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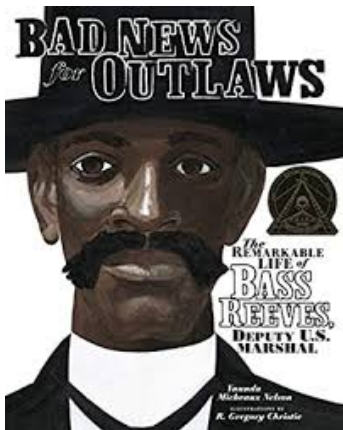


Narrative Nonfiction Picture Books to use with Curriculum

Contact gollj@medinabees.org with questions or suggestions. I will continue to add to this. You can email if you want me to search for specific subjects

- **EVERY MCS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HAS A HARD COPY OF EACH OF THESE BOOKS!**

- These books can be found as **eBooks** through **EPIC** getepic.com (unlimited copies) or **SORA** (MCS Clever, limited copies, so you or your students would Borrow) eBooks, **as noted below**.
- **MACKINVIA** (MCS Clever, unlimited copies of eBooks).
- **EPIC** getepic.com- Also has a whole collection labeled "Narrative Nonfiction". You, or students, can also search Narrative Nonfiction, then after scrolling to the bottom of the choices, click on Show More.
- **STORIA** (4th and 5th only)- *Bad Pets, Bad Pets on the Loose, Bad Pets Save Christmas, ANY National Geographic Chapters book, Stubby the War Dog.*
- You could also use a read aloud of these from Youtube.
- **Curricular ties are BOLD.**
- **[eBook Teacher Cheat Sheet](#)**- ALL directions for ALL platforms.



Bad News for Outlaws: The Remarkable Life of Bass Reeves, Deputy U.S. Marshal by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson- This is also a longer book, and would require a few days to make it through as a read-aloud. From former slave to "the finest Deputy U.S. Marshal of his time", the word "remarkable" definitely suits Bass Reeves. This would offer another perspective during 4th grade's **Westward Expansion** unit, since Reeves was a peace officer in Indian Territory, where the West's most notorious outlaws would hide. This story would also piece together more of what was happening at the time before and after the **Civil War**. As a runaway slave, Bass was actually taken in by Native Americans. **Social/emotional** character traits of honesty, fairness, duty, bravery, hard work, and determination are well-represented in the book. Bass even tried to talk to those he caught about being better men. **SORA**

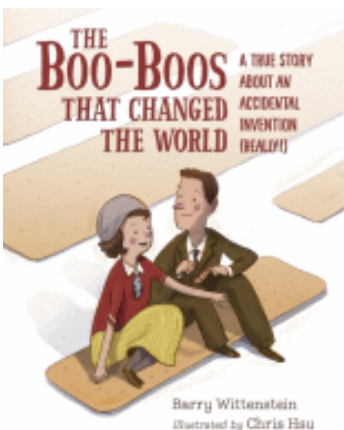


Bartali's Bicycle: The True Story of Gino Bartali, Italy's Secret Hero by Megan Hoyt- This 2021 National Jewish Book Award finalist by author Megan Hoyt and illustrator Iacopo Bruno brings to light the inspiring, true story of Gino Bartali, a beloved Italian cyclist and secret champion in the fight for Jewish lives during World War II.

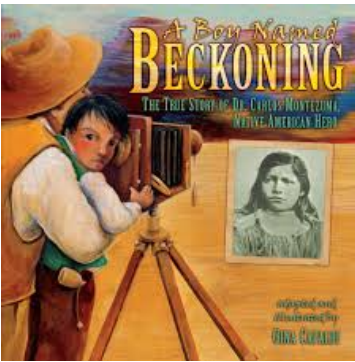
Gino Bartali pedaled across Italy for years, winning one cycling race after another, including the 1938 Tour de France. Gino became an international sports hero! But the next year, **World War II** began, and it changed everything. Soldiers marched into Italy. Tanks rolled down the cobbled streets of Florence. And powerful leaders declared that Jewish people should be arrested.

To the entire world, Gino Bartali was merely a champion cyclist. But Gino's greatest achievement was something he never told a soul—that he secretly worked with the Italian resistance to save hundreds of Jewish men, women, and children, and others, from certain death, using the one thing no authority would question: his bicycle.

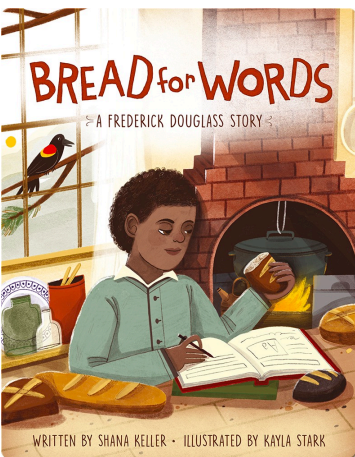
This compelling nonfiction picture book for elementary-age readers offers a unique **perspective** on World War II history. It's a strong choice for units on the war and for **biographies** of lesser-known heroes in history and in sports. Also use for the social emotional trait of **putting others first**.



