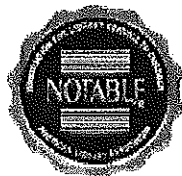


This is the current list of ALSC Notable Books for Children.

2008 Notable Children's Books



Each year a committee of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) identifies the best of the best in children's books. According to the Notables Criteria, "notable" is defined as: Worthy of note or notice, important, distinguished, outstanding. As applied to children's books, notable should be thought to include books of especially commendable quality, books that exhibit venturesome creativity, and books of fiction, information, poetry and pictures for all age levels (birth through age 14) that reflect and encourage children's interests in exemplary ways.

According to ALSC policy, the current year's Newbery, Caldecott, Belpré, Sibert, Geisel, and Batchelder Award and Honor books automatically are added to the Notable Children's Books list.

For your convenience, Notable Children's Books that have also received other ALA awards, such as the [Coretta Scott King Award](#), [Michael L. Printz Award](#), [Schneider Family Book Award](#), and/or were named a [Best Book for Young Adults](#) are noted on this list.

[Link to Past Notable Children's Book Lists](#)

Younger Readers

Agcc, Jon. *Nothing*. illus. Hyperion. (9780786836949)

When Suzie, the rich customer, asks the shopkeeper "what's for sale," his response is "nothing." "Good," says Suzie, "I'll pay you \$300 for it." And so the mad rush to purchase nothing begins.

Bang-Campbell, Monika. *Little Rat Makes Music*. Illus. by Molly Bang. Harcourt. (9780152053055).

Little Rat loves playing the violin, but hates to practice. Her hard work with Kitty culminates in their recital duet.

Broach, Elise. *When Dinosaurs Came with Everything*. Illus. by David Small. Simon & Schuster/Atheneum. (9780689869228).

Errands are no longer boring when a little boy finds that a free gift comes with every purchase--a dinosaur! The dilemma comes when he brings his dinosaurs home.

Brown, Monica. *My Name Is Gabito: The Life of Gabriel García Márquez/Me llamo Gabito: La vida de Gabriel García Márquez*. Illus. by Raúl Colón. Luna Rising. (9780873589086)

Evocative, tropical illustrations pull the eye into Gabriel García Márquez's imaginative world, introducing children to the early life of the celebrated Colombian author. *A 2008 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book*.

Coffelt, Nancy. *Fred Stays with Me!* Illus. by Tricia Tusa. Little, Brown. (9780316882699)

Fred the dog goes with his young mistress to both mom's and dad's houses, wreaking havoc at both. "Fred can't stay

here,” say both parents, but his young owner says emphatically, “Fred stays with me!”

Cole, Brock. *Good Enough to Eat*. illus. Farrar. (9780374327378)

When the villagers sacrifice a scruffy street-girl to a terrible ogre, she must use all her considerable wits not only to survive but also to come out a winner.

Deedy, Carmen Agra. *Martina the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale*. Illus. by Michael Austin. Peachtree. (9781561453993)

With the help of her Abuela’s shocking advice, Martina interviews a cast of unlikely suitors to find her true love in a lively and humorous retelling of a classic folktale. *A 2008 Belpré Author Honor Book*.

Dillon, Leo and Diane Dillon. *Mother Goose Numbers on the Loose*. illus. Harcourt. (9780152056766).

A series of animal and human characters, many with masks, illustrate 24 traditional rhymes that leap off the pages in this mathematical pageant for toddlers.

Floca, Brian. *Lightship*. illus. Simon & Schuster/Richard Jackson. (9781416924364)

Simple, stately prose, perfectly complemented by luminous watercolors, introduces the lightship Ambrose, its crew and cat. *A 2008 Sibert Honor Book*.

The Global Fund for Children. *Global Babies*. illus. Charlesbridge. (9781580891745)

“Babies everywhere are beautiful, special, and loved” is the simple message of this board book illustrated with seventeen photos of babies from around the world.

