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We gratefully acknowledge our editor and friend, Lois Bridges, whose keen insight and vision led us to make this book a reality. In addition, we wish to acknowledge the wisdom and guidance of Elizabeth Valway whose day-to-day communications kept us on track. And finally we wish to acknowledge Joyce Weston’s talents as she created for us yet another stunning cover that embraced our work with dignity and grace.
Introduction

Most of us would be shocked by the wealth of resources being overlooked if we had the time to carefully and thoroughly examine the picture book collections in school and classroom libraries. Many well-written and tightly focused books are available to help layer children’s understanding of most any topic in the curriculum. Yet, picture books continue to be greatly underutilized in our teaching, so we have revisited our personal libraries with a lens focused on weaving picture books into lessons throughout the day and across the curriculum.

In Learning Under the Influence of Language and Literature (2006), we delineated six opportunities for reading aloud across the day. The fifth of those opportunities, described in Chapter 6 of that book, is to use reading aloud as a curriculum bridge. That chapter suggested using read-alouds as an instructional act designed to help students build background for a unit of study through a conceptual framework of thought, language, and image. The specific example provided there was for a study of the civil rights movement in the United States. We developed a rationale for using read-alouds as a means of exploring the topic with a thorough collection of picture books that are listed in the chapter’s annotated bibliography.

This book extends the focus to other areas of the curriculum and strengthens the connections between well-chosen picture books and learning in the content areas. You will find listings of books and descriptions here to support many units of study; lines of inquiry; and individual research in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The collections included are not intended to be exhaustive lists; no single book has space to do that. Instead, we have examined the national standards as described by the leading professional organizations in each area of the curriculum and used those as the lens for choosing which books to include. Every collection contains a set of “bookshelves” that we think of as “starter sets.” Each set is intended as a springboard of sorts—an introduction to authors and topics in picture-book format that will help you launch or extend your teaching.

Our hope is that these starter sets can be the beginning of a growing collection of titles you can rely on again and again. The size of our personal collections certainly has increased as a result of the search for titles to include on each of the
shelves in this book. While there are current titles, you will also note that several of our favorites are books that have been around a while, so it is likely they are already in local school, community, and/or classroom libraries.

As you locate the books on our shelves and begin to weave them into your curriculum and teaching, the emphasis can clearly remain on the power of reading aloud as a deliberate and thoughtful act of instruction. However, we hope the information here on the collection of books is adequate and broad enough—that is, represents a variety of genres, topics, formats, and illustration styles—to help you find titles to extend your instruction and support students in their personal inquiries as well.

We suggest that you create a small text set from each collection of books to support a study you have planned. Consider the following as a thoughtful way to use such a set to layer in concepts and vocabulary related to a topic.

• Preview the titles included in each set.
• Identify concepts that could be developed and/or extended by using a particular set of books.
• Identify essential vocabulary related to the unit of study to be undertaken.
• Identify the core understandings needed to connect to the new information.
• Notice how the writer develops the concepts—that is, through the use of language, illustrations, captions, labels, and so on.

Next, for each set of books, place the titles in order from simple to complex. Then, select one for an opening read-aloud.

• Begin with a launching title from the set. This should be a book you feel has the potential to introduce the necessary concepts and vocabulary.
• Read the title and the names of the author and illustrator.
• Speak to the connection you hope the book you are using will establish. For example:

  “Readers, we have been learning about slavery in American history. Today as I read this book, I hope you will notice that many people in that time believed that slavery was wrong. Pay attention to how courageous individual slaves risked everything to gain freedom. Notice too how others who were free risked everything to help slaves gain freedom. When we
reach the end of the book, I will ask you to turn and talk with your partners about it.”

• As you read, occasionally speak to your insights—the ones you are leading students toward—by commenting on what you’ve noticed and wonder about and the connections you have made.

Be very cautious; don’t overdo this. Too much commentary may take away the need for readers and listeners to think independently and may even reduce the extent to which they are able to engage with the story. For some books, this will not be necessary. In any case, it should not overpower the language of the text and the interplay between the mind of the writer and the mind of the reader or listener. Remember your goal is to slowly move students toward independence and that this work is instructional. Your role is to serve as the one who is demonstrating the thinking, not thinking for them.