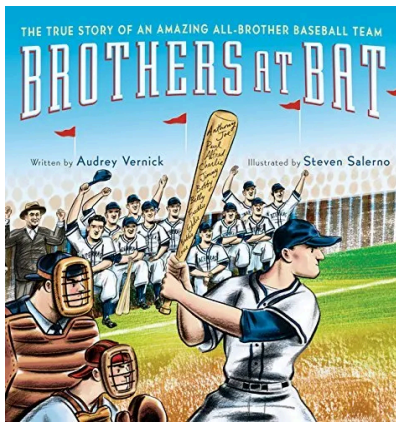
The Boo-Boos that Changed the World by Barry Wittenstein- This incredible read-aloud length picture book can be used for **social/emotional curriculum** by addressing **growth mindset** of how difficulties can turn into opportunities or help people discover ways to help others, like the invention of the band-aid! Could pair with *What Do You Do With a Problem?* Students could build/create/draw a scene from a memory of when someone helped them with something that was difficult for them and have a discussion about it. This would be a great start to a unit on **biographies** and inventors. Students choose their own person or inventor to research (or in pairs). They could create a presentation of what that person is famous for, or make a few symbols to represent items on a timeline and use their creation to share about their person. They could also come up with some problems in the classroom or school or other places and think about what could be invented to help. Show a picture of bandaids in a store now...look how one idea can evolve! **EPIC**



A Boy Named Beckoning: The True Story of Dr. Carlos Montezuma, Native American Hero by Gina Capaldi- This is a longer book, and could be a read-aloud for several days. This gets you right from the beginning when you find out that the book is about a young boy who was taken from his people to be sold into slavery, yet became one of the most respected **Native Americans** of his time, and a learned and respected man. Native Americans were not included in the abolition of slavery. This book would be helpful during the **Westward Expansion** unit in 4th grade curriculum. It really touches on the **social/emotional** standard of empathy, as it is told in **first person point of view** from Carlos' perspective, from a letter he sent to the Smithsonian when they heard about his life. Throughout the book are real pictures. Carlos' adoptive father was a photographer. He fought for the rights of the Native American peoples. Here is a [video about his life](#). "Friend, all was not lost. Through good friends and by my own personal effort in the conflict of life, I have experienced what life means." - Dr. Carlos Montezuma **EPIC**

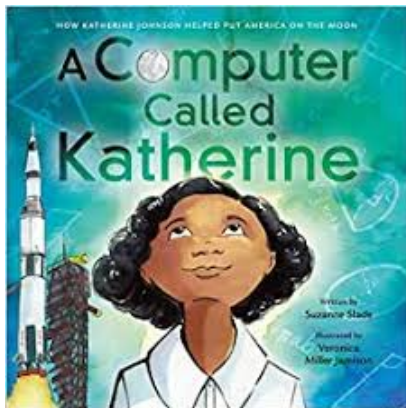


Bread for Words: A Frederick Douglass Story by Shana Keller- While there are a lot of Frederick Douglass stories out there, this one brings it to the perspective of him as a child, written in first person **point of view**. This would be a phenomenal book to use to help students understand what it would have been like to be forced to be a **slave**, and the confusing injustices based on skin color. **Socially and emotionally**, empathy and perseverance are key, and would hold a great discussion taken from the specific examples given. Heading into a unit on the **Civil War** and **biographies**, *Bread for Words* gives a new point of view to a story worth hearing, and an appreciation for school and the **power of reading**. **EPIC**



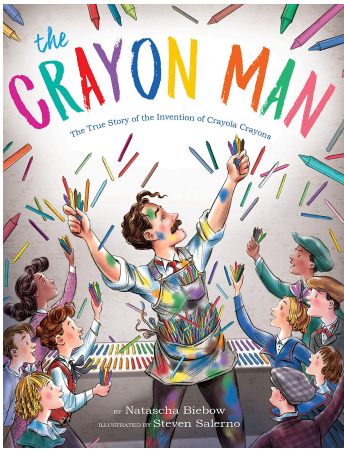
Brothers at Bat: The True Story of an Amazing All-Brother Baseball

Team by Audrey Vernick- This is a very cool, crazy story to be used in the classroom or in **gym** class! This family had 18 kids and 12 boys. The Acerra family made their own baseball team in New Jersey and played other ball teams in the League, even making it into the Baseball Hall of Fame. This is a wonderful story, and **socially/emotionally**, really shows the effectiveness of teamwork and good sportsmanship. It also celebrates strengths and weaknesses. Yes, *celebrates* both of these. The purpose of a team is to know where your strengths and weaknesses lie and help each other. This book also shows the importance of perseverance in the face (no pun intended, as a guy literally lost an eye) of difficulties. The boys also served in **World War II**, so this would be a more upbeat intro to that time period. [SORA](#)