Gonzalez, Maya Christina. *My Colors, My World/Mis colores, mi mundo*. illus. Children’s Book Press. (9780892392216)

Young Maya’s journey from sand-covered surroundings to a world overflowing with rich violet and pink hues offers a visual feast of vibrant colors and magical realism. *A 2008 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book*.

Graham, Bob. *Dimity Dumpty: The Story of Humpty’s Little Sister*. illus. Candlewick. (9780763630782)

Rambunctious Humpty along with his parents Dominic and Dorothy amaze audiences as members of the high flying acrobatic Tumbling Dumpties, but it is his quiet and shy sister who rescues him after that famous fall.

Gravett, Emily. *Orange Pear Apple Bear*. illus. Simon & Schuster. (9781416939993)

Combining the four words in the title, this early concept book about shape, color and sequence introduces language play as well as punctuation in soft hued watercolor illustrations.

Harrington Janice N. *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County*. Illus. by Shelley Jackson. Farrar/Mclanie Kroupa. (9780374312510)

This fast-moving, quick-talking ‘Chicken-Chasing Queen,’ a high-spirited little girl on her grandma’s farm, comes to understand and respect Miss Hen when she discovers this prize chicken’s well-guarded secret!

Henkes, Kevin. *A Good Day*. illus. Greenwillow. (9780061140181)

At first it seems to be a bad day for bird, dog, fox, and squirrel, but then the tide turns, and it’s a good day for everyone,

including a little girl.

Here's a Little Poem: A Very First Book of Poetry. Ed. by Jane Yolen and Andrew Fusek Peters. Illus. by Polly Dunbar. Candlewick. (9780763631413)

Over 60 short poems in English, collected from around the globe, appear in four copiously illustrated sections that represent central interests of young children: me, my house, outside, and bedtime.

Isadora, Rachel. *Yo, Jo!* Illus. Harcourt. (9780152057831)

Bright collage illustrations show a young, lively boy greeting his friends in urban colloquial language, while reserving a more traditional English for his grandfather.

Lunde, Darrin. *Hello, Bumblebee Bat.* Illus. by Patricia J. Wynne. Charlesbridge. (9781570913747)

Straightforward text pops out of a sparse background allowing this little mammal to describe its habitat and characteristics in an intriguing and accessible way. *A 2008 Geisel Honor Book.*

McKissack, Patricia C. *The All-I'll-Ever-Want Christmas Doll.* Illus. by Jerry Pinkney. Schwartz & Wade. (9780375837593).

All Nella wants for Christmas is a Baby Betty doll, a nearly impossible dream for a depression-era child, but when her dream comes true in spite of her sisters' predictions, she finds it is more fun to share.

Montes, Marisa. *Los Gatos Black on Halloween.* Illus. by Yuyi Morales. Holt. (9780805074291)

Rhyming text describes spooky monsters of many types gathering for a ball. *The 2008 Belpré Illustrator Award Book and a 2008 Belpré Author Honor Book.*

Morales, Yuyi. *Little Night.* illus. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter. (9781596430884)

Little Night is summoned by Mother Sky to perform all the familiar routines that children everywhere experience, and like these children, Little Night responds with mischievous hiding games throughout the earth and sky. (A Spanish version of this book is also available.)

Perkins, Lynne Rae. *Pictures from Our Vacation.* illus. Greenwillow. (9780060850975)

With her sketchbook and camera in hand, a young girl assembles a visual mosaic of what starts as an all-too-familiar disappointing family vacation to Dad's childhood home but ends as a fun-filled romp with relatives.

Pinkney, Jerry. *Little Red Riding Hood.* illus. Little, Brown. (9780316013550)

Lush pencil and watercolor illustrations featuring a Red Riding Hood of color, a wily wolf, and a resourceful woodcutter, bring a unique perspective to this traditional tale.

