



Key Works

A Guide to Lower School Literary Resources

Pre-Kindergarten

Rainbow Fish

By Marcus Pfister

All about Me
Feelings

Each September, tapping into the children's feelings is an important aspect of our introduction to school. As we read Rainbow Fish, the children are asked key questions about how they think the other fish feel, and how they would feel if someone treated them unkindly. The book also allows the children to know we can change and learn to be kind and share.

Martin's Big Words The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King

By Doreen Rappaport

Dr. Martin Luther King
Individuality

This book gives us the opportunity to reinforce our individuality. We point out even though in many ways we are different, we are all the same. It is vital to introduce, explain, and expect acceptance.

Good Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition

By Lizzy Rockwell

Nutrition
Thanksgiving

From the first day of Pre-K, we discuss taking care of our bodies. This book is a great visual for children to learn about nutrition. We also incorporate planting, growing and harvesting during this time. Using the Native Americans' and Pilgrims' First Thanksgiving as a platform for working together and celebrating family, we end with our Thanksgiving Feast.

Junior Kindergarten

The Story of Corn by Willy Ernesto

Long Ago and Today by Rozanne Lanczak Williams

The Indian Paint Brush by Tommie DePoala

Thanksgiving Feast
Social Studies
Science

The children explore life as a Native American or Pilgrim through exposure to many pieces of literature, culminating in a Thanksgiving feast. Children express themselves artistically as they create Native American and Pilgrim costumes and decorations. For example, while listening to Native American chants, the students engage in creating paintings associated with feelings felt while listening to music. In addition, they learn to prepare foods that are traditionally associated with the celebration.

We Are All Alike, We Are All Different

By Cheltenham School
of Kindergarten

Celebrations of Light
Social Studies

One of the first themes in JK is “We are All Alike, We are All Different.” In honor of this theme, our students explore in December how children all around the world use candles to celebrate holidays. We begin with children and their parents sharing favorite customs and traditions celebrated within their homes. Through literature, music, art and role play children explore and experience celebrations such as St. Lucia Day, Las Posadas, St. Nicholas Day, Hanukah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. Each child makes a candle reflecting how their favorite celebrations light up their lives.

The Great Kapok Tree

By Lynne Cherry

The Rainforest
Science

Our rainforest unit is introduced through geography and literature. We begin our exploration with geography, locating the rainforests of the world and compare our climate and lifestyles to those of the indigenous peoples. All the while, the classroom is transformed into a tropical rainforest and each student creates a book, “My JK Guide to the Rainforest”. Additionally, we begin with the story, The Great Kapok Tree. The classroom rainforest is populated with students’ creations as we learn about the peoples, predators, rivers, trees and plants of the rainforest. It culminates in a performance for the parents.

Kindergarten

How Full is Your Bucket by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer

Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister

The Land of Many Colors by Klamath County YMCA Family PreSchool

Martin's Big Words by Doreen Rappaport

My Mouth is a Volcano by Julia Cook

Social Studies

Our Social Studies Program focuses on empathy. Teaching young children to understand their feelings and the feelings of others encourages them to build relationships and become kind and caring people. We use the Bucket Filler Program based on *How Full is Your Bucket* by Tom Rath. Upon filling a class bucket, the class reward is chosen by the students. The reward is a kind deed for someone else.

The Doorbell Rang by Pat Hutchins

Patterns Everywhere by Kari Jenson Gold

Sort It Out by Kari Jenson Gold

Time To by Bruce McMillan

What Is Place Value by J.E. Osborne

Graph It by Jennifer Osborne

Math

Our Math Program introduces students to a broad range of concepts beginning with number sense and ending with addition and subtraction. Abstract concepts such as patterns, sorting, and graphing are practiced. We also include empathy-based math to tie in with our social studies program.

Learning to Read, Write and Listen

Reading A-Z

Arts Reading

We start by exposing children to letters and letter sounds (phonics) through our letter book program, Learning to Read, Write and Listen, as well as Reading A-Z, a leveled reading system. Students are assessed weekly to determine appropriate reading level. Literature selections are thematic; lessons and projects follow the literature read. Often, projects are based on thematic literature to improve comprehension (titles will vary from year to year). Letter books are used for letter formation. Creative writing is introduced through Weekend Updates and writing prompts.

Groundhog Day by Gail Gibbons

Sky Boys by Deborah Hopkinson

My Five Senses by Alike

Chickens Aren't the Only Ones by Ruth Heller

Dem Bones by Bob Barner

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, The Very Hungry Spider by Eric Carle

Where Does All the Garbage Go by Melvin Berger

Science

Our science program uses hands on activities to teach students basic concepts. We do experiments and projects that reinforce the scientific principles involved. We create a student science book detailing the work completed.