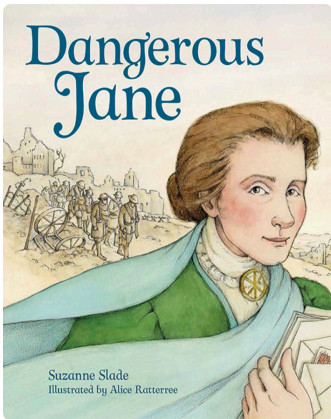


A Computer Called Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Helped Put

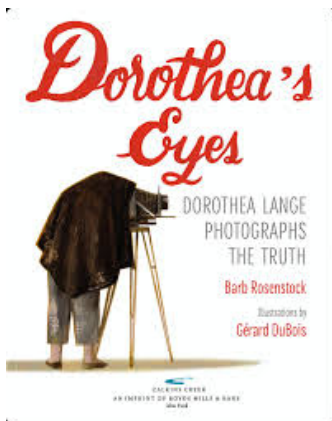
America on the Moon by Suzanne Buckingham Slade- "If you want to know, ask a question. There's no such thing as a dumb question." - Katherine Johnson. **Socially/emotionally**, this is wonderful for **growth mindset** and perseverance. Sharing the story of Katherine Johnson's incredible contribution to the **space** program using her affinity for **mathematics**, this book also touches on issues of inequality and dreams of **equal rights** for all people. This book is a godsend for a math teacher, inciting excitement for the subject through the eyes of Katherine. This would also be an amazing pairing with a space unit. We use Sphero robots in our schools to help teach coding and angles, and have put them to great use as "rovers", where students become NASA scientists to simulate the planning for a soft landing or have to code them on "Mars". This book would definitely energize the kids to learn more about all of these **STEM** topics. There is also a picture book called *Counting the Stars* about Katherine Johnson. [SORA](#)



The Crayon Man by Natascha Biebow- The illustrations are phenomenal, as well as the story of the inventor of Crayola in this read-aloud length picture book! This book is definitely high interest as students all love learning how things are made, and all use crayons! Here is an awesome [Crayon Man Educator's Guide](#) to show kids some of the pictures that go with the story and the edits made along the way to both the text and pictures. Also, this is a great story to pair with Mr. Rogers' [How Crayons Are Made](#) video! Awesome for kicking off a **biography** unit or teaching **story sequence** and **growth mindset**, while learning each student's favorite **color**! It would be fun to bring in a BIG box of Crayola crayons and let the kids do a **bar graph and/or line graph** of favorite colors, and let the little ones practice writing their names in their color of choice! This is also a great tie in to a **rocks and minerals** unit, as that is what was originally used to make the color powders. Show a picture of crayons in a store now...look how one idea can evolve! **EPIC** (as a read-aloud), **SORA**

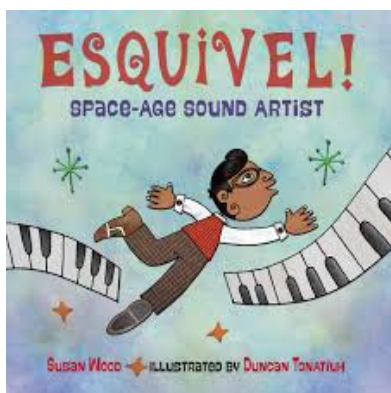


Dangerous Jane by Suzanne Buckingham Slade- This is about Jane Addams, the first female winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. She came from difficulty as a child, losing her mother at a young age and developing a limp, which made her heart reach out to the hurting and needy. She founded Hull House in Chicago, a place where all were welcome. She then led the way to try to stop **World War I** and united women to help all around the world. At first people loved her for helping, but then people were angry that she was trying to help the people that had been their enemies, as well. Jane continued to help anyone in need. This would be a wonderful kick-off to a **biography** or **persuasive writing** unit, as Jane had to persuade others to help with her causes. **EPIC**



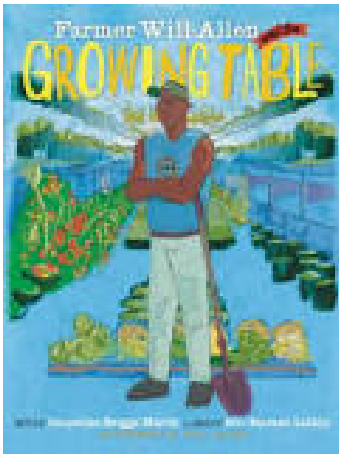
Dorothea's Eyes: Dorothea Lange Photographs the Truth by Barb