Sayre, April Pulley. *Vulture View.* Illus. by Steve Jenkins. Holt. (9780805075571)

Rhyming lyrical text and dramatic textured collage introduce a day in the life of turkey vultures. *A 2008 Geisel Honor Book.*

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *Dog and Bear: Two Friends, Three Stories.* illus. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter. (9781596430532)

In three easy-to-read stories, a playful dachshund and a multi-colored stuffed bear discover the ironies and humor of friendship familiar to the very young.

Seeger, Laura Vacarro. *First the Egg*. illus. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter. (9781596432727)

Simple words and paintings create a jewel-like package that introduces the age-old chicken-and-egg riddle for the youngest reader. *A 2008 Caldecott Honor Book & 2008 Geisel Honor Book*.

Thompson, Lauren. *Ballerina Dreams: A True Story*. Illus. by James Estrin. Feiwel & Friends. (9780312370299)

This pink and purple princess photo-essay describes five young girls with muscle disorders, whose year of ballet class culminates in a recital with tutus, make-up, ballet shoes, and tiaras.

Wheeler, Lisa. *Jazz Baby*. Illus. by R. Gregory Christie. Harcourt. (9780152025229)

Bebop rhyme and repeated stanzas are just the right rhythm for young readers in this nostalgic celebration of dancing, singing, and playing music. *A 2008 Geisel Honor Book*.

Willems, Mo. *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*. illus. Hyperion. (9781423102991)

Masterful photo collages take Trixie and her daddy through their Brooklyn neighborhood to the Pre-K class where Trixie discovers that her beloved Knuffle Bunny is not “so one-of-a-kind anymore.” *A 2008 Caldecott Honor Book*.

Willems, Mo. *There Is a Bird on Your Head!* illus. Hyperion. (9781423106869)

Elephant Gerald learns that there is something worse than having a bird on your head—having two birds on your head. Trying to help her friend, the always-playful Piggie ends up with a problem of her own. *The 2008 Geisel Award Book*.

Middle Readers

Bishop, Nic. *Nic Bishop Spiders*. illus. Scholastic Nonfiction, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780439877565)

More than a dozen types of spiders are presented through vibrant, dramatic up-close photos and compelling, knowledgeable text. *A 2008 Sibert Honor Book*.

Dowson, Nick. *Tracks of a Panda*. Illus. by Yu Rong. Candlewick. (9780763631468)

This introduction to the species that follows a panda baby and its mother as the two find food, change location, and avoid danger is beautifully illustrated in the Chinese style with brush and ink paintings.

Giblin, James Cross. *The Many Rides of Paul Revere*. Archival Photographs. Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780439572903).

Going far beyond Longfellow’s poem, this presents Paul Revere as artist, statesman, revolutionary, entrepreneur, family man and more, with archival illustrations. An interesting addendum compares the poem to the true events.

Goscinny, René. *Nicholas and the Gang*. Illus. by Jean-Jacques Sempé. Tr. from the French by Anthea Bell. Phaidon. (9780714847887)

Energetic text and jaunty pen-and-ink artwork combine to tell of the escapades of a schoolboy and his classmates in an all-boys school. *A 2008 Batchelder Honor Book*.

Hest, Amy. *Remembering Mrs. Rossi*. Illus. by Heather Maione. Candlewick. (9780763621636)

Third grade is a tough time to lose a mother. As the seasons come and go, interactions with her sometimes clueless but loving father and her mother's sixth grade students help Annie deal with her grief.

Judge, Lita. *One Thousand Tracings: Healing the Wounds of World War II*. illus. Hyperion. (9781423100089)

After World War II, the narrator's family sent a package to a needy German friend, beginning the project described in these 14 poems, that sent shoes and clothes, coats and canned food to European survivors.

Kobayashi, Issa. *Today and Today*. Illus. by G. Brian Karas. Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780439590785)

Karas creates a serene pictorial arc for a selection of Issa's haiku poems that progresses through a single year of loss and rebirth.

Lehman, Barbara. *Rainstorm*. illus. Houghton. (9780618756391)

It's a rainy day when a bored young boy finds a key that opens a trunk with a ladder in it. He climbs down and his amazing adventure begins.

