

# KEYSTONE TO READING ELEMENTARY BOOK AWARD LISTS

2024-2025

(annotations excerpted from Amazon)

## Annotated Preschool List

### **Bitsy Bat, School Star** by Kaz Windness

*Bitsy is a little bat with big star dreams of making friends at her new school. But when she arrives, Bitsy doesn't feel like she fits in. Everyone tells Bitsy she's doing things wrong, so she tries harder and ends up having a five-star meltdown. Bitsy doesn't want to go back to school, but with help from her family, she musters her courage, comes up with a new plan, and discovers that being a good friend is just one of the ways she shines bright!*

### **A Book for Bear** by Ellen L. Ramsey and MacKenzie Haley **PA Author**

*Bear loves books. When Bear decides he wants a book of his very own, he and his best friend, Ellen, hatch a plan. But sneaking a bear into school, a library, and a bookstore proves to be harder than they thought.*

### **City Feet** by Aixa Pérez-Prado

*Children, teachers, and parents alike will enjoy reading this multicultural, upbeat, and beautifully illustrated book from a child's point of view about diversity within our communities. The rhyming creates a fun and attention-grabbing story for young children, but also provides an opportunity to discuss diversity and humanity.*

### **How to Get Your Octopus to School** by Becky Scharnhorst and Jaclyn Sinquett

*Getting your octopus to school won't be easy. He would much rather stay home with you and play hide-and-seek or dress-up. But you know your octopus will love school if he gives it a chance. Includes octopus facts in the backmatter.*

### **If You Wake a Skunk** by Carol Doeringer and Florence Weiser

*What's a pair of campers to do when a skunk shows up? This cautionary tale will have readers cringing as each page is turned. Tension builds as the campers creep closer and tempt fate, dismissing the skunk's warnings. Includes back matter about skunk biology and behavior.*

### **Mine!** by Candace Fleming and Eric Rohmann

*Here is a read-aloud picture book, perfect for storytime, that will have kids repeating the refrain "Mine!"... complete with an ending that celebrates sharing and is sure to surprise!*

### **Paisley's Big Birthday** by Heather Pierce Stigall and Natalia Bushuyeva **PA Author**

*Paisley's birthday is today, right? Then why doesn't she feel any older? She still has trouble reading, still has trouble jumping in the Hopstacle Course, and is still in Bunnygarten. In this sweet story about having patience as we grow, Paisley wonders when she will finally be big?*

### **The Sound of Kindness** by Amy Ludwig VanDerwater and Teresa Martinez

*Follow an adult and child as they explore their neighborhood, listening for the sounds of kindness. Words of friendship, gratitude, support, generosity, and love...we can see and hear them if we try. What will you hear if you take a kindness walk?*

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## Annotated Primary List

(annotations excerpted from Amazon)

**Animals in Surprising Shades: Poems About Earth's Colorful Creatures** by Susan Johnston Taylor and Annie Baskt  
*For young poets who love science and young scientists who love poetry, this thoughtful collection of poems about fascinating and colorful creatures found throughout the world invites readers to linger and wonder on every page. Learn why the Blue-footed Booby puts on a special dance or how the Picasso Bug uses its masterful chemical defense against predators. Explore simple and fun poetic forms like the tanka, haiku, and quatrain.*

**The Courage of the Little Hummingbird: A Tale Told Around the World** by Leah Henderson and Magaly Morales  
*The story of the little hummingbird has been told around the world in many forms and across many cultures, and is believed to have originated among the Indigenous Quecha people of modern-day Ecuador. In this picture book spin on the globally popular legend, when a disastrous forest fire threatens the Great Forest, the hummingbird must inspire all the animals to work together to save their homes.*

**Enough Is...** by Jessica Whipple and Nicole Wong **PA Author**  
*This book follows one child as she learns the difference between wanting and needing and, in the end, feels the contentment that flows from being satisfied with what she has.*

**A Family Like Ours** by Frank Murphy and Alice Lee, and Kayla Harren **PA Author**  
*From sprawling extended families and close-knit units to adopted and chosen families, A Family Like Ours celebrates all those important connections we build over the years. Regardless of what yours looks like, family is a place for support, safety, growth, and inspiration.*

**A Garden in My Hands** by Meera Sriram and Sandhya Prabhat  
*This picture book celebrates the custom of applying henna for special occasions through a mother and daughter who share family memories and stories.*

**How Birds Sleep** by Sarah Pedry and David Obuchowski  
*Discover the mysterious and fascinating sleeping habits of more than twenty bird species from around the world in this gorgeously illustrated read-aloud picture book, perfect for bedtime, or any time.*

**Rise to the Sky: How the World's Tallest Trees Grow up** by Rebecca E. Hirsch and Mia Posada **PA Author**  
*This book is a poetic introduction to the tree life cycle. It features the tallest tree species from around the world, including the coast redwood, the Sitka spruce, and the giant sequoia.*

**Whale Fall: Exploring the Ocean-Floor Ecosystem** by Melissa Stewart and Rob Dunleavy  
*This nonfiction picture book filled with stunning illustrations details the end of life for a whale, also known as a whale fall, when its body sinks to the ocean floor and becomes an energy-rich food source for organisms living in the deep sea.*

**Wishes of the World** by Melissa Stiveson and Khoa Le  
*One child feels a hope and a wish growing in their heart--and wonders: How do you make your wishes come true? Wishes of the World learns the answer to that question from children from the United States to Japan, from Thailand to Guatemala, showing readers that hope and wishes are universal even as we make our wishes in unique ways.*

**Yoshi: Sea Turtle Genius** by Lynne Cox and Richard Jones  
*Join Yoshi, a sea turtle, on her remarkable journey as she swims farther than any animal in recorded history--23,000 miles!--to return to the beach where she first hatched, to lay her own eggs.*

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## Annotated Intermediate List

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**Border Crossings** by Sneed B. Collard III and Howard Gray

*As two endangered ocelots attempt to cross the border, they face obstacles that drive home the catastrophic effects of barriers like the Wall. Powerful storytelling introduces young readers to the wildlife that thrives along the border and urges budding nature buffs to value and protect our environment.*

**Butt or Face?: A Hilarious Animal Guessing Game Book for Kids** by Kari Lavelle

This book offers kids a delightfully cheeky challenge: examine a close-up photo of an animal, and then guess whether you're looking at the top or the bottom. The answer is revealed on the next page with a complete photo of the animal! Also included are factual animal details along with how these animals use camouflage or other trickery to engage with their home.

**Invincible: Fathers and Mothers of Black America** by Wade Hudson and E.B.Lewis

*This lyrical picture book explores the birth of Black America, focusing on the little-known men and women who fought for justice and for an America where freedom truly rang for all.*

**The Museum on the Moon: The Curious Objects on the Lunar Surface** by Irene Latham and Myriam Wares

*The Museum on the Moon introduces readers to the mysterious objects left on the lunar surface since humans arrived in 1969. Part history, part poetry, heartwarming and haunting, The Museum on the Moon is a moving exhibit of humankind's most famous quest for knowledge and our place in the universe.*

**Never Give Up: Dr. Kati Karikó and the Race for the Future of Vaccines** by Debbie Dadey and Julianna Oakley

*Growing up in a small Hungarian town, Kati Karikó was curious about everything. As an adult, she channeled her curiosity into her work as a scientist. After many years of hard work and dedication, she figured out how to use mRNA to make a vaccine—and when a deadly virus called COVID-19 started infecting millions of people, Kati's invention turned out to be exactly what the world needed.*

**Rivka's Presents** by Laurie Wallmark and Adelina Lirius

*In this heartwarming story about the importance of community, a little Jewish girl living on the Lower East Side during the flu pandemic of 1918 can't start school because her father is sick, so she makes a trade with her neighbors: chores for lessons.*

**Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes** by Patty CisnerosPrevo and Dion M.B.D.

*Meet fifteen remarkable athletes who use adaptive equipment in this beautiful and truth-telling picture book. Tenacious tells their stories and more, revealing the daily joys and challenges of life as an athlete with disabilities.*

**A Walk in the Woods** by Nikki Grimes and Jerry and Brian Pinkney

*Confused and distraught after the death of his father, a boy opens an envelope he left behind and is surprised to find a map of the woods beyond their house, with one spot marked in bright red. He sets off through the spaces he once explored with his dad. When he reaches the spot marked on the map, he finds pages upon pages of drawings of woodland creatures, made by his father when he was his age. What he sees shows him a side of his dad he never knew, and something even deeper for them to share together.*

**We Are Here** by Tami Charles and Bryan Collier

*Lyrical, affirmational, and bursting with love, We Are Here is a poignant story about Black and brown heritage and community.*

**Welcome to the Wonder House** by Georgia Heard and Rebecca Kai Dotlich, and Deborah Freedman

*This collection of poems, creatively presented in the format of an allegorical house, will engage anyone who has ever wondered "why?" as it shows young readers that wonder is everywhere—in yourself and in the world around you.*