Rosenstock- What a story. Dorothea's story begins when she gets polio at a young age, develops a limp, and is made fun of. She notices things that others do not. Wishing she could be invisible, and feeling that way, as well, she loves **observing** others, especially faces. Her father leaves and her mother and her immigrate to America. When she becomes a teen, she announces that she is going to be a photographer, something unheard of for a woman at the time, but she perseveres. During the **Great Depression**, Dorothea realizes she needs to see not only with her eyes, but also with her heart. All of these areas are wonderful for **social/emotional** curriculum. She can't help but take notice of those that others' do not...the poor...the invisible. She becomes an unintentional pioneer of **documentary** photography. I could not believe that she was the photographer behind very famous photographs of that time. What a great story to use with classes to help them work together to really get to know each other and "see" each other. Students could even do documentary pieces on each other at the beginning of the year to really get to know their classmates. A great intro to **biography**, as well. **EPIC**



Esquivel!: Space-Age Sound Artist by Susan Wood-

Juan Esquivel, from Mexico, heard the mariachi bands, and from age 6, loved **music** and playing piano. At 14, Juan found a radio station where he played for 15 minutes a day. He was self-taught, and focused on how sounds made people feel. Juan was very good at imagining sound effects to go with radio programs and during performances, and TV shows. This is an awesome book for teaching **onomatopoeia**. He became a sound artist, painting pictures in people's minds with music, and making them laugh. The [rendition of this book I found on Epic Books](#) played music in the background, which really brought it to life and helped me understand what the text would have sounded like. This is great for kicking off a **biography** unit and would be helpful to share with the music teachers. Students could create their own crazy sound effects during music after writing stories in class. **EPIC**



Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table by Jacqueline Briggs Martin-

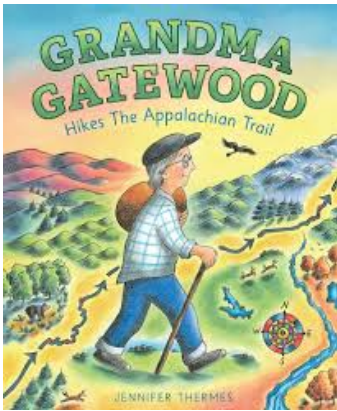
I am so glad that I opened this book. Will Allen, who played professional basketball, grew up without having cars or a TV, but they always had good food and a full table, because they grew it themselves. After realizing his dreams in other ways, he and his wife moved to Milwaukee, where he was saddened by the lack of fresh vegetables and food in the city, and the kids who had never even eaten a ripe tomato. He bought a plot of land, a dump, really, in the city, and got to work. Once turning it into a beautiful urban farm, animals and all, where everyone came to get their produce, eggs, etc., Will began to dream bigger and traveled across the country and world helping others learn how to develop their own urban farms. This book would be amazing for a unit on **farms** or **plants**. **Composting** and worms were a huge part of the success, so this would also be helpful for units on **ecosystems**, **recycling**, and **life-cycles**. **Socially/emotionally**, this is wonderful for noticing needs and taking action. This short, awesome [video on Will and his farms is designed for STEM support](#) and making this story more personal. **EPIC**



Goldie Takes a Stand: Golda Meir's First Crusade by Barbara Krasner-

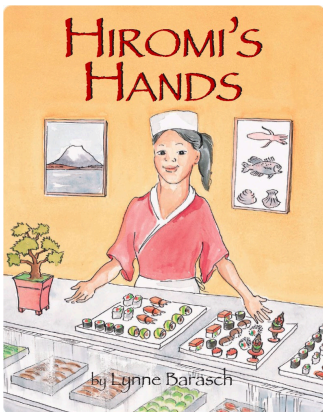
As a young girl, Goldie Mabowehz was the president of the American Young Sisters Society in her town. She decided immigrant children in Milwaukee needed school books to learn and had to figure out how to raise money for them. "Education is the only way to lift ourselves out of poverty," is her quote. **Socially/emotionally**, this book shows that no one is too small to make a difference. Golda immigrated to America as a child, but ended up going back to help Israel as an adult and became the Prime Minister of Israel. When starting a unit on **economics** or **counting money**, this would be an amazing **community-building** book. The class could put their minds together to come up with a cause and ways to raise and count money for it, and realize that they too can make a difference. This would be a neat pairing with *Horton Hears a Who*, reiterating that "A person's a person no matter how small." Dr. Seuss's birthday is March 2nd, and many times, economics is taught in the spring, as well.