Levine, Ellen. *Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad*. Illus. by Kadir Nelson. Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780439777339)

Henry "Box" Brown's ingenious design to ship himself in a box from slavery to freedom is portrayed in luminous illustrations. *A 2008 Caldecott Honor Book*.

Lewin, Ted. *At Gleason's Gym*. illus. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter. (9781596432314)

Lewin captures the sights and sounds of the busy, noisy Brooklyn gym, four rings of boxing and wrestling action and famous world wide, where nine-year-old Sugar Boy Younan trains for the National Silver Gloves championship.

Mora, Pat. *Yum! ¡Mmmm! ¡Que Rico! Americas' Sproutings*. Illus. by Rafael López. Lee & Low. (9781584302711)

Fourteen haiku celebrate foods that are native to North, Central, and South America. Vibrant illustrations energize the poems while informational sidebars invite further inquiry.

Park, Linda Sue. *Tap Dancing on the Roof*. Illus. by Istvan Banyai. Clarion. (9780618234837)

A collection of 28 whimsical Sijo poems, accompanied by equally playful and often surprising illustrations, introduces readers and would-be poets to this traditional Korean form.

Ray, Deborah Kogan. *Down the Colorado: John Wesley Powell, the One-Armed Explorer*. illus. Farrar. (9780374318383).

Follow John Wesley Powell and his team through the Grand Canyon, as they collectively map the route and compile scientific data and Powell follows his personal dream of becoming a naturalist.

Richter, Jutta. *The Cat: Or, How I Lost Eternity*. Illus. by Rotraut Susanne Berner. Tr. from the German by Anna Brailovsky. Milkweed Editions. (9781571316769)

In this timeless fable, willful young Christine attempts to understand the nature of true learning and friendship. *A 2008 Batchelder Honor Book*.

Schlitz, Laura Amy. *The Bearskinners: A Tale of the Brothers Grimm*. Illus. by Max Grafe. Candlewick. (9780763627300)

A soldier makes a terrible bargain with the devil and must survive seven years as an outcast in order to gain wealth, hope, and love.

Selznick, Brian. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. illus. Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780439813785)

Suspenseful text and wordless double-page spreads tell the story of young Hugo, an orphan secretly living in the walls of a train station where he labors to complete a mysterious invention left by his father. *The 2008 Caldecott Medal Book and a YALSA Best Book for Young Adults*.

Stewart, Trenton Lee. *The Mysterious Benedict Society*. Little, Brown/Megan Tingley. (9780316057776)

Four gifted orphans selected by their benefactor Mr. Benedict, set out on a dangerous mission to save the world from a scientist bent on world domination through mind control.

Varon, Sara. *Robot Dreams*. illus. Roaring Brook/First Second. (9781596431089)

In a wordless graphic novel, a rusty robot, abandoned on a beach, dreams of rescue while its former companion, a dog, tries various means to save it with an outcome that surprises both.

Older Readers

Alexander, Lloyd. *The Golden Dream of Carlo Chuchio*. Holt. (9780805083330)

Set in an imaginary land reminiscent of the Arabian nights, Carlo Chuchio and his companions, seeking an elusive treasure, discover that “the journey is the treasure.”

Alexander, Elizabeth and Marilyn Nelson. *Miss Crandall's School for Young Ladies and Little Misses of Color*. Illus. by Floyd Cooper. Boyds Mills/Wordsong. (9781590784563)

Through twenty-four sonnets, two Connecticut poets imagine the voices of selected “Little Misses of Color” to tell the courageous story of Prudence Crandall, who opened her nineteenth century academy to young African American women.

Bausum, Ann. *Muckrakers: How Ida Tarbell, Upton Sinclair, and Lincoln Steffens Helped Expose Scandal, Inspire Reform, and Invent Investigative Journalism*. illus. National Geographic. (9781426301377)

Covering the period from 1858–2007 in her timeline, Bausum focuses on the early 20th century investigative reporters who exposed city government corruption, Standard Oil irregularities, and meatpacking scandals as McClure magazine reporters.