Let this first story serve as a foundation—a common ground of sorts. As you reach the end, ask students to turn and talk with their partners; this could also be done in a group of three or four. Remind them of your opening statement and invite students to reflect on that before they begin: “I hope you noticed how courageous individuals risked everything to gain freedom or to help others gain freedom.” As they begin their conversations, move around the room and listen in.

Now, speak to the group’s work:

“So readers, as I was walking about, I heard comments like these [give a few examples and continue]. Now I’m wondering what we have learned from this book? This author shows us that freedom was not easy to attain and came at great risk. Think about the risks involved and how one person made a difference. Think now about how [name individual being profiled in one of the books—Harriet Tubman, John Parker, Sojourner Truth, Levi and Katy Coffin] did that. What difference did her [his] actions make? Think about something we might take from this book to put into practice in our lives. OK, turn and talk with your partners [group] about that.”

Let this buzz a bit. Don’t wait too long or the conversation will naturally drift away from the focus. In fact, we find it builds energy to cut it a bit shorter. When there is energy and focus about the topic, there is an eagerness to share and continue the dialogue: “Readers, your attention please. Thank you. Let’s talk for a moment about what you and your classmates have been thinking here.”
As students begin to talk and share, continue to guide the direction of the discussion:

“Let’s think about what we’ve learned from this. What did you realize . . . ? When did you realize that . . . ? What were you wondering . . . ? What did you notice . . . ? Can you identify a place in the book that led you to that thinking? Can you talk about how the author or illustrator led you to that thinking?”

Each of the preceding questions has the potential to open further dialogue. You will have to decide which of them to pursue and which to redirect as you consider time constraints and goals and, most important, students’ growing understandings.

Begin charting the main points when the students begin to talk. Be sure to include the language you identified when organizing the set of books you’ll be using. Take this opportunity to do the following.

• Feature the vocabulary
• Introduce or extend the concepts you hope to scaffold with the set of books
• Have students use the book’s language to express their ideas, insights, and connections
• Have students articulate confusions, wonderings, and longings for more insight

This chart should become a touchstone for subsequent books in the set and for designing your instruction to meet the growing understandings of your students. Now as you read each book in the collection in sequence, make consistent references to the chart and add to it to show the connections between individual books and among those within the text set.

As the concepts and/or language become more and more complex in successive books, you may choose to pause within a book to have children turn to each other and discuss it. However, use the charting at the conclusion of the book to bring closure for students. Review the chart before reading the next book as you and your students continue through the set’s remaining titles.

When you finish a set of books, have students refer to the chart, turn to their partners or group, and talk through the threads of thinking they can see. With the first set, you may need to lead that process and scaffold the thinking required to arrive at specific generalizations. For later sets, this should become a more and more independent exercise.
Now let’s take a look at one collection of books and see what it looks like with a focus on The Underground Railroad. Assume that the following is your collection.

**Almost to Freedom**
*Written by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson*  
*Illustrated by Colin Bootman*  
*Scholastic 2003, ISBN 0–439–63156–4*

**Aunt Harriet’s Underground Railroad in the Sky**
*Written and Illustrated by Faith Ringgold*  

**Enemies of Slavery**
*Written by David A. Adler*  
*Illustrated by Donald A. Smith*  

**Freedom River**
*Written by Doreen Rappaport*  
*Illustrated by Bryan Collier*  
*Jump at the Sun/Hyperion 2000, ISBN 0–7868–0350–9*

**A Good Night for Freedom**
*Written by Barbara Olenyik Morrow*  
*Illustrated by Leonard Jenkins*  

**. . . If You Traveled on The Underground Railroad**
*Written by Ellen Levine*  
*Illustrated by Larry Johnson*  
*Scholastic 1992, ISBN 0–590–45156–1*

**Liberty Street**
*Written by Candice Ransom*  
*Illustrated by Eric Velasquez*  
After reading each of the preceding titles, we considered the following to decide on a sequence for presenting the books.