EPIC



Grandma Gatewood Hikes the Appalachian Trail by Jennifer Thermes-

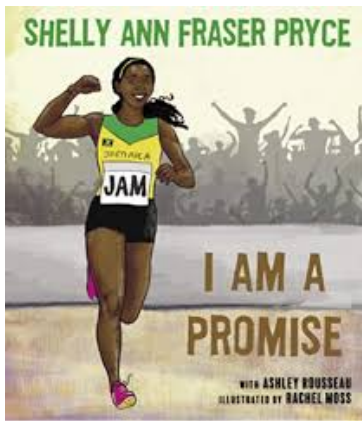
This book is amazing, **socially/emotionally** demonstrating that it is never too late to chase, or hike, after your dreams! With **maps** along the way, and a **timeline** at the end, Emma "Grandma" Gatewood would be a stellar addition to either of these units. For writing, students could create their own book in the same way, sharing about a trip they took, across town, or on a vacation. She is also from Ohio, where I live and teach, so this could definitely be part of an **Ohio studies** unit. There are many videos if you just search online, including a 48 minute documentary, but this was a short and interesting [video about Grandma Gatewood's life and contributions](#). **EPIC**



Hiromi's Hands by Lynne Barasch- Hiromi Suzuki and her family

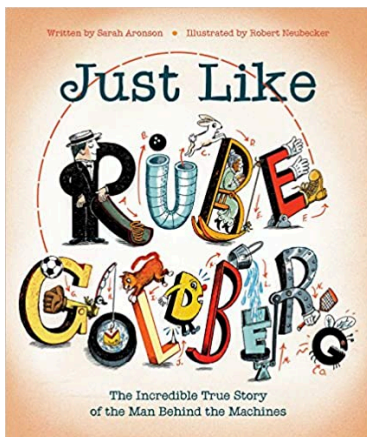
immigrated to America from Japan when she was young. Her father had been hired to be the sushi chef in a top restaurant. In Japan, girls were not allowed to do things that they were able to do in America, so Hiromi shadowed her father and learned how to be just as stellar of a sushi chef, and one of the first female sushi chefs in New York City. This would be a great start to a unit on **cultural** differences and similarities, and **immigration**. It would also be fun to have students try sushi (maybe start with the cooked versions). Fun fact, the author wrote this story because Hiromi became friends with her daughter in kindergarten, when she first immigrated to America. They are still friends today!

EPIC



I am a Promise: Shelly Ann Fraser Pryce by Shelly Ann Fraser Pryce-

This Jamaican six-time Olympic Medal winner began as a poor girl, but followed her gifts and worked hard to not only win gold, but also help many along the way. Another uniquely inspiring story which would be wonderful for **social/emotional** curriculum about not letting your difficult past become your future. Her hard work, determination, and love for those around her has given her the means to now support others' and their dreams. This book is written in first person, so would be wonderful for a point of view lesson. It also uses **similes** and would be helpful for a **figurative language** lesson. Also a beautiful and simple model for an **autobiography** project. Here is a video [Reading with Shelly Ann Fraser Pryce](#). **EPIC**

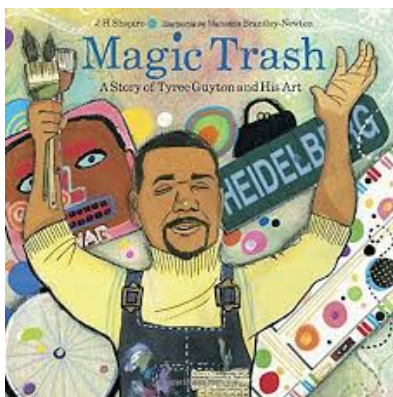


Just Like Rube Goldberg by Sarah Aronson- This book is really neat in

its layout, but would require a bit of ad-libbing to help the kids make sense of it all. But, using the pictures and sharing the story would be a great kick off to **biographies** and another great **growth mindset** book. Just by searching "Rube Goldberg Kids", there are many videos that would inspire students, such as this [Giant Rube Goldberg Machine](#) from *Kids Invent Stuff*. It would be fun to have kids attempt to build their own Rube Goldberg machines, and maybe use this as a kickoff to a **geometry** lesson, letting the kids measure the angles used in their inventions, or a unit on **forces and motion**, or **sequencing**, as Rube Goldberg machines definitely visually showcase how one part has to come before another to have it work...like a story. (Youtube read aloud)



Karl's New Beak by Lela Nargi- This book was AWESOME and so needed! With **3D printers** in almost every one of our elementary schools now, I am ecstatic to find *Karl's New Beak*! This book can be used to help students understand the **real-world problems** that **STEM** subjects and 3D printers can help solve, just as we are challenging them to figure out real-world ways to use it, as well. For example, our Medina public library started making mask extenders and helped us understand how to create that program. We also want to look at things like printing shelves for wobbly desk legs to sit on and creating personalized cookie cutters for Christmas presents. This is a great book for teaching **animal characteristics** and how they connect with their environment. **Socially/emotionally**, I am grateful that they left in the changes that had to be made to Karl's beak to demonstrate that failure is just another step closer to success. Here is an [awesome video of the real life Karl!](#) **SORA**

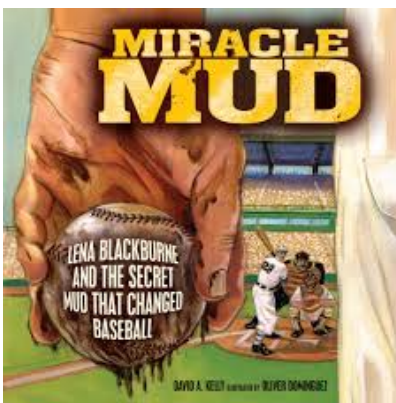


Magic Trash: A Story of Tyree Guyton and His Art by J.H. Shapiro- Wow. Who knew that trash and belief could change people's lives? This would be an awesome book for **art** to use with their curriculum, in conjunction with **social/emotional** curriculum. Tyree was always fairly misunderstood, except by his Grandpa Sam, showing how even one person's encouragement can have a major impact and ripple effect. Tyree loved turning trash into toys or art, as he grew up in a poor and dangerous part of town in Detroit. When he came back as an adult, his street was riddled by violence, riots, and trash. He started painting and turning the trash into art installations. The bad people started leaving, not wanting to be in a house with multi-colored dots painted on it. The city tried to take things down, but then neighbors joined together to stand up for their **community** and Tyree's art, even joining in to make more. From there, Heidelberg Street became a site where people now come to visit. A wonderful kickoff to current **biographies**, Tyree is still with us and travels the world, speaking on the impact of urban art and community. This short [video shows Tyree and his art](#), and speaks to The Heidelberg Project, which he founded to help more cities. **EPIC**

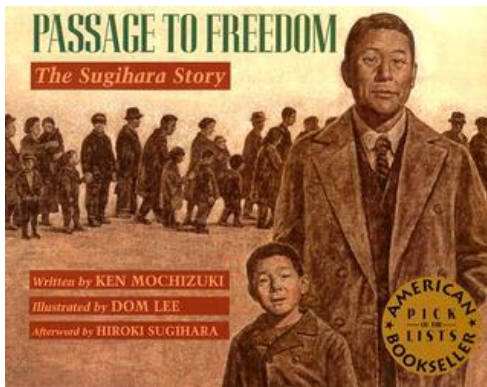


The Marvelous Thing that Came from a Spring by Gilbert Ford- This amazing story is about the unintentional invention of the Slinky! Great with a **biography** or **inventors** unit.

Social/Emotional ties to perseverance, learning from our mistakes, and realizing that they can lead to greater things if we see them as opportunities! This humble toy sold 400 units in less than 2 hours after it was first demonstrated at Gimbel's in Philly! To learn more, click [here!](#) **STEM-** Let students design, draw, and build their own toy/invention using any Maker items.

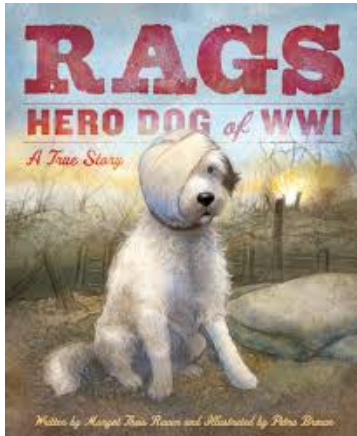


Miracle Mud: Lena Blackburne and the Secret Mud that Changed Baseball by David A. Kelly- Very cool fun fact! Before each Major League game, the baseballs have to be rubbed with a specific mud that was founded by Lena Blackburne, a former player who got tired of soggy baseballs. Who knew that baseballs would be too shiny or get soggy without this special addition? This mud is even in the Baseball Hall of Fame! This book is awesome for kicking off a **biography** unit to demonstrate to students that while the main facts are important, when it comes to finding the fun facts, those are important, as well, as they are what make the person stand out! This would also be a great **social/emotional** book to show how Lena struggled to be a great player, but he was good enough to become a coach, and he was there for a reason. If he would have gotten down, or compared himself with others, he would not have noticed the problem at hand, and used his own gifts to solve it! This would also be a neat book to use in **gym** class. This video, [Baseball's Dirty Little Secret](#), demonstrates the process! **EPIC**



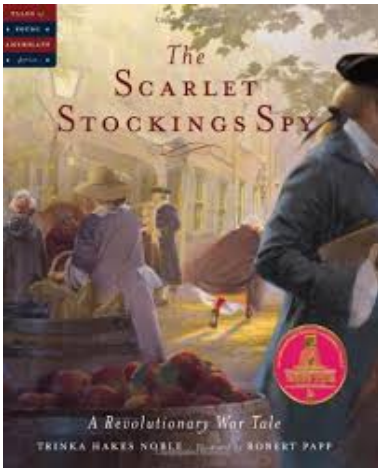
Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story by Ken Mochizuki-

This is a book for older elementary students. Set in Lithuania during **WWII**, this is the story of the Japanese “Shindler”, who saved many Jews from the Holocaust, while he was there as the **ambassador** from Japan. Fifth grade students are generally fascinated by World War II, and **socially/emotionally**, this book is a wonderful take on doing the right thing in the midst of great opposition and consequences. This would be a great opportunity to discuss empathy, as the book talks about always putting yourself in the shoes of another. **EPIC**



Rags: Hero Dog of WWI, a True Story by Margot Raven - A beautiful

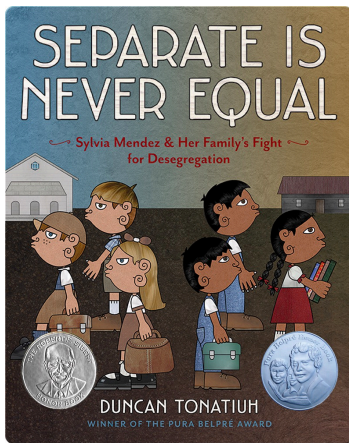
book about a stray dog that an American soldier found in Paris. Rags, named after the appearance of how Donovan found him, became an incredible asset to the Army, helping many men and carrying messages, but always returning faithfully to his owner. The Epilogue of this book is a must read, as the story in the picture book ends rather abruptly. I wish they would have put some of what was in the epilogue in the actual book. **Socially/emotionally**, Rags teaches bravery, loyalty, and not judging by appearances. This would, of course, be a great kick off to a **WWI** unit. If you search, you can find many videos of various lengths about Rags and his contributions to the war. I’m grateful to have found this little hero’s story. **EPIC**



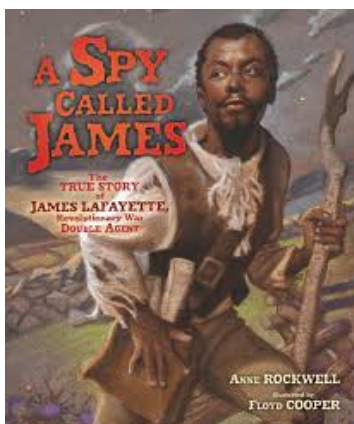
The Scarlet Stockings Spy Trinka Hakes Noble- During the **Revolutionary War**, a girl about the age of our students becomes a spy for George Washington's camp. **Socially/emotionally**, his book would be helpful to help students understand how even kids their age were involved in the war and what it would have been like to live during that time. In a subtle way, the toll of the war is shared throughout the book. This would also be a great intro into **coding** and **symbolism**. Students could develop their own codes and messages and allow peers to solve them. This is also a great story starter for what they think it would have been like if they were the ones who were risking their lives as spies. Students could read the chapter book, *George Washington, Spymaster*, if they wanted more information on this subject. Or, *If You Were a Kid During the American Revolution* (which is a great book for teaching **Main Idea, as is that whole series**). (Youtube read aloud)



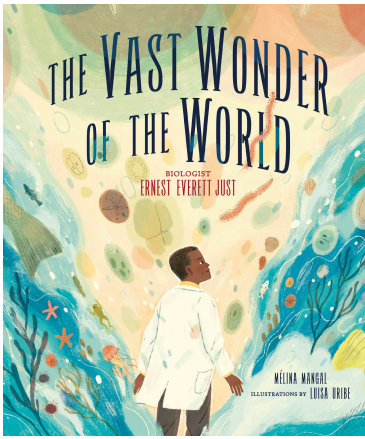
Secret Engineer: How Emily Roebling Built the Brooklyn Bridge by Rachel Dougherty- Right from the beginning this book grabs you, with pictures of workers hanging from the Brooklyn Bridge's cables! What a great start to a **STEM** Design Challenge of Bridge Building! **STEM-** You could mix this with a [Lego Masters clip of the bridge building challenge](#) that tested how much weight their bridges could bear, then give the kids Lego, and time to plan, and it's off to the races! In the pictures, terms such as arch, **radius**, **degrees**, tension, compression, and **weight** are mentioned, which are perfect for **geometry** and **forces** units, as well. **Socially/emotionally**, the way this book highlights learning in the face of adversity is also beautiful to share with students. I just saw that there is another book about this called *How Emily Saved the Bridge*. **SORA**



Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation by Duncan Tonatiuh- This book is wonderful and shares in a heartfelt, straightforward manner the way that the Mendez family fought for what was right. This would be a wonderful book to show and discuss another area of the **civil rights** movement, the clear reasons why separate is not equal, and how people of different races can work together for a common goal. **Social/Emotional** goals are clear in this book, demonstrating the value of others despite appearances, and not giving up in the face of obstacles. **EPIC**