Barakat, Ibtisam. *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood*. Farrar/Melanie Kroupa. (9780374357337)

On the fortieth anniversary of the Arab-Israeli Six Day War (1967-1971), Ibtisam Barakat writes a compelling memoir of her young childhood during the war that shows the value and beauty of ordinary life.

Bernier-Grand, Carmen T. *Frida: ¡Viva la vida! Long Live Life!* illus. Marshall Cavendish. (9780761453369)

Lyrical free-verse poems comprise the heart of this well-rounded biographical work of artist Frida Kahlo's life. *A 2008 Belpré Author Honor Book*.

Burns, Loree Griffin. *Tracking Trash: Flotsam, Jetsam, and the Science of Ocean Motion*. illus. Houghton. (9780618581313)

An introduction to the science of ocean motion describing the work of Dr. Curt Ebbesmeyer who tracks the distribution of trash, like sneakers and bathtub toys spilled at sea, through the Pacific Ocean.

Compestine, Ying Chang. *Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party*. Holt. (9780805082074)

In this coming-of-age story, Ling narrates the terrible changes suffered by her family and neighborhood during the Cultural Revolution in China. *A YALSA Best Book for Young Adults*.

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Elijah of Buxton*. Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780439023443).

Elijah, the first free-born child in Buxton, a Canadian community of escaped slaves in 1860, transforms from a "fra-gile" 11-year-old boy into a courageous hero. *A 2008 Newbery Honor Book and the 2008 Coretta Scott King Author Award Book*.

Engle, Margarita. *The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano*. Illus. by Sean Qualls. Holt. (9780805077063)

This collection of haunting poems, using multiple voices, illuminates the daily terror and hypocrisy of the slave system. After witnessing young Manzano's harsh punishments for reading and writing, readers will marvel at his enduring strength and persistence to attain freedom. *The 2008 Belpré Author Award Book*.

Freedman, Russell. *Who Was First? Discovering the Americas*. illus. Clarion. (9780618663910).

A treasure hunt backwards in time reveals the multiplicity of cultures and peoples who lived in and contributed to America long before that fateful trip of Columbus in 1492.

Gore, Al. *An Inconvenient Truth: The Crisis of Global Warming*. illus. Viking/Rodale. (9780670062720)

Gore's movie tie-in book, rewritten for children, uses the original argument and most of the original illustrations to introduce the issue, show symptoms, describe effects, and suggest things to do about the most important issue of our times.

Grandits, John. *Blue Lipstick: Concrete Poems*. Clarion. (9780618568604)

Thirty-three poems, often insightful and always original, reveal the topsy turvy feelings of 15-year-old Jessie.

Holm, Jennifer. *Middle School Is Worse Than Meatloaf: A Year Told through Stuff*. Illus. by Elicia Castaldi. Simon & Schuster/Ginee Seo. (9780689852817).

Gimmy Davis chronicles the ups and downs of her seventh-grade year in a colorful collage of newspaper clippings, report cards, school assignments, notes to self, and more.

Krull, Kathleen. *Marie Curie: Giants of Science*. Illus. by Boris Kulikov. Viking. (9780670058945).

Marie Curie broke scientific ground discovering radium, from which both she and her husband died. Krull's conversational narrative brings a giant among scientists and her work to life.

Miyabe, Miyuki. *Brave Story*. Tr. from the Japanese by Alexander O. Smith. VIZ Media. (9781421511962)

Wataru's chaotic life leads him to enter the videogame-infused world of Vision to alter his fate. The wisdom and power he gains on his journey enable him to embrace the transformed reality to which he returns. *The 2008 Batchelder Award Book.*

Neri, G. *Chess Rumble*. Illus. by Jesse Joshua Watson. Lee & Low. (978-1-58430-279-7)

Marcus, a troubled eleven-year-old battling his own anger, gains coping skills after learning to play chess with a neighborhood master. This novel in verse, written in street vernacular, is illustrated in striking black and grey acrylics.

