

Great Books to Give as Gifts 2010

The Youngest Ones

[Posy](#) by Linda Newbery, illus. by Catherine Rayner 9781416971122 Posy the kitten scampers through a busy day tangling yarn and catching spiders. Her antics are described with minimalist art and playful rhyming text perfect for the youngest reader.

[Shark vs. Train](#) by Chris Barton, illus. by Tom Lichtenheld 9780316007627 By pitting a cartoon train and shark against each other in a series of increasingly ludicrous challenges (the train's heft is a liability in a hot air balloon race, but very effective on a seesaw), Barton and Lichtenheld tap into kids' innate ability to turn anything, anything into a competition.

[My Garden](#) by Kevin Henkes 9780061715174 A young girl helps her mother weed the garden and imagines growing seashells, jelly bean bushes, and more.

[Dogs](#) by Emily Gravett 9781416987031 Lovable dogs, big and small, tough and gentle, are depicted in playful watercolors.

[I Am a Backhoe](#) by Anna Grossnickle Hines 9781582463063 Truck lovers will find their favorites here.

[Children Make Terrible Pets](#) by Peter Brown 9780316015486 Lucy, an over-the-top feminine bear cub, finds a boy and wants to keep him as a pet.

[LMNO Peas](#) by Keith Baker 9781416991410 Featuring a range of zippy characters from Acrobat Peas to Zoologist Peas, this delightful picture book highlights a variety of interests, hobbies, and careers--each one themed to a letter of the alphabet.

The Natural World

[Shades of People](#) by Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly 9780823421916 Images of happy children with many shades and colors of skin show the beauty of all people inside and out.

[Redwoods](#) by Jason Chin 9781596434301 Jason imaginatively steps into his book about redwoods and embarks on an adventurous exploration climbing through the canopy of these giants.

[Down, Down, Down: A Journey to the Bottom of the Sea](#) by Steve Jenkins 9780618966363 This irresistible underwater exploration reveals the mysteries of the sea by going deeper and deeper and deeper from top to bottom, viewing little known creatures and encountering spaces where few have ever been.

[Ubiquitous: Celebrating Nature's Survivors](#) by Joyce Sidman and Beckie Prange 9780618717194 A tribute to the living creatures who have survived millions of years of evolution by developing unique characteristics, from the beetle's sturdy wings to the gecko's sticky toe pads.

[Farm](#) by Elisha Cooper 9780545070751 Breathtaking watercolor panoramas, which portray endless expanses of farmland, with matter-of-fact prose takes readers through a year of planting, caring for crops and animals, harvesting, and preparing to begin the cycle once again.

Poetry

[A Whiff of Pine, A Hint of Skunk: A Forest of Poems](#) by Deborah Ruddell, illus. by Joan Rankin 9781416942115 Clever rhyming verse showcases a variety of forest animals throughout the seasons.

[Mother Poems](#) by Hope Anita Smith 9780805082319 This touching collection of free verse poems explores a child's view of her mother and their life together, then expresses raw emotions after her mother's death.

[The Tree That Time Built](#) by Mary Ann Hoberman and Linda Winston, illus. by Barbara Fortin 9781402225178 Celebrates the world of nature and science, with a focus on the Earth's origins and the need to protect and preserve the environment.

Inspiring People

[Summer Birds: The Butterflies of Maria Merian](#) by Margarita Engle, illus. by Julie Paschkis, 9780805089370 Documents the work of Maria Merian, who lived during the Middle Ages and disproved the theory of spontaneous generation by observing caterpillars as they spun cocoons and emerged as butterflies and moths in the spring.

[You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax?!](#) by Jonah Winter, illus. by André Carrilho. 9780375837388 Sandy Koufax's achievements as a great left-handed pitcher come to life in dramatic and dynamic illustrations coupled with smatterings of alluring facts and figures.

[Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice](#) by Phillip Hoose 9780374313227 Nine months before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus, a 15-year-old girl was arrested for defying the same Montgomery, Alabama bus laws. This is her long-neglected story.