- Background knowledge of the learners
- Previous exposure to the vocabulary and concepts presented in the set
- Complexity of each text in the set
- Potential for each book to serve as a scaffold, or springboard, to growing insights and understandings within the unit of study

Consider those that follow and reflect on our rationale for using the books in this order. You may, of course, find that a different sequence better suits the needs of your learners.

**Under the Quilt of Night**

The story remains tightly focused on the escape of a group of slaves led by one young girl. The young girl is our narrator. The telling of the story is presented in the “phases” of an escape (running, waiting, watching, hiding, traveling, singing). The story layers in the major concepts and introduces and embeds key vocabulary for the set.

**Liberty Street**

The setting for the story is in contrast to the typical plantation setting. The narrator, Kezia, is a young girl born to slaves who work in and around the home of a widow named Missus Grace. The escape here is to protect Kezia from the prospects of being bonded out to the sister of Missus Grace. Kezia’s father has been sold to help pay the widow’s debts. Kezia’s mom is a conductor. Here again the
focus remains tight. The story reveals all the planning that leads up to an escape, reveals signals for safety, and layers in some of the dangers faced.

**Almost to Freedom**
The story is told through the perspective of a doll who accompanies a young girl as she and her family make the escape to freedom. The story reveals some aspects of life as a slave and helps to develop concepts of conductors, safe houses, and other vocabulary for the set. The text is more complex and detailed and of greater length than the previous book.

**Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt**
The book reveals how slaves could be separated from family to serve the needs of the master. It shows various jobs slaves performed (field hands, seamstresses, cooks, drivers). The story reveals how word of freedom, escape to Canada or North, and the making of maps could spread among the slaves. The author describes the ingenuity of the slaves in search of freedom and the careful planning necessary to avoid capture.

**A Good Night for Freedom**
This story layers in a new dimension with a white child who meets two runaway slaves in the home of a Quaker woman known to help runaways. When the slave catchers confront her, she has the dilemma of deciding what to do. The book extends concepts introduced in earlier books and layers in vocabulary.

**Freedom River**
In this true story, we meet a former slave (John Parker) who bought his freedom and moved to a free state (Ohio). He has a successful business and employs both black and white men. Kentucky, a slave state, lies across the river and John Parker routinely helps slaves make the escape into Ohio and further north where they will be safe. This book layers in new concepts and vocabulary.

**Aunt Harriet’s Underground Railroad in the Sky**
This story provides a brief history of The Underground Railroad. The narrator is a young girl who is flying among the stars . . . with her baby brother. This “fantasy” setting provides a backdrop for the children to witness (experience) an escape.
The story commemorates the one hundredth anniversary of Harriet Tubman’s first flight to freedom.

**Enemies of Slavery**
This book extends concepts by departing from a story format and moving to one-page profiles of fourteen individuals—black, white, male, and female—who stood against slavery at risk to their own safety. The previous books, told as stories, will have built a foundation for understanding the significance of the actions of each of these individuals.

**...If You Traveled on The Underground Railroad**
This book is presented last because it has the greatest depth of detail and the most text. The content is organized around a series of questions about life in the time of slavery with a tight focus on escaping via The Underground Railroad. The scaffolding provided through previous books in this set will lessen the impact of the concept density and vocabulary in this title. This book should serve well as a way to pull concepts from the set together into a cohesive whole.

The next move is to identify a set of concepts that could be developed and/or extended through use of this set of books, including:

- Slavery
- The Underground Railroad
- Emancipation

Then it’s time to review the set to identify essential vocabulary related to the unit of study. For this set, you could include the following:

- Abolition
- Abolitionists
- Bonding out
- Bounty hunters
- Conductors
- Free state
- Jump the broom
- Liberty
- Master (sometimes printed as massa)
- Overseer
• Paterollers
• Runaways
• Safe house
• Skiff
• Slave catcher
• Slave state
• Stations and agents of The Underground Railroad

Next, identify the core understandings needed, such as the following, to connect to the new information.

