that have been the object of controversy, community or school censorship, or self-censorship by teachers or librarians: see up-to-date lists from the American Library Association

Possible Assignment:

Examine the controversy over *Souder* or *The Education of Little Tree* in journals/reviews of children's literature. Outline the arguments for and against inclusion of these books in the curriculum. Should publishers require that books on particular racial or ethnic groups be written exclusively by members of those groups? Should quality make a difference?

Class 13.1 Responses to Children's Literature

Readings: Perry Nodelman, Part I, Chapter 2, *The Pleasures of Children's Literature*
Avi, "The Child in Children's Literature," *The Horn Book Magazine*, Nov./Dec 1992, 50-60

Discussion Topics:

- Should one's view of the child (as someone to be morally instructed or as someone whose imagination or understanding should be pleurably stimulated) affect how one judges a piece of children's literature? Should one's judgment depend on how explicit the purpose of moral instruction is?
- The "pleasures" of children's literature as described by Nodelman
- Avi's idea that we discover Eden by leaving it; Avi's contention that many writers for children are doing two contradictory things at once:
 - they are saying to the child "Save us!" "Don't become what we have become!"
 - they are saying that growing up is the sad fate of humankind. There is no escape.

Class 13:2 **Open Class: Student Presentations of their Research Projects**

Class 13:3 **Just For Fun**

Readings: *Holes*, Louis Sachar

Discussion Topics:

- The structure of Sachar's *Holes* as an example of a puzzle—a story in which one must fill in holes;
- Sachar's narrative voice—his precision, his spare language, his humor, the way in which he trusts his readers to figure out the puzzle of the story;
- Time to go over papers or for student presentations of research;
- Final comments.

Recommended References to Place on Reserve

- Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York: Random House, 1977.
- D'Aulaire, Ingri and Edgar Parin. *D'Aulaire's Book of Greek Myths*. Also *Norse Gods and Giants*. Also *Trolls*. New York: Doubleday.
- De la Mare, Walter. *Bible Stories*. New York: Knopf, 1961.
- Dickinson, Peter. *City of Gold: Stories from the New Testament*. New York: Pantheon, 1980.
- Gardner, Martin. *The Annotated Alice: The Definitive Edition*. New York: Norton, 1999.
- Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. Translated and with an Introduction by Jack Zipes. New York: Bantam, 1992.
- Edgeworth, Maria. *The Parent's Assistant*. New York: Macmillan, 1897.
- Frye, Northrop. *The Educated Imagination*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964.
- Hallett, Martin, and Barbara Karasek, eds. *Folk and Fairy Tales*, 2nd edition. Toronto: Broadview Press, 1998.
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- Horning, Kathleen. *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books*. New York: Harper Collins, 1997.
- Hunt, Peter, ed. *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
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- Johnson, Edna, Evelyn R. Sickels, Frances Clarke Sayers, and Carolyn Horovitz. *Anthology of Children's Literature*, 5th edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.
- Kingston, Carolyn. *The Tragic Mode in Children's Literature*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1974.
- Meigs, Cornelia, Anne Thaxter Eaton, Elizabeth Nesbitt, and Ruth Hill Viguers, *A Critical History of Children's Literature*, revised edition, London: Macmillan, 1969.
- Nodelman, Perry. *The Pleasures of Children's Literature*. New York: Longman Press, 1992.
- Opie, Iona and Peter. *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967/
- Sawyer, Ruth. *The Way of the Storyteller*. New York: Viking, 1962.
- Sherwood, Mary Martha. *The Fairchild Family*. Wells Gardner: Darton, 1931.
- Sloan, Glenna. *The Child as Critic: Teaching Literature in the Elementary School*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1975.
- Stotsky, Sandra. *Losing Our Language*. New York: Free Press, 1999. Paperback edition available from Encounter Books, 2002.

Sutherland, Zena. *Children and Books*, 9th edition. New York: Longman, 1997.

Townsend, John Rowe. *Written for Children: An Outline of English-Language Children's Literature*. London: Scarecrow Press, 1996.