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Arthur A. Levine Books, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780545010221)

In this seventh and final volume about Harry Potter, the battle of the young hero and his companions against dark evil comes to an edge-of-seat, swashbuckling conclusion. *A YALSA Best Book for Young Adults*

Schlitz, Laura Amy. *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village*. Illus. by Robert Byrd. Candlewick. (9780763615789)

Thirteenth-century England springs to life in 21 dramatic individual narratives that introduce young inhabitants of village and manor. *The 2008 Newbery Medal Book.*

Schmidt, Gary. *The Wednesday Wars*. Clarion. (9780618724833)

Seventh-grader Holling Hoodhood is convinced his teacher hates him. Through their Wednesday afternoon Shakespeare sessions, she helps him cope with events both wildly funny and deadly serious. *A 2008 Newbery Honor Book and a YALSA Best Book for Young Adults.*

Sís, Peter. *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*. illus. Farrar. (9780374347017)

In his deeply felt memoir set in mid-20th century Prague, Sís contrasts the constrictive walls of the communist state with his personal quest for artistic freedom. *The 2008 Sibert Medal Book, a 2008 Caldecott Honor Book, and a YALSA Best Book for Young Adults.*

Tan, Shaun. *The Arrival*. illus. Arthur A. Levine Books, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780439895293)

A man leaves his family, travels to a new world and slowly assimilates into its strange new culture. In this riveting graphic novel, sepia-toned illustrations wordlessly reveal the loneliness and isolation of the immigrant experience. *A YALSA Best Book for Young Adults.*

Thompson, Kate. *The New Policeman*. Greenwillow. (9780061174278)

Hoping to buy a bit of time for his mother's birthday, J.J. Liddy discovers that time is leaking from his world into the land of fairies. Through music and his own wits, he navigates both worlds to try to correct the imbalance. *A YALSA Best Book for Young Adults.*

Wells, Rosemary. *Red Moon at Sharpsburg*. Viking. (9780670036387)

The bloodiness of the Civil War (red moon) and the complex issues of divided loyalties are seen through the eyes of India Moody, coming-of-age in Virginia and determined, despite all, to become a scientist.

Williams, Marcia. *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*. illus. Candlewick. (9780763631970)

The nine bawdy tales of Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims are tamed and retold in modern English and graphic novel

format with bits of the original language included in the borders, decorated in the manner of medieval manuscripts.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Feathers*. Putnam. (9780399239892)

A new boy's arrival in a sixth-grade classroom helps Frannie recognize the barriers that separate people, and the importance of hope as a bridge. *A 2008 Newbery Honor Book*.

Wynne-Jones, Tim. *Rex Zero and the End of the World*. Farrar/Melanie Kroupa. (9780374334673)

When ten-year-old Rex's family moves to Ottawa in 1962, he finds new friends outside his immediate neighborhood, comes to grips with living during the Cold War, and discovers the mystery of a missing panther.

All Ages

Bryan, Ashley. *Let It Shine: Three Favorite Spirituals*. illus. Simon & Schuster/Atheneum. (9780689847325)

Vibrant cut-paper collages illustrate inspiring spirituals: "This Little Light of Mine," "Oh When the Saints Go Marching In," and "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." An artist's note explains their historical context and significance. *The 2008 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Book*.

Prelutsky, Jack. *Good Sports: Rhymes about Running, Jumping, Throwing, and More*.

Illus. by Chris Raschka. Knopf. (9780375837005)

Bright, gestural watercolors and seventeen poems capture the experiences and feelings of young athletes as they participate with varying successes in a variety of sports including karate, baseball, swimming, and running.

Prévert, Jacques. *How to Paint the Portrait of a Bird*. Illus. and tr. by Mordicai Gerstein. Roaring Brook. (9781596432154).

How does one paint a bird? A young boy uses imagination and color to create a surreal interpretation of this complex French poem.

2008 Notable Children's Books Committee:

Caroline Ward, chair, The Ferguson Library, Stamford, Conn.

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