• Slaves were captured, brought to America, and sold as property.
• Slaves could be bought and sold.
• Slaves could be sold and separated from family members.
• Slaves were not free to move about as they wished.
• Slaves could be whipped and/or otherwise severely punished by the master for anything that didn’t please him.
• There were no laws to protect slaves.
• Slaves were not allowed to learn to read and write.
• Slaves who tried to escape and were captured could be subjected to severe forms of punishment (e.g., having toes or a foot cut off to prevent them from running again, being sold away from their families).
• There were many people, both black and white, who risked much to help slaves gain freedom.
• Those who helped slaves escape could be severely punished if caught.
• The nation was divided between slave states and free states.
• There were supporters of slavery in both slave states and free states.
• There were antislavery movements in both slave states and free states.

It is also important to make notes about how the writer develops the concepts—for example, by using language, illustrations, captions, labels, and so on.

This line of thinking can be extended using a variation of a literature circle. In this situation, the circle could be a vehicle for building vocabulary; developing or extending (breadth and depth) concepts; and building a repertoire of images that
will serve as a connector (like the loop side of Velcro) for the language, concepts, charts, and diagrams so frequently found in content-area textbooks and in teacher talk (the hook side of Velcro). The books can be organized in the following two or three ways.

1. By time, especially in social studies because the books can be sorted by events on a timeline for the unit of study.
2. By complexity within a time period—that is, the same as for the stories featuring events of The Underground Railroad—or within a topic of study, especially for mathematics or science.
3. By standards or strands in the curriculum or in the guidelines set forth by professional organizations (e.g., NSTA, NCTM, NCSS, NCTE).
Picture Books and Read-Alouds to Support the Mathematics Curriculum

Using literature is one of the most inviting ways to get children involved in mathematical thinking. Stories offer readers and listeners an array of possibilities when seeking solutions to open-ended problems. When mathematical concepts are contextualized in stories, the meaning of those concepts is naturally carried by the medium of story (xi). The mathematics standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) seek to build a solid foundation for each strand of math. In contrast to past practices, which focused on covering as much as possible in a curriculum of extreme breadth with little depth, the more recent standards were designed to delve more deeply.

We like to think of this as taking the time to hover with ideas and concepts as opposed to rushing to cover the curriculum. The goal, then, is for children to develop a depth of knowledge—a thorough understanding—because they must be users of math in the world beyond school. Indeed, math education is changing rapidly because these more recent standards have become the “yardstick” with which the mathematics curriculum is being measured.

The five content standards, or strands, of mathematics apply to all grade levels—kindergarten through twelfth—and include the following.

- Number and Operations
- Algebra
In addition to these five content standards, NCTM has developed five process standards.

- Problem Solving
- Reasoning and Proof
- Communication
- Connections
- Representation

Each process standard is used in all areas of mathematical thinking and, in our opinion, in all literacy education. Therefore, as concepts are introduced to young students who must understand what they are learning and actively build new knowledge from the interplay of new experiences and prior knowledge, we feel that literature can be an essential resource. With this in mind, here is a collection of carefully selected picture books for those who want to establish a classroom learning environment to address the more recent standards for mathematics education. This bookshelf provides books that offer wonderful read-alouds to introduce children to concepts that may be new and sometimes difficult for them.

Now let’s take Marc Harshman’s picture book, *Only One* (1993), and consider how you might use it to extend the math thinking of primary children. First, read the book aloud to explore the concept of the number of individuals, items, or pieces it takes to make one new something. For example, it takes 50,000 bees to make one hive, 500 seeds to make one pumpkin, 100 patches to make one quilt, 12 eggs to make one dozen, 11 cows to make one herd, and so on.

After inviting children to get together with their partners, provide them with chart paper and markers. Then, show them the page with eleven cows. Begin to think aloud about the possible number of legs shown in the picture, and invite students into the thinking with something like this:

Investigators, today I want you to use your markers and chart paper to show how you and your partner can help me determine the total number of legs these eleven cows have. To explain your answer, you can show your thinking in any way you would like.
If children can manage this, you can extend their thinking by inviting them to show how they would determine the total number of eyes or ears or tails in the same illustration.

By having them work with this strategy, you are exposing children to each of the process standards while working within the Number and Operations content standard. To briefly show how each process principle is used, consider doing the following.

After the problem is posed to them, have partners reason out how they will solve the problem. Through such reasoning, they must communicate to partners a reasonable method to represent their thinking. For the partners to be able to complete each of the other processes, they must be able to connect a reasonable method of solving the problem as posed by you.

