

# Series Books of Special Interest

Adler, David. *A Picture Book Biography* series. New York: Holiday House.

The list of a wide variety of famous people goes on and on! Books are written as narratives, usually chronologically, and make for good read-alouds.

## **PRIMARY**

*Artists in Their Time* series. New York: Franklin Watts.

Hopper, O’Keeffe, Van Gogh, and Chagall are a few of the artists featured in these extensive yet reader-friendly texts. Books “explore some of the most influential artists of our time, discussing their work in relation to their life and what was happening in the world around them.”

## **MIDDLE**

*Biomes Atlases* series. Chicago: Heinemann–Raintree.

These books show the web of relationships between climate, plants, animals, and people that make every biome unique. Short chapters include narrative text, maps, and “fact” sidebars about such titles as *Arctic Tundra and Polar Deserts*, *Oceans and Beaches*, and *Tropical Forests*.

## **MIDDLE**

*Childhood of Famous Americans* series. New York: Aladdin.

With an attempt at “maintaining consistency with events, ethics, and character,” fictionalized details and conversations are added to make these stories “come alive” for readers. List of subjects is extensive and those with older copyrights continue to be reprinted.

## **INTERMEDIATE**

Christopher, Matt. *On the Field with . . .* series. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

From the fiction-about-sports writer, series features a number of athletes representing many different sports—Tiger Woods, Tony Hawk, Muhammad Ali, Alex Rodriguez are included. Written as chapter books with a black-and-white photo section in each.

**INTERMEDIATE**

Davies, Nicola, and others. *Read, Listen, and Wonder*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Beautifully written and illustrated, this series (formerly *Read and Wonder*) is published with a “read-along CD with music and facts.” Books are fabulous read-alouds as information is presented both in narrative text and factual notes throughout. Sure to be a favorite series for teachers and students. See such titles as *Big Blue Whale*, *Surprising Sharks* (they are!), and *One Tiny Turtle*.

**PRIMARY**

*First Guide to Government* series. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

What is a City Council? The Supreme Court? What are elections? This series tackles tough concepts with a limited text and colorful photographs.

**PRIMARY**

Fradin, Judy and Dennis. *Witness to Disaster* series. Washington, DC: National Geographic.

Beautiful and vivid photographs portray the aftermath of disasters in books focusing on volcanoes, earthquakes, and hurricanes. Each includes eyewitness accounts as well as an in-depth look at the science and prediction of natural disasters.

**MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL**

*Fueling the Future* series. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

Part of the larger “Heinemann Info Search” series, this group has titles such as *Fossil Fuels and Biofuels*, *Nuclear Energy*, *Solar Energy*, *Wind Energy*, and *Water and Geothermal Energy*. Each chapter presents a different question. Text explains science concepts, why alternative energy sources are needed, and gives examples of energy use for around the world.

**MIDDLE**

*Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artists* series. New York: Children's Press.

Check these out. Photographs, artwork, and limited text make these accessible for the primary-age group. Good read-alouds for primary grades.

**PRIMARY**

*Going to School* series. Mankato, MN: Capstone Press.

Includes going to school during the Civil War, the Great Depression, and the Civil Rights Movement.

**INTERMEDIATE**

*Great Outdoors* series. Mankato, MN: Capstone Press.

New series with books on ice fishing, fly fishing, pheasant hunting, hiking, and camping to name a few. Each book includes chapters on equipment, skills and techniques, conservation, and safety. Looks as if there is a recipe in each, too! Expert consultants are credited.

**INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE**

Hakim, Joy. *The Story of Science* series. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books (published in Association with the National Science Teachers Association).

The author states that these books are written “for young thinkers.” She features the stories behind the how and the why of scientific knowledge. Pieces and/or sections could be pulled as short text. Excerpts from scientists are included as are sidebars with facts, charts, maps, and diagrams to enhance the narrative style of text. Latest edition is entitled *Einstein Adds a New Dimension*. Compares with the high quality of her earlier history series.

**MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL**

Hakim, Joy. *A History of U.S.* series. New York: Oxford University Press.

10 volumes of U.S. history from Volume 1: The First Americans, Prehistory–1600, to Volume 10: All the People, 1945–2001. A compelling presentation of American history. Engagingly written with personal stories as well as historic facts and information. Joy Hakim knows how to write for kids about history!

**INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL**

Harrison, David. *Earthworks* series. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.

These very well done books read as narratives. Language is clear, art is simple, and the length makes for a good read-aloud. Includes titles such as *Rivers*; *Volcanoes*; *Caves*; and *Mountains*.

**PRIMARY/INTERMEDIATE**

*Headline Science* series. Mankato, MN: Compass Point Books.

Global warming, stem-cell research, and “thinking machines—robots” are featured subjects in this well-done, comprehensive, and high-interest series.

**HIGH SCHOOL**

*High Interest* series. New York: Children’s Press.

Series within series are of high interest—*Danger Is My Business* (there’s a book on *Bounty Hunters*), *Natural Disasters*, and *Digging Up the Past*. Books use familiar nonfiction features.

**INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE**

*History News: \_\_\_\_\_* series. New York: Candlewick Press.

Learn about the Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, Explorers, Vikings, and Revolutionaries in the form of a daily newspaper written at the time.

**INTERMEDIATE**

*How and Why* series. New York: Creative Teaching Press.

*Animals Are Poisonous*, *Spiders Spin Silk*, and *Plants Eat Insects* are a few of the titles. Questions at end provide review of facts presented. Illustrations are bold and detailed.

**PRIMARY**

*How Did That Get Here?* series. New York: Crabtree Publishing.

Traces the origins, development, and future of such commodities as tea, bananas, silk, chocolate, spices, etc. Books are entitled *The Biography of . . .* Interesting approach!

**MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL**

*I Wonder Why* series. Boston: Kingfisher.

Why is the dodo dead? Why do caterpillars eat so much? Why do pine trees have needles? Why do flutes have holes? These and other titles will grab readers' attention. Question-and-answer format extends information on related subjects per titles.

**PRIMARY**

Krull, Kathleen. *Lives of the . . . (and What the Neighbors Thought)*.

New York: Harcourt.

Brief biographies of some amazing individuals—both familiar and obscure. Fun, captivating, and enticing stories in this series feature women, musicians, artists, and athletes. Writing tends to be gossipy in places—did you know that Isabella I of Spain took only two baths in her lifetime?!

**INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE**

*Life Cycles* series. New York: Creative Teaching Press.

The shape of the books are a bit different, illustrations are detailed and bold, and the text promotes interaction. Titles in this series include monarch butterflies, fighting fish, horses, and sunflowers. Readers are asked to put photographs in order at the end.

**PRIMARY**

*Life Science in Depth* series. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

Main concepts and theories are explored. Photographs and diagrams support the text. Subjects include cells and cell function; inheritance and selection; adaptation and competition; body systems and health.

**MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL**

*Lives and Times* series. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

These books tell the stories of famous people and make use of photographs and art from the time. Nonfiction features include table of contents, timelines, index, and a glossary (some words are bold-faced within text).

**INTERMEDIATE**

*Look Once/Look Again* series. New York: Creative Teaching Press.

Page turning promotes looking from parts to the whole. Text promotes interaction. Limited text, but includes some tough vocabulary. Teachers could use as read-alouds.

**PRIMARY**

*Mapping Earthforms* series. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

This series looks at coasts, deserts, valleys, and so forth—the physical features that shape the landscape. Includes questions to prompt readers’ interpretations, maps and diagrams, photos, and case studies.

**INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE**

*Microlife* series. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

Books on bacteria, infectious diseases, scientists and their discoveries, and microorganisms.

**HIGH SCHOOL**

*The Middle East* series. Chicago: Heinemann–Raintree.