Wulschlager, Jackie. *Inventing Wonderland: The Lives and Fantasies of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, J.M. Barrie, Kenneth Grahame and A.A. Milne*. New York: Free Press, 1995.

Appendix A: Recommended Authors and Illustrators*

Grades K-2

AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS

Aliki
Misumasa Anno
Edward Ardizzone
Ludwig. Bemelmans
Molly Bang
Paulette Bourgeois
Jan Brett
Norman Bridwell
Raymond Briggs
Marc Brown
Marcia Brown
Margaret Wise Brown
Ashley Bryan
Eve Bunting
John Burningham
Virginia Lee Burton
Randolph Caldecott
Eric Carle
Lucille Clifton
Joanna Cole
Barbara Cooney
Joy Cowley
Donald Crews
Edgar Parin and Ingri D'Aulaire
Tomie dePaola
Leo and Diane Dillon
Tom Feeling
Mem Fox
Don Freeman
Wanda Gag
Theodore Geisel
Gail Gibbons
Kate Greenaway
Eloise Greenfield
Helen Griffith
Donald Hall
Russell and Lillian Hoban
Tana Hoban
Shirley Hughes
Thacher Hurd
Gloria Huston
Trina Schart Hyman
Crockett. Johnson
Ezra Jack Keats
Steven Kellogg
Rudyard Kipling
Ruth Kraus
Robert Lawson
Monroe Leaf
Reeve Lindbergh

Arnold Lobel
Robert McCloskey
Gerald McDermott
Patricia McKissack
David McPhail
James Marshall
Bill Martin
Mercer Mayer
A.A. Milne
Else Holmelund Minarik
Robert Munsch
William Pene du Bois
Jerry Pinkney
Patricia Polacco
Beatrix Potter
Alice and Martin Provensen
H.A. and Margaret Rey
Faith Ringgold
Glen Rounds
Cynthia Rylant
Allen Say
Maurice Sendak
Marcia Sewall
Marjorie Sharmat
Peter Spier
William Steig
John Steptoe
Tomi Ungerer
Chris Van Allsburg
Jean van Leeuwen
Judith Viorst
Rosemary Wells
Vera Williams
Ed Young
Margot and Harve Zemach
Charlotte Zolotow

POETS

Ashley Bryan
John Ciardi
Lucille Clifton
Rachel Field
Eloise Greenfield
Donald Hall
David McCord
A.A. Milne
Jack Prelutsky
Laura Richards

Grades 3-4

AUTHORS

Joan Aiken

Lynne Reid Banks
L. Frank Baum
Raymond Bial
Judy Blume
Eve Bunting
Joseph Bruchac
Ashley Bryan
Frances Burnett
Betsy Byars
Ann Cameron
Andrew Cameron
Louis Carroll
Beverly Cleary
Andrew Clements
Shirley Climo
Elizabeth Coatsworth
Paula Danziger
Mary Mapes Dodge
Elizabeth Enright
Eleanor Estes
Walter Farley
John Fitzgerald
Louise Fitzhugh
Paul Fleischman
Sid Fleischman
Mem Fox
Jean Fritz
John Reynolds Gardiner
Jean George
James Griblin
Patricia Reilly Giff
Jamie Gilson
Kenneth Grahame
Paul Goble
Margaret Henry
Johanna Hurwitz
Rudyard Kipling
Peg Kehret
Dick King-Smith
Jane Langton
Kathryn Lasky
Jacob Lawrence
Patricia Lauber
Julius Lester
Gail Levine
David Macaulay
Patricia MacLachlan
Mary Mahy
Edith Nesbit
Sterling North
Mary Norton
Daniel Pinkwater
Patricia Polacco
Howard Pyle
Louis Sachar
Carl Sandburg

Alvin Schwartz
George Selden
Margery Sharp
Seymour Simon
Louis Slobodkin
Robert Louis Stevenson
Mildred Taylor
P. L. Travers
Ann Warren Turner
Mildred Pitts Walter
E.B. White
Laura Ingalls Wilder

POETS

Steven Vincent and Rosemarie Carr Benet
Lewis Carroll
John Ciardi
Rachel Field
Robert Frost
Langston Hughes
Edward Lear
Myra Cohn Livingston
David McCord
A.A. Milne
Jack Prelutsky
Laura Richards
Shel Silverstein

*These lists of authors and their suggested grade levels were reviewed by the editors of *The Horn Book Magazine* before inclusion in Appendix A and Appendix B of the 1997 or 2001 Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework. These names constitute a core list of those authors and illustrators whose works comprise the literary and intellectual capital drawn on by those who write in English, as well as of contemporary authors and illustrators whose reputations were established after World War II and whose works are available in the United States.

Appendix B: Suggestions for Research Projects

1. Design a literature program for a specific age group or grade level. Specify your literary objectives, methods, choice of literature, and learning activities.
2. Examine the qualities of the fantasy world in modern children's literature from Sendak to Tolkien and science fiction.
3. Using a Freudian or Jungian scheme, examine recurring themes in mythology and/or folk-fairy tales.
4. Examine children's own oral literature, traditional or contemporary, (games, riddles, jokes, etc.) from a cognitive and metalinguistic perspective.
5. Examine several of the literary selections in an instructional reader for any grade from 2 to 6 for literary quality and evaluate the pedagogical approach accompanying them.
6. Examine topics/theme in current award-winning children's books and determine to what extent they aim to please/delight or to provide moral instruction.
7. Examine the research/surveys on differences between girls and boys in reading preferences over the past 100 years.
8. Review a group of counting or concept books using the criteria discussed in class.
9. Examine the research on bibliotherapy and the quality of the books that are used in these studies.
10. Explore the topic/theme of loss or death in children's literature.
11. Explore humor in children's literature: relate different types to developmental stages.
12. Compare several sets of series about a child or family (19th century, early 20th century, and mid-twentieth century, e.g., Elsie Dinsmore, Nancy Drew, Hardy boys, Boxcar children, Great Brain).
13. Examine the art of story telling.
14. Analyze several adaptations of children's literature, compare with the original, and discuss the effectiveness of the adapted texts in light of literary standards you define.
15. Examine children's books/stories/plays that have created controversy or been censored, and analyze the arguments that have been made for or against them
16. Discuss the literary quality of "young adult" literature, e.g., Go Ask Alice (anonymous, 1972, Avon Books).
17. Does "trash" have any value? Reading the comics, Autocar, Mad Magazine, etc.
18. Review a group of alphabet books. Discuss the themes and word choices—especially for Q, X, and Z.
19. Compare and contrast original versions of folk-fairy tales and those written for children.
20. Compare and contrast similar topics/themes by different authors: e.g., the isolated child (Kipling's Mowgli stories, The Secret Garden, Island of the Blue Dolphins); travelers in time (A Wrinkle in Time, The Return of the Twelves, The Diamond in the Window)

21. Develop and administer a questionnaire to assess children's reading preferences.
22. Examine in depth the literary works of one author. Discuss which elements in the works children might respond to and, if applicable, the functions of the illustrations.
23. Examine any genre of children's literature in depth.

The Tall Tale	Folk Tales - Fairy Tales
Science Fiction	Mythology
Historical Fiction	Detective Stories
Biography	Realistic Fiction
Fables	Poetry
24. Examine Tolkien's source material for the Lord of the Rings, or Alexander's use of the Mabinogian for his Prydain Chronicles.
25. Develop your own criteria for the critical evaluation of children's books and apply them to several well-known children's books.
26. Explore adult classics claimed by children and children's classics claimed by adults.

Possible Exam Questions

Exam Question #1:

In 1967, author Irene Hunt received the Newbery Medal for *Up a Road Slowly*, a story reflecting the “new realism.” In her acceptance speech, she referred favorably to contemporary children’s literature as “a substitute for our ineffective sermons.” In a three to four paragraph persuasive essay, support or challenge Hunt’s implication that the intention to provide moral instruction to children should guide the creation of literature for them. Use examples of readings from class to support your ideas.

Exam Question #2:

In *Uses of Enchantment*, Bruno Bettelheim writes: “Today children no longer grow up within the security of an extended family, or of a well-integrated community. Therefore, even more than at the times fairy tales were invented, it is important to provide the modern child with images of heroes who have to go out into the world all by themselves and who, although originally ignorant of the ultimate things, find secure places in the world by following their right way with deep inner confidence.”

Address Bettelheim’s ideas by discussing examples from the fairy tales read in the course. In what ways might these tales build a child’s confidence in achieving “meaningful and rewarding relations with the world around him.”

Exam Question #3:

Maurice Sendak in *Children and Books* writes: “Vivify, quicken, and vitalize—of these three synonyms, quicken, I think, best suggest the genuine spirit of animation, the breathing to life, the swing into action, that I consider the essential quality in pictures for children’s books. To quicken means, for the illustrator, the task of first comprehending the nature of his text and then of giving life to that comprehension in his own medium, the picture.”

In order for students to apply what they have learned in the sessions on picture books, the instructor should provide paperback copies of the following picture books (or others not assigned for class reading). Students should be asked to select one and discuss how the illustrator “comprehends the nature of his text” and then “gives life to that comprehension.” (The instructor should ask students to return all copies so that they may be used again, although not on the next two or three final exams. The instructor should try to accumulate a supply of paperback copies of about six to eight unassigned picture books for this purpose.)

Harold and the Purple Crayon, Crockett Johnson

Ira Sleeps Over, Bernard Waber

Anansi the Spider, Gerald McDermott

Any Beatrix Potter book not discussed in class

Exam Question #4:

According to Iona and Peter Opie, the following “favourite accumulates on the principle of ‘The House that Jack built’” They note that it was repopularized in Britain in 1953 by American folk-singer Burl Ives, but had been well-known for 40 years before his visit. Suggest why this poem/song was so popular among young children by discussing the literary devices at work in it, including its humorous aspects.

There was an old woman who swallowed a fly;
I wonder why
She swallowed a fly,
Poor old woman, she’s sure to die.

There was an old woman who swallowed a spider,
That went oops-oops right down inside her;

She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,
I wonder why
She swallowed a fly.
Poor old woman, she's sure to die.

There was an old woman who swallowed a bird;
How absurd
To swallow a bird,
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider....

There was an old woman who swallowed a cat;
Fancy that!
She swallowed a cat...

There was an old woman who swallowed a dog;
She went the whole hog
And swallowed a dog...

There was an old woman who swallowed a cow;
I wonder how
She swallowed a cow...

There was an old woman who swallowed a horse;
She died, of course!

Exam Question #5:

In his article "On Telling the Truth" in *Booklist*, Sept. 15, 1998, Russell Freedman asserts that "we judge a piece of writing as we might judge a person's character, probing for signs of intelligence and wit, honesty and serious intent. If the writing is persuasive, if it shines with conviction, that has less to do with the assembled facts, perhaps, than with the quality of the prose, the author's use of language, the plausible and vivid tone that allows the reader to trust the facts and gives the assurance of being in the hands of a forthright and truthful storyteller."

Judge one of the following books according to Freedman's criteria. Probe it for signs of intelligence, wit, honesty and serious intent. Offer examples in your judgment call.

Charlotte's Web, E.B. White
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Mildred Taylor
The Giver, Lois Lowry

Exam Question #6:

The Harry Potter series may become the best-selling series for children of all times. From your reading of the Potter book assigned in the course, or from seeing the movie based on it, discuss why the Harry Potter series is so appealing to children with reference to the following topics:

- the research on children's reading preferences,
- the significance of the development of fantasy literature for children in the 19th century,
- the moralistic quality of the "new realism," and
- the values and character of Harry Potter and his two friends Hermione and Ron.