The absolute beauty of inviting young mathematicians to participate in this kind of thinking is that it allows them to become actively engaged in each of the critical process standards while at the same time displaying the depth of their understanding of the Number and Operations content standard and how they choose to solve the problem.

If you are working with older children, you may want to address this same content standard using Annegert Fuchshuber’s *Two Peas in a Pod* (1996). Following the read-aloud, and with the assistance of the children, make an anchor chart for all of the book’s characters and animals—Paul and Peter, Mama Bear and her two cubs, Papa Lion and his three cubs, Mother Mole and her four baby moles, Mother Owl and her five baby owls, Mother Cat and her six kittens, and so on. The chart will serve to ensure that every character will be available for the children to refer to as they work together to solve the problem you pose. The invitation should follow the pattern of the one used with the younger children, but the content needs to be more diverse. With older children, invite partners to figure out the total number of legs shown in the illustration.

Investigators, today I want you and your partners to use markers and chart paper to show your thinking about how many legs are shown in the illustrations of *Only One*—the total number. Refer back to the anchor chart we’ve just created to help you as you solve the problem on each of the spreads of the book. For instance, think of the picture of Paul and Peter. We know very quickly that the illustrator shows us four legs on that spread. But what about on the page with the Mama Bear and her two
cubs? Turn to your partner and discuss how many legs are shown on this page.

After a short time, let one of the children explain his or her thinking. If they seem to clearly understand the process, move on. If not, discuss the next page in the book to clarify your expectations.

Now, work with your partners to solve the puzzle of the total number of legs we would find if you look at each of the pages of *Two Peas in a Pod*. Your chart paper should show your thinking as you solve the problem.

Once again, by using a lovely read-aloud, you’ve shown children a connection between literature and math. In addition, you’ve provided them a challenging problem in an environment that is appealing and also safe for them to explore. By keeping the standards in mind as you choose books for read-alouds, you can move far beyond the initial concept, as we just illustrated with both *Two Peas in a Pod* and *Only One*. This is what is often referred to as “working smarter rather than harder”!

Now it’s time for you to explore this bookshelf on your own. So, let your imagination run free and consider all the ways literature can be used to build bridges across the mathematics curriculum. One quick note before you get started with this collection: The books are grouped by specific content area under each of the five national standards.

Again, we realize this is not a comprehensive list for any of the standards; however, we so hope that the shelves here will be the starting point for your collection of excellent picture books. This collection includes many great read-alouds, we think, to help you introduce concepts that will help children learn about unfamiliar topics. It is our hope that the read-aloud experiences children have when you use the books will create a supportive environment that can lead students toward a deeper understanding of mathematical thinking.
Standard One: Number and Operations

Addition

Dominoes Around the World
Written by Mary D. Lankford
Illustrated by Karen Dugan

The game of dominoes has been a favorite of people for many years. Lankford’s book gives the history of the game and provides the various ways it is played by people in different countries. Since playing dominoes is an engaging way to use addition, this book offers a nice opportunity for a read-aloud that will get children into the game. It offers several alternative ways, other than the one we are most familiar with, to practice it. The procedures for game play in other lands (e.g., Cuba, France, Malta, The Netherlands, Spain, Ukraine, and Vietnam) are described. Dugan provides a picture of the countries to go along with the rules of play in each locale.

Fish Eyes (Number Sense)
Written and Illustrated by Lois Ehlert

From the Booklist review: Ehlert’s sense of color and graphic design is amazing. . . . The dramatic effect of the brilliant tropical colors of the fish against a polished navy background makes the book a show stopper . . . a visual treat from start to finish. And, equally, it will be a welcome addition to your math class as you attempt to develop number sense with children. Every time you see Lois Ehlert’s name on a book, you can trust it to be a beautiful one for young children.

The Grapes of Math: Mind-Stretching Math Riddles
Written by Greg Tang
Illustrated by Harry Briggs

With very clever riddles, Tang will have children solving math problems long before the last page of this wonderful read-aloud. The question posed is
always printed in a contrasting color, while the riddle provides clues on how to quickly arrive at the answer. Once you read and solve several, children will be bouncing to do the rest by themselves. We find that children catch on much more quickly than most adults. Once again, Greg provides the answers at the back. As usual, Briggs’ illustrations are vibrant and provide the perfect visual support for solving the riddles.

**Let’s Go Visiting**

Written by Sue Williams  
Illustrated by Julie Vivas  

Here’s one young children will beg to hear again and again. The cumulative, repetitive pattern in the art is one that they will just delight in. The language follows a pattern of increasing the number by one every time you turn the page. *Let’s go visiting... What do you say?... One brown foal is ready to play... Let’s go visiting... What do you say?... Two red calves are ready to play.* Following each *Let’s Go Visiting...*, readers meet a new animal and each time we meet a new animal, there is one more than on the previous page. So turn page after page and meet three black kittens, four pink piglets, five green ducklings, and six yellow puppies. Then, *No more visiting. No more play... Let’s curl up and sleep in the hay!* 

**Math Appeal: Mind-Stretching Math Riddles**

Written by Greg Tang  
Illustrated by Harry Briggs  
Scholastic 2003, ISBN 0–439–21046–1

Greg Tang has stepped up his invitation to children to engage in mathematical thinking with his third book. Once you read these books aloud, children will never leave them on the shelf. This book is written in the same style as his first two, but without a theme, so each page is a new surprise. Here’s a typical one to give you an example:

*Boston Pea Party*  
*A pea would find it rather odd,*  
*To be alone inside a pod.*  
*They like to hang out with their friends,*  
*For them the party never ends!*
Science evokes images of wonder and inquiry and invites the mind to question. Perhaps more than any other area of the curriculum, science begs us to pose problems, to pursue possibilities, and to probe with an open mind while remaining receptive to options while zeroing in on solutions. In this chapter we pull books from our shelves that open the world to readers, books that tickle the brain with new information, and books that tease the imagination with new questions.

As you consider these collections, there will be many opportunities for building text sets. One possibility is to select a topic from science and follow our suggestions from the introduction (where we chose a set of books that featured The Underground Railroad). Another way of organizing an inquiry with these books is to pull together a set on the basis of a specific topic. We have organized a few sets in this chapter that way as examples.

Suppose students have been engaged in a study of insects that sparked an interest in arachnids. So what next? Begin with brainstorming about the topic to generate all that is known or believed as truth within the learning community. As students begin sharing their knowledge and beliefs, chart the information on the board. Consciously organize what’s known into clusters with like headings (e.g., habitat, diet/nutrition, mating/reproduction, physical characteristics). Don’t name the categories during the brainstorming; just cluster the ideas and statements as if you are creating an index without headings.
As ideas begin to wane, ask your students to turn and talk about why information is clustered in this way. Remind the class that readers sometimes use only portions of a book to locate information to validate, extend, or negate their thinking. Introduce, or remind them of, the purpose of an index and ask students to think about words they would use to find more information for each cluster. Let those words become the names for the categories.

Present the books in the set that follows or use similar titles. Select one title from this list as a read-aloud. From this set we would use About Arachnids.

**About Arachnids: A Guide for Children**  
*Written by Cathryn Sill*  
*Illustrated by John Sill*  

**Black Widow Spider: Habits and Habitat**  
*Written by Nancy J. Nielsen*  
*Illustrations from various photographers*  

**Eight Legs**  
*Written by D. M. Souza*  
*Illustrations by various photographers*  

**The Fascinating World of Spiders**  
*Written by Maria Angels Julivert*  
*Illustrated by Marcel Socias Studios*  

**The Spider (Dimensional Nature Portfolio Series)**  
*Written by Luise Woelflein*  
*Illustrated by Tomo Narashima*  
As you read, have students signal you when they hear anything that validates (thumb up), extends (palm up), or negates (thumb down) information. Every time you validate information, circle the item on the board. If something you read aloud extends a thought, circle it and write a bit more to show the new thinking. If
a thought is negated, draw a single line through it and make a note of the new information. Recognize that one source may validate, another may stretch, and yet another may negate the same thought.