Of timely and important matter! These books offer an historical background, an update on the current situation in the region, and explain today’s conflicts. Titles include *Iraq Then and Now*, *Oil in the Middle East*, *The Making of the Middle East*, *Israel and Palestine*, and *Iran and the Islamic Revolution*. Glossy pages are filled with narrative text, maps, facts and figures, timelines, a “who’s who” list, and a “find out more” section.

**MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL**

*Nascar* series. New York: Crabtree Publishing.

Yes, a series for fans of this popular sport! Titles include *The History of Nascar*, *Great Nascar Champions*, *Famous Nascar Tracks*, and *Amazing Nascar Races*.

**INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE**

*National Geographic Theme Sets*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.

With an interesting approach, this series promotes a variety of uses for a variety of readers. While each book (in the Life Cycles series, for example) focuses on a different animal and how it changes as it grows, the same key concepts are developed across books to help students focus on the big ideas. Great way to differentiate per a child's interest. Teaching notes and extended literacy activities formatted in the same way are included also.

**INTERMEDIATE**

*'Ology Books*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Currently, these are the hottest books going! On display in every bookstore visited, subjects include Monsterology, Pirateology, Egyptology, Spyology, and others of high interest. These are beautifully put together, written in first-person narrative by chapters and feature inserts, pop-open booklets, different fonts; they would probably hold up better in private collections than in classrooms.

**INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE**

*On My Own Biography* series. Minneapolis, MN: Millbrook Press.

Well-done accounts of such characters as Daniel Boone, Pablo Picasso, and Laura Ingalls Wilder. Written as narratives with attractive illustrations.

**INTERMEDIATE**

*Outrageous Women of . . .* series. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

Reformers, writers, leaders, and first ladies—each woman is given a chapter, written in a narrative text. Series subjects cover the Middle Ages, Colonial Times, Civil War Times, among others.

**MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL**

*People on the Move* series. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

Case studies, personal quotes, maps, statistics, and timelines help readers understand and explore the movements and migrations of people. Titles include *Economic Migrants*, *Environment Migrants*, *Nomads and Travelers*, and *Refugees and Asylum Seekers*.

**MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL**

Pringle, Laurence. \_\_\_\_\_! *Strange and Wonderful*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.

This beautifully illustrated series features books on crows, penguins, sharks, snakes, whales, and bats. Text is carefully and well-written for younger readers: “If you were a bat, you could stay up all night” and offers a solid introduction to the lives and behaviors of these animals.

**PRIMARY**

*Read and Learn* series. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

The size of these paperbacks allows them to be used as read-alouds and/or for independent reading. Each chapter begins with a question and promotes interaction; the print is bold throughout; photographs are labeled; and a picture glossary with page references, a quiz, and an index are included at the end. A note to parents and teachers stresses the importance of questioning. There are series about zoo animals, transportation, simple machines, and newspapers, to name a few.

**PRIMARY**

*Rookie Read-About Health* series. New York: Children’s Press.

Wide variety of age-appropriate, interesting topics include such subjects as chickenpox, sunburn, bruises, food safety, and teeth. Paperback size is for individual reading. Text is simple yet scientific. Photographs are colorful. Index and “words you know” (with photo clues) included at end.

**PRIMARY**

*Rookie Read-About Science* series. New York: Children’s Press.

Paperbacks for independent use focus on such topics as matter, electricity, simple machines, sounds, telescope use, the moon, zoo animals, and rainbows—to name a few. Text is simple yet scientific. Colorful photos enhance understanding. Index and vocabulary review (with photo clues) included.

**PRIMARY**

Sasek, M. *This Is* \_\_\_\_\_. New York: Universe Publishers.

*This Is London* (or Paris or San Francisco or Israel to name a few)—these are the classics! Recently printed, original copyrights on some date back to late fifties and early sixties. Claiming to be for “ages 8–80,” these picture books are fun read-alouds. Illustrations are bold and well-done, text is limited.