First Grade

The Story of Blue Bird

by Tomek Bogacki

Social Studies
Science

Bogacki hits on many of the central themes of growing up. Sometimes things are scary and we are afraid, but we won't know what is out there until we try. The bird in this story leaves the nest and searches for what is out there. Bogacki hits the other key themes of first grade, friendship and embracing differences, when the bird meets a flock of colorful birds and forgetting his fears, spreads his wings and flies. Students are fascinated with flight. They respond to The Story of Blue Bird by imagining what they would see if they were the main character. As we study birds in science, the students compare and contrast this work of fantasy to nonfiction books they read about birds.

The Magic School Bus: Lost in the Solar System

by Joanna Cole and
Bruce Degen

Science

The Magic School Bus: Lost in the Solar System provides a captivating introduction to our solar system unit. The accessible story of a fictional class riding their modified school bus through the solar system presents a lot of information. Students new to the topic will hang onto the story and the generalities, while children who have some background knowledge are drawn in by the sidebars that give more detailed information about the specific topics. As we learn more about the planets through research during our laptop time, students use their critical thinking skills to determine what is fact and what is fantasy.

Little Bear's Friends

by Else Holmelund
Minarik

Language Arts

Else Minarik's "Little Bear" series is one of the first chapter books young readers can access and reading their first chapter books provides a great sense of accomplishment. One of the hallmarks of these books is how familiar characters engage in a real plot. Little Bear's Friends uses fantasy to gently remind the students how to make friends and how to be a good friend. First Graders can also relate to the relationship Little Bear has with his mother. After reading this story, students reflect on the characteristics of a good friend and choose several to elaborate on in a written reflection.

Try Your Best

by Robert McKissack

Language Arts

On a daily basis, children are encouraged to try their best. In this story, Try Your Best, Ann Learns what she can accomplish with the help of friends and her teacher who reminds her to try her best. When the teacher says he can't run very fast, it's the students who implore him to try his best. The students appreciate this plot twist. The First Graders use this story as a springboard to reflecting on a time when they tried their best and they write about it in their journal.

Circus

by Alexander Calder

Arts

Alexander Calder's creation of a miniature circus makes his sculptures accessible to a young audience. He was influential to how artwork is viewed, bringing playfulness to his artistic vision. The Circus theme has a timeless appeal to children's imagination. Students enjoy creating clay elephants and wire sculptures. It brings an appreciation and openness to viewing sculptures that carries through to our visit to Grounds for Sculpture, a modern art sculpture park.

Second Grade

I Have a Dream (Book and Video)

by David Adler

Social Studies

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This speech is instrumental in teaching the students about tolerance, diversity, equality and how peace can prevail. Students recognize differences and relate it to present day situations. It is a vehicle for teaching the students how to have a voice and to stand up for their beliefs in a positive way. The students are inspired by original footage of MLK's "I Have A Dream" speech delivered in front of the Lincoln Memorial. They memorize and recite this speech as a class to not only the entire LS but often to MS and US student bodies.

Flat Stanley

by Jeff Brown

Geography

The original story is about a boy that gets flattened by a bulletin board. Students create their individual adventures by writing a letter accompanying their Flat Stanley and sending him off through traditional mail. As Flat Stanley returns with stories of where he has been, the students are exposed to different places and cultures. This is also an opportunity to explore maps of the world. Students identify the location of his latest adventure and record the distance from RPS.

Books and Literature by Gail Gibbons

Science

These factual stories act as a precursor to our Science Units (apples, spiders, bats, dinosaurs, trees, penguins), as well as our Science Workshop with parents. These non-fiction books present topics in a clear language that students can easily grasp the facts and allow them to further explore the topics through experimentation and other hands-on activities.

Magic School Bus: On the Ocean Floor

Science

Social Studies

This fun and hands on unit is introduced through a reading of Magic School Bus: On the Ocean Floor. Our favorite Science Guy, Bill Nye, enhances further exploration of this topic. The unit culminates with a trip to Sandy Hook to explore the salt marsh environment as well as the landscape and living organisms of the beach.

Third Grade

Little House in the Big Woods

by Laura Ingalls
Wilder

Reading
Language Arts
Social Studies

We read Little House in the Big Woods to kick off our exploration of Pioneers. Through the eyes of a little girl, students are able to get a feel for the hard work and stark life experienced by the pioneers who moved west. This is a springboard for students to learn about the expansion of the US, including the reasons people left the crowded east coast, the hard work and courage required for the move into the wilderness, and how our country came to be the coast-to-coast nation it is today. The culmination of this study is Pioneer Day, where students share with parents skits they have written and performed using various chapters as a guide. They also display lapbooks based on the novel and facts learned about Westward Expansion. They perform square dances and experience a Pioneer meal!

Ben Franklin, Scientist and Inventor (Movie) Keep the Lights Burning Abby (Movie)

Colonial America
History
Science

“Ben Franklin, Scientist and Inventor” starts our unit on electricity, as students get to know the scientist who discovered electricity and how it can be used to help peoples’ lives. This is the jumping off point for lessons in science class on complete circuits that lead to projects on building a working lighthouse. “Keep the Lights Burning Abby,” shown in Library class, is about a girl in colonial America who keeps a lighthouse burning through a storm. Children are asked to research assigned lighthouses in Computer Class and create a slide with facts specific to their lighthouses. The lighthouses are from the states east of the Mississippi River with many located in the thirteen original colonies.

In connection to lighthouse study, students learn about the events leading up to and including the American Revolution by reading a variety of books supplemented by viewing the series Liberty’s Kids. Children complete a research project on a key figure or event from the Revolution. Research is completed in Library class and the slide is done in Computers. The completed slides are used to create an “American Revolution Timeline” bulletin board.

Poetry by Shel Silverstein

Reading
Writing
Poetry

The children learn that poetry is about expressive language using words that show emotion, and how these words connect to the larger world. The types of poetry are Acrostic, Haiku, Cinquain, Couplet, Quatrain, and Limerick. The unit ends with a Poetry Café where students present poems to their families that they have written in their anthologies.

Fourth Grade

Joyful Noises

Language Arts
Science

This literature piece opens a pathway to allow students to explore writing original works of poetry, jump start our science unit on insects, and prepare us to carefully observe insects both in the classroom (rearing of butterflies) and on campus. This theme opens a segue into making observations, predictions and conclusions about the world around them. Students learn about the interrelatedness of environmental factors and their impacts on populations.

Cinderella Stories

Social Studies
Language Arts
Reading

Students will read many timeless classics from around the world. These pieces begin our discussions on family history and the immigration of people to America over time. This is one piece of the fourth grade Ethnic Pride study that culminates with an Ethnic Pride Festival that highlights student work, musical performances, and a luncheon with Ethnic foods shared by families.

Immigrant Kids

By Russel Freedman

Reading
Writing
Poetry

As students study immigration and Ethnic Pride, they will read portions of Immigrant Kids, which tells the stories of young urban immigrants around the turn of the century. This book, along with the website resource hold the students' attention by telling compelling stories and including images of these young immigrants' experiences.

When I Was Young in the Mountains

By Cynthia Rylant

Social Studies

This story, read aloud to the fourth grade, serves as a starting point of our unit United States regions, including Appalachia. Through listening to music, watching and discussing documentaries, and writing to pen pals in southeastern Kentucky, fourth graders' worlds are opened to a culture that is new to them. This unit concludes with the transformation of the fourth grade classroom into a coalmine, with students giving tours to Lower School children and adults throughout the RPS community.

Fifth Grade

My Life with Chimpanzees

By Jane Goodall

Language Arts
Science

Students read the story of Jane Goodall's rise to become one of the world's great ethologists and the world's expert on chimpanzee behavior in the wild. As a young girl, Jane Goodall dreamed of living with animals and of writing about them, and some of her favorite childhood books were *Tarzan* and *Dr. Doolittle*. Not only does this book give students the opportunity to read about the lives of chimpanzees, but it also proves that it is possible to achieve a lifelong goal through dedication and hard work. Students use this text as a resource as they investigate a chosen endangered animal in both Leadership and IDEAS/Computer classes.

The Westing Game

By Ellen Raskin

Analysis
Language Arts
Reading

Sixteen interesting and bizarre characters, which live in a mysterious apartment building, compete to become heir to the Westing millions. Inspired by the intrigue surrounding Howard Hughes's will and by the celebration of the bicentennial of the United States, the novel combines a tricky mystery with a tribute to American opportunity. Would-be heirs play both chess and the stock market in their attempts to solve the puzzle and gain a fortune. The Westing Game is a great mystery book for the students, a bridge book between younger mysteries and Agatha Christie books. Students create "Clue" mystery game based on The Westing Game.

The Pharaoh's Secrets

By Marissa Moss

Ancient History

The Pharaoh's Secrets "skillfully weaves history with a personal story full of heartache and family tensions that will entice and enthrall readers." Students learn the rituals of ancient Egypt while reading about "exotic locales, mysterious strangers, and a sinister archaeologist, round out an adventure that is full of riddles, old tales, and, most surprisingly of all, a link to Talibah's and Adom's mother, who died mysteriously."

Wonder

By R. J. Palacio

Social Sciences
Values

Wonder is the tale about a boy, August "Auggie" Pullman, born with a rare combination of genetic anomalies, causing him to look "deformed." As a result of childhood surgeries, Auggie is not able to attend public school until fifth grade. Though he is very smart and has been home-schooled, Auggie has no idea what it is like to be in school with other children. The book relates Auggie's first year of school from the perspective of many different characters. He experiences both bullying and acts of kindness. The story is an eye-opening account that helps students understand what it is like to be different, to experience bullying, and to persevere. Wonder is a great tool in the fight against bullying. Students design their own book trailer on Wonder and discuss their own precepts, "mantras".