After the first book is read aloud, revisit the board and the clusters. Make a chart or transparency of the revised information. Some information will not have been addressed. There will be students who feel certain their information is correct even if it was negated by a single source. There will also be new thinking in the mix. At this point, now that there is more information, ask whether there are new questions that could be posed. Pose them in the appropriate cluster and challenge the community to help find answers.

We have found it helpful to give each group one cluster to focus on. This can rotate and escalate over a few days. For example, group one may take “physical characteristics” and find some answers, validate some information, and extend ideas a bit using a book they have. The next day they should keep the same resource and move on to another cluster. An alternate approach is to let the group keep the same cluster and rotate the books. Our preference is to have group members stay with one book and examine the same topic from several angles, as with the clusters. This seems to help learners recognize that one book may hold a wealth of information on some topics and very little on others. It also demonstrates the idea of “mining” a resource for all it is worth.

Each day as the groups conclude their work, revisit the class chart and layer in all new findings. Synthesize the information and lay out the next challenge. Continue this work for about four or five days so that each group can thoroughly examine two or three clusters of information within the same topic through a close study of one resource. As you conclude the cycle, come back together as a whole class and generate an opening paragraph about the topic. Then encourage each group to organize a short text using the information from their thorough investigation of one cluster.

Bring the reports together and read them as one cohesive text. Next, return to the separate written pieces and work together as a class to generate transitions between the sets of information and some concluding section for the whole. Place the combined text in a binder about the topic.

To extend this work, think about a follow-up for which every group takes a topic and follows the project cycle independently. That would mean that each group does its own brainstorming, clustering, and investigating in an entire set of books. As learners read and make notes, it may be helpful to organize information using headings such as these:
Another topic that could be studied is bats; books to use include the following.

**Bats**
*Written and Illustrated by Gail Gibbons*
Holiday House 1999, 2000, isbn 0–8234–1637–2

**Bats (Animals, Animals Series)**
*Written by Margaret Dornfeld*
*Illustrated by various photographers*
Benchmark/Marshall Cavendish 2004, isbn 0–7614–1754–0

**Bats (Let’s Investigate Wildlife Series)**
*Written by Nancy J. Shaw*
*Illustrated by various photographers*
Creative Paperbacks 2001, isbn 0–89812–318–6

**Bat Loves the Night (Read and Wonder Series)**
*Written by Nicola Davies*
*Illustrated by Sarah Fox-Davies*
Candlewick 2001, isbn 0–7636–1202–2

The collection of books for this chapter was selected to address the strands in the science curriculum as described by the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). Once again, think of these books as a starter set. We realize that we have only scratched the surface of what is available. However, our intention is to demonstrate that there are numerous picture books available to support various units of study and cycles of inquiry. The broad array of picture books in the market enables every teacher to make read-aloud a viable part of the instructional day. The following books are organized into shelves that will address many, although not all, of the areas of a school’s science curriculum.
About Mollusks: A Guide for Children
Written by Cathryn Sill
Illustrated by John Sill

This science series (*About . . . Birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, fish, arachnids, crustaceans*) is an outstanding addition to any classroom, regardless of the grade level. Sill, a former elementary teacher, was so clever in the design of this series that she pulls even uninterested children into the subjects. Every book in the series follows a single simple format—large, bold print is always placed on the left page. The language is concise and clear usually one to two sentences defines what is pictured on the right. Words never describe more than a single concept, so it sometimes is limited to a phrase that will be continued when the page is turned. On the facing page, there is always a crisp full-color illustration created by the author’s husband John. The illustrations are carefully presented so that the concept being featured in the language is obvious in the art. Once you read through to the back of the book, you will find what truly makes this series a rich treasure for science classrooms—the Afterword. Yes, you read right, the Afterword. Here each of the illustrations from the book appears again in a thumbnail-size print accompanied by elaborate text offering more in-depth information for the teacher to extend conversations and inquiry. Of course, more proficient readers will take advantage of this information on their own. In addition, you will find a bibliography of books on the subject and websites for further research.