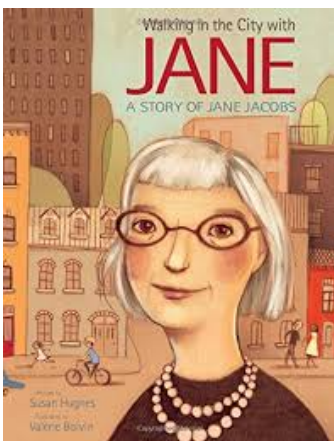


A Spy Called James: The True Story of James Lafayette by Anne Rockwell- During the **Revolutionary War**, a slave trying to earn his freedom by fighting for the Colonies, and **Lafayette** specifically, became a spy against the British, and an unsung hero. The story of how he received his freedom is redemptive and unexpected. This is an awesome book to use with the Revolutionary War unit. This book also is helpful to teach the **social/emotional** trait of looking out for others, not just yourself, in the way Lafayette stood up for James' freedom, as well as how James put his life on the line for what he cared about. Awesome writing prompts and discussion platform, as well. **EPIC**



The Vast Wonder of the World by Melina Mangal- "If I can give the boys and girls a scientific start, it will help them in whatever they may do later." - Ernest Everett Just

This beautifully illustrated picture book shares about Ernest Everett Just, a man who broke the confines of segregation to bring the wonder of the microbiology world of cells to light. This book could be used when having to touch on **reproduction life science** in 5th grade, as it does calmly mention Just's breakthrough discovery about sperm and egg cells in sea animals (on one page). As a biologist, this book could definitely be used to touch on **biography** and **habitats** or **biomes**. Just led the way in helping other scientists see the value in learning more through being gentle and kind to the animals and their natural environments. This is also a great book for **social/emotional** development and **growth mindset**, as Just was a big proponent of observational learning and asking questions. If a class is about to use **microscopes**, this would be an awesome kick-off book. This book also touches on **racial issues** in a calm, but direct way, and would open helpful class discussion. **EPIC**

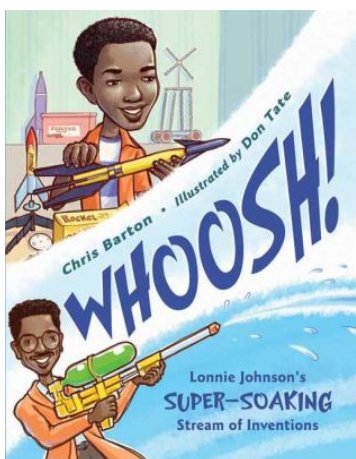


Walking in the City with Jane: A Story of Jane Jacobs by Susan Hughes- This book is a timely find, as it is about the importance of **community**. Jane saw things that other people missed. And when she moved to the big city, she realized that it, too, was its own ecosystem. So, when others wanted to bulldoze and remove parks and old buildings in the name of progress, she stood her ground and convinced the authorities of what also makes a city great. This book would be an amazing start to an **ecosystems** unit, as it inspires students to really observe and be aware of the ecosystems around them. It also helps with the **social/emotional** goals of perseverance and care for the environment and people around you, as well as standing up for what you believe in. There are now "Jane's Walk" in many cities to celebrate Jane's life and contributions of livability and walkability in cities. This would also be a great kick off to **careers**, as Jane was a noted journalist and married to an architect. Take a look at this intriguing video, [The Jane Jacobs' Tour](#). **EPIC**



What Miss Mitchell Saw by Hayley Barrett- America's First Female Professional **Astronomer**, Maria (Pronounced Mariah) Mitchell, is celebrated in this book. This would be great for a **careers** unit, as she started as a little girl, then a teacher, then a librarian, then onto being the first to spot a world-wide phenomenon, which is still named after her today. This can be used with units on **space** and **constellations**. It also lends to career introductions, as what she learned as a little girl became her hobby, and eventually, her career. She was hired by the U.S. Government and was also a **professor** of astronomy. She was also very active in **social causes**, such as the abolition of slavery. Students could create constellations with Legos or other materials.

[SORA](#)



Whoosh! Lonnie Johnson's SUPER-SOAKING Stream of Inventions by Chris Barton- This book is a wonderful **social/emotional** resource for teaching the character trait of perseverance and not giving up, even when others are negative or when obstacles stand in your way. I love that this book starts with Lonnie at the same age as our school kids. This touches lightly on **racial issues**. Using this book during a **space** unit would be awesome and unexpected, as Lonnie was the **engineer** in charge of finding a solution for **NASA's** Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and is wonderful for **STEM**. Unexpectedly, while trying to create something else, Lonnie invented the super soaker! This would also be a great start to the **science fair** or other science units. Also great intro to careers. Cool [video with Lonnie Johnson](#) on how he invented the super soaker and other facts. **EPIC** Also, on [MackinVIA](#) there is an unlimited copy biography on Lonnie Johnson.