Other Non-Fiction Stand-Outs

[Pharaoh's Boat](#) by David L. Weitzman 9780547053417 Meticulously created, hieroglyphic-like illustrations along with a detailed text reveal the riddle of reconstructing a regal boat commissioned by Cheops, the Pharaoh, to journey into the afterlife.

[The War to End All Wars: World War I](#) by Russell Freedman 9780547026862 An introduction to World War I, explains its relevance as a conflict that involved many nations and casualties, while introducing modern weaponry and military strategies that have shaped all subsequent wars.

Fun with Fiction

[I Spy Fly Guy!](#) by Tedd Arnold 9780545110280 A disastrous ending to a game of hide and seek finds Fly Guy hauled away to the local dump in this new take on a lost pet. (kindergarten-first grade)

[How Oliver Olson Changed the World](#) by Claudia Mills, illus. by Heather Maione 9780374334871 A third-grade science project gives Oliver the confidence to break free from his overprotective parents in this humorous, realistic school story. (second –third grade)

[The Small Adventure of Popeye and Elvis](#) by Barbara O'Connor 9780374370558 Popeye grabs at a chance for adventure and friendship when a boy his age named Elvis rolls into the sleepy town of Fayette. (third-fifth grade)

[One Crazy Summer](#) by Rita Williams-Garcia 9780060760885 When Delphine and her two younger sisters arrive in Oakland, California, in the summer of 1968 to spend time with their long-absent mother, they learn more than they bargained for. (third- fifth grade)

[Troll's Eye View: A Book of Villainous Tales](#), edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling. 9780670061419 Fifteen deeply twisted, fantastically funny, and hauntingly human fairy tales are told from the point of view of the villain in this excellent collection of very grim short stories. (fifth-eighth grade)

[A Faraway Island](#) by Annika Thor and Linda Schenck, 9780385905909 In 1939 Sweden, two Jewish sisters wait for their parents to flee the Nazis in Austria, but while eight-year-old Nellie settles in quickly, twelve-year-old Stephanie feels stranded with a foster mother who is cold and unforgiving. (fifth-eighth grade)

Graphic Novels and Cartooning

[Adventures in Cartooning](#) by James Sturm, Andrew Arnold and Alexis Frederick-Frost 9781596433694 The Magic Cartooning Elf mesmerizes readers with the story of a knight and a princess that also provides step-by-step instruction for creating cartoons.

[Smile](#) by Raina Telgemeier 9780545132060 An autobiography in graphic novel format describes how the author lost two of her front teeth in an accident when she was twelve, and her subsequent struggles with various corrective dental techniques throughout adolescence. (grade four-six)

[Ghostopolis](#) by Doug Tennapel 9780545210270 Accidentally transported to the spirit world by a washed-out ghost wrangler, Garth Hale discovers that he wields unique powers aggressively coveted by the spirits around him and teams up with his grandfather's ghost to find a way back home.

[The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian](#), by Sherman Alexie, 0316013684 Budding cartoonist Junior leaves his troubled school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

Grown-ups on Your List

[Mennonite in a Little Black Dress: A Memoir of Going Home](#) by Rhoda Janzen, 9780805089257 A poet describes how, after her husband left her for a relationship with a man and she subsequently was seriously injured in a car crash, she returned home to her close-knit Mennonite family and came to terms with her failed marriage and her choices in life.

[For Better: The Science of a Good Marriage](#) by Tara Parker-Pope 9780525951384 Challenges popular misconceptions about marriage and divorce, drawing on scientific insights to address such topics as the biology of infidelity, the probabilities of marital success, and how to overcome hidden attitudes.

[Shadow Tag](#) by Louise Erdrich 9780061536090 After she discovers that her husband has been reading her diary, Irene America turns it into a manipulative farce, while secretly keeping a second diary that includes her true thoughts about her shaky marriage, its affect on her children, and her struggles with alcohol.

[Country Driving: A Journey Through China From Farm to Factory](#) by Peter Hessler 9780061804090 Hessler chronicles the effects of an expanding road network on the rapidly changing lives of individual Chinese.

Most of the annotations are from Baker and Taylor's Title Source III

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