All About Owls
Written and Illustrated by Jim Arnosky

This little book packs lots of information into a short text for an animal study unit. The illustrations are supportive of the facts presented in three to
Throughout history, story has been one of the primary means of passing all that is important to families and communities and cultures from one generation to the next. Story has helped us develop a sense of who we are and where we come from. Story has helped us come to know ourselves in relation to others. It has been through story that we begin to understand times past and begin to shape our hopes for the future. The social studies curriculum is rich with opportunities to mine the treasures in literature; story is therefore a natural vehicle in this rich and robust curriculum.

The collection of books presented in this chapter includes many stories—ones about people, places, and events that made history. There are stories that lead us to pause and reflect on events of the past. There are stories about moments so near to the present that we can hardly take them in. And there are stories that cause us to look to the future and say, “I can make a difference. I can be like that. I can.”

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has delineated ten thematic strands that form the basis of the social studies standards. These broad strands have helped to shape, though have not limited, our search for titles to include in this chapter. We hope you will take the time to visit the website of the NCSS at www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands for a more in-depth look at the strands.
Books in this collection have been organized into sets by broad topics and then subdivided into smaller sets by categories that we are calling bookshelves. Each bookshelf is presented in alphabetical order, but the titles on any shelf can be easily organized into a text set, as described in the introduction to this book. Each collection can be used to introduce, extend, or enrich a unit of study.

Every bookshelf can also be the foundation for a close study of related novels. For example, the bookshelves making up the collection on civil rights could form a foundation—vocabulary, concept, image—for a study of novels such as Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry; The Well; Mississippi Bridge; or The Watson’s Go to Birmingham, 1963. So, as you peruse our shelves, we hope you will be thinking of the connections you could make to your units of study and to the bridges you could build across the curriculum with these picture books and selected opportunities for read aloud in the social studies class.

Building Background for a Study of Civil Rights

For this section, we selected a few books on each of several topics to create “starter sets” that can help launch different studies. We hope that you will consider each of the sets as a beginning point and that you will continue adding to each of them as you make read-alouds a vital part of the curriculum areas across the day. The books in this particular collection are intended to extend those presented in our companion book, Learning Under the Influence of Language and Literature: Making the Most of Read-Alouds Across the Day (2006).

Civil Rights Bookshelf One: In the Time of Slavery

Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters
Written by Patricia C. McKissack and Fredrick L. McKissack
Illustrated by John Thompson

The McKissacks provide the stark contrast between the events of “Big Times” (Christmas) in the plantation owner’s big house and those of the slaves who lived in the quarters. The hauntingly beautiful language richly describes the traditions and scenes of the holidays in the mid-1800s. This is not a one sitting read-aloud so plan for a few installments. Take your time and savor the beautiful art that so aptly brings the story alive.
Lest We Forget: The Passage from Africa to Slavery and Emancipation
Written by Velma Maia Thomas

This is a three-dimensional book containing photographs and documents from the Black Holocaust Exhibit. With its many interactive pages (e.g., fold-outs, removable letters in pockets, pullouts), this book is an unbelievable resource for older readers. It will support hand-in-hand the reading of From Slave Ship to Freedom Road as it tells the story of Africa before people were sold into slavery. Each double page deals with another area of the timeline through emancipation and every one has a special feature that invites the reader to interact with the text in some way to extend meaning. This is an excellent resource to bring an additional dimension to a study of this period of history.

Nettie’s Trip South
Written by Ann Turner
Illustrated by Ronald Himler

Through a child’s eyes, slavery is observed and truth is sought by Nettie who lives up North and has never seen the South or a slave. She longs to see both before the war, which would prevent her trip, breaks out. When she arrives in the South for her first stay in a hotel, she meets the first person she has ever known who has only one name. On Nettie’s first trip around town, the adventure turns out to be very upsetting—she witnesses her first slave auction. As she watches, two young children are sold; she becomes so heartsick she throws up. The book is sketched in black and white to embrace the harshness of the theme of the story. It provides a different perspective to bring into the discussion.

No More! Stories and Songs of Slave Resistance
Written by Doreen Rappaport
Illustrated by Shane W. Evans

Rappaport explains in an Author’s Note that she did extensive research to trace the history of the courageous struggle waged by enslaved Africans from the time they boarded the first slave ships heading for the New World to
Thank you for sampling this resource.

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