**PRIMARY**

*Save Our Animals!* series. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

Colorful photographs and bold print teach of plight of endangered species.

**PRIMARY**

Simon, Seymour. *See More Readers* series. San Francisco: SeaStar Books.

Three different levels of simple narrative text. Fabulous full-paged photographs and a variety of high-interest topics from wild weather to giant machines to space and animals. Book covers are color-coded for easy reference.

**PRIMARY/INTERMEDIATE**

Simon, Seymour. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Award-winning titles in this series include a variety of animals, different systems of the body, natural disasters, and various aspects of the solar system. As always, photographs are fabulous (and high-tech) and will appeal to readers of all ages. Pages and/or parts are great for read-aloud.

**INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE**

Sleeping Bear Press publishes an extensive series of alphabet and number books about sports, including such titles as *A Is for Axel—An Ice Skating Alphabet* or *Hat Tricks Count—A Hockey Number Book*. Highly predictable format allows readers to enjoy the rhyming text and to digest the factual information provided on each page. Readers will appreciate an easy way to gain more information about the sports they love.

**INTERMEDIATE**

*Stories of Great People* series. New York: Crabtree Publishing.

New, fun, and attractive series with titles such as *Shakespeare's Quill*, *The Wright Brothers' Glider*, and *Sitting Bull's Tomahawk*. Narrative traces story of characters perusing and questioning items in the “Knickknack” Market and intersperses factual information throughout. Good for read-aloud.

**INTERMEDIATE**

*Symbols of Freedom* series. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

The Alamo, Mount Rushmore, the Pentagon, and the White House are just a few of the places and things on the extensive list of titles in this series. Limited (but tough) text documents the people behind these important American symbols and how they came to be. Colorful photographs.

**PRIMARY**

*24/7 Science Behind the Scenes* series. New York: Scholastic.

True-life cases will intrigue young sleuths. Choices within this series include Espionage, Unsolved Mysteries, Forensic Cases, Medical Mysteries, and Key War Battles.

**MIDDLE**

*24 Hours* series. New York: DK Publishing.

Animals are tracked around the clock in such environments as a coral reef and in the mountains. Focus in each book returns to five animals at different times of the day to see what they're doing. A scale guide is included for perspective on each creature's size.

**PRIMARY/INTERMEDIATE**

*Teens in . . . —Global Connections* series. Minneapolis: Compass Point Books.

This series claims to “uncover the challenges, pastimes, and customs of teens around the world.” Australia, Japan, Kenya, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, and Viet Nam are a few of the countries represented. Colored photographs enhance the text; chapter topics focus on school days, typical days, family life, work, holidays, and sports.

**MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL**

*Things I Like* series. Chicago: Heinemann Library.

Written in the first person, the large print and limited text will be manageable for early readers. Colorful photographs and a variety of topics (such as soccer, bugs, and outer space) will attract them also.

**PRIMARY**

*Time for Kids Biographies* series. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Ben Franklin, John Kennedy, Harriet Tubman, and Jackie Robinson are a few of the people highlighted in this series. Narrative text, historical reproductions, and colored photographs.

**INTERMEDIATE**

*Write Your Own* series. Minneapolis: Compass Point Books.

Well-organized, reader-friendly text guides students through stages of writing articles, biographies, fairy tales, graphic novels, and other genres. Writing exercises (“Now it’s your turn”) included throughout. Would provoke a different kind of discussion among readers and be fun for a collaborative venture.

**MIDDLE**

*You Wouldn’t Want to \_\_\_\_\_*. Danbury, CT: Franklin Watts.

Titles include such diverse options as *You Wouldn’t Want to Be a Pyramid Builder*; *a Roman Gladiator*; *a Mammoth Hunter*; *a Pirate’s Prisoner*; and *You Wouldn’t Want to Live in the Wild West*; in Pompeii—the list goes on and on! Angle is interesting, text is written in the second person, content is solid, illustrations are somewhat silly.

**INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE**