

Informational Books

Aliki. *My Five Senses*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1962. ISBN 0690047924

Our five senses open doorways to all there is to know about our world. A young child discovers the importance of each of our senses, alone or combined, in making us aware of all that is around us. Appealing illustrations invite children to take another look at this book.

☞ Related Reading: *Animal Senses*, *The Magic School Bus Explores the Senses*, *Touching and Feeling*, *Rain* (Stojic); *Sense Suspense*, *Touch the Poem* (the five senses)

Arnosky, Jim. *All About Turtles*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2000. ISBN 0590481495.

Jim Arnosky's encompassing illustrations use every centimetre on the page. Starting with the title page and the next two double-page spreads, one is shown the actual size of an alligator snapping turtle. This imaginative way of portraying a life-size picture is just the beginning of a book full of facts about the fascinating world of turtles. It is a worthy book in the All About series which will keep children returning for more.

☞ Related Reading: *Starfish*, *All About Alligators*, *Humpback Goes North*, *Giant Turtle*, *Aska's Sea Creatures*, *They Swim the Seas* (sea creatures)

Baker, Jeannie. *The Story of Rosy Dock*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1995. ISBN 0688114911.

Throughout her collage illustrations, Jeannie Baker captures the extraordinary beauty of the desert in Central Australia through its cycles of rain and drought. However, in this story, Baker also shows how the landscape is changing as a result of planting the non-native plant, rosy dock. Without normal predators, this plant seed is being spread by dust storms and is multiplying quickly, thus pushing native plants to extinction. The story of "Rosy Dock" has been made into an animated film.

☞ Related Reading: *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*, *Sea Otter Inlet*, *Ladybug Garden*, *Window* (ecology)

Beeler, Selby B. *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions from Around the World* (illus. G. Brian Karas). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1998. ISBN 0395891086.

This book takes one around the world to discover tooth traditions from many countries. Some traditions are shared by many countries and some countries have many traditions. Losing a tooth is very important to young children who will take delight in sharing the tooth traditions of so many other children. This is not a book that has to be shared in one session. It is a book to keep in a classroom library to return to whenever a student loses a tooth. The humorous, somewhat childlike illustrations further enhance the inviting appeal of the book.

☞ Related Reading: *The Real Tooth Fairy*, *Little Rabbit's Loose Tooth* (losing a tooth)

Cole, Henry. *Jack's Garden*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1995. ISBN 068815283X.

This cumulative book describes the growth of Jack's garden from unturned soil to lush growth. Using a creative feature, Henry Cole expands the focus of each page by including in the borders, illustrations and labelling to show the parts of nature that come together to help Jack grow a beautiful garden. Realistic artwork details the wonder of nature as we see it in a garden.

Related Reading: *Wonderful Worms*, *The Kids Canadian Plant Book*, *This Is Your Garden*, *Dandelions: Stars in the Grass*, *Down to Earth* (gardens)

Cole, Joanna. *My Puppy is Born* (photo. Margaret Miller). New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991. ISBN 0688101984.

Fascinating and funny photographs, supported by text appropriate for young children, make this a delightful and appealing story of the first eight weeks of a puppy's life. The miracle of birth and the mischievous antics of a young pup entice the reader to return often to this book.

Related Reading: *How Puppies Grow*, *Puppy: See How They Grow*, *Our Puppies Are Growing*

Cowley, Joy. *Red-Eyed Tree Frog* (illus. Nic Bishop). New York: Scholastic Press, 1999. ISBN 0590871757.

One plucky red-eyed tree frog, found in the rain forest of Central America, searches throughout the night for something to eat while being careful not to become dinner for some other animal. The photographs are bold and spectacular close-ups that capture the wonder of this tiny creature.

Related Reading: *Frogs and Toads*, *Fabulous Frogs*

George, Jean Craighead. *Look to the North: A Wolf Pup Diary* (illus. Lucia Washburn). New York: HarperCollins, 1997. ISBN 0060236418.

Children are fascinated by the connections of time to which Jean Craighead George refers as she writes about each stage of a wolf puppy's growth. She consistently tells her readers/listeners to look to the North when certain things are happening in the reader's environment, such as dandelions turning silver. That is when wolf pups are being born. By naming three wolf pups and telling of their survival and adventures, she makes the wolf very real to children. The illustrations, wild and beautiful, keep children focused on each pup as they follow its growth. This is a book to be shared on repeated occasions.

Related Reading: *Song of the North*, *Sirko and the Wolf* (wolves)

Gibbons, Gail. *Exploring the Deep, Dark Sea*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1999. ISBN 0316309451.

This fascinating, fact-filled, well-illustrated book gives us a glimpse into a hugely unexplored part of our earth and reveals an underwater world that is magical and mysterious. Underwater vehicles - a submersible and an ROV - explore the zones of the ocean from the sunlight zone to the abyss and even further into the trenches - deep cracks in the ocean floor. A time line records the past, present and future of underwater research. This is an amazing guide for young children.

☞ Related Reading: *Sunken Treasure*, *The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor*, *This is the Sea that Feeds Us* (the sea)

Gibbons, Gail. *Spiders*. New York: Holiday House, 1993. ISBN 0823410064.

Spiders inhabited the earth before dinosaurs. Their silk is three times stronger than steel thread the same thickness. These and other interesting facts about physical characteristics, behaviour, habitats and different kinds of spiders are presented in this informative text. Vivid colours and detailed drawings contribute to this book's appeal.

☞ Related Reading: *I Love Spiders*, *The Very Busy Spider* (fiction); *Spectacular Spiders*, *Spider's Nest*, *Spiders Spin Webs*, *I didn't know that spiders have fangs and other amazing facts about arachnids* (non-fiction)

Godkin, Celia. *Ladybug Garden*. Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1995. ISBN 1550410830.

The ecosystem of a garden is brilliantly displayed in this informational story. Children will clearly see how all of the life in a garden is linked and what will happen if a necessary creature, in this case the ladybug, is removed from the ecosystem. The text is detailed, but explained within a story context, which simplifies the message for children. The illustrations are vibrant, with double-page spreads. They are eye-catching and seem to zoom in on some of the insects, which will delight youthful readers and listeners.

☞ Related Reading: *The Grouchy Ladybug*, *Sea Otter Inlet*, *The Hidden Forest*, *Are You A Ladybug?* (ecology)

Granfield, Linda. *In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem by John McCrae* (illus. Janet Wilson). Toronto: Lester Publishing Ltd., 1995. ISBN 1895555655.

This book can be appreciated on several levels. For younger children who have just a basic understanding of war, a reading of the beautifully illustrated poem will be enough. The illustrations truly reflect the mood and the happenings of this famous poem. For children who are ready for more, there is information about the First World War, the soldiers who fought in it, and the creator of the poem. The paintings are accompanied by posters, postcards, and artifacts which add to the authenticity of this well-presented book.

☞ Related Reading: *One More Border*, *So Far from the Sea*, *The Roses in my Carpets*, *The Butterfly*, *The Lotus Seed*, *A Time for Toys* (war/Remembrance Day)

Guiberson, Brenda Z. *Cactus Hotel* (illus. Megan Lloyd). New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1991. ISBN 0805013334.

A tiny seed from the fruit of the saguaro cactus will slowly grow into a 50 foot plant, its growing time being 150 years. During that time, desert creatures build comfortable homes and nesting places in the cactus. As one animal leaves, another takes its place, ensuring a high occupancy rate in this cactus “hotel”. Even after it crumbles to the desert floor, spiders and insects move in to extend the usefulness of the cactus. The rich illustrations help to celebrate the contribution of the cactus to desert life.

☞ Related Reading: *Deserts*, *Welcome to the Sea of Sand*, *Watching Desert Wildlife* (deserts)

Hickman, Pamela. *The Kids Canadian Bug Book* (illus. Heather Collins). Toronto: Kids Can Press, 1995. ISBN 1550742310.

This book belongs to the Kids Canadian nature series. It provides general information about insects - the three main body parts, types of life cycles, various habitats, migrating and/or hibernating patterns, as well as food preferences. At least 50 insects are introduced in this book. Simple projects are also outlined for discovering bugs in your environment.

☞ Related Reading: *Bugs for Lunch*, *Big Bugs*, *Have You Seen Bugs?*

Hirschi, Ron. *Fall* (photographs by Thomas D. Mangelsen). New York: Cobblehill Books, 1991. ISBN 0525650539.

This book belongs to the Wildlife Seasons quartet. Its clear photographs and simple text introduce the young reader to the characteristics of Autumn as it relates to the plants and animals. The dying plants such as the lilies and larkspurs leave seed for new life. The abundance of cones, nuts, berries and wild mushrooms help the animals to prepare for their hibernation or migration. The call of the passing geese, the colour of the leaves and the frosty mornings tell that Winter is near.

☞ Related Reading: *Winter*, *Spring* (author); *In the Woods: Who's Been Here?*; *Every Autumn Comes the Bear*, *The First Red Maple Leaf*, *Autumn Leaves*, *Fall is Here! I Love It!*

Isadora, Rachel. *Young Mozart*. New York: Viking, 1997. ISBN 0670871206.

A child prodigy, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, before he was 7 years old, dazzled audiences including royalty throughout Europe, with his compositions and virtuoso musicianship. Recounting Mozart's life as a prolific composer of hundreds of works, the author/illustrator embellishes the story of this musical genius with warm, detailed watercolours.

☞ Related Reading: *Bach's Big Adventure*, *The Great Poochini*, *The Story of the Incredible Orchestra*, *Sebastian: A Book About Bach*, *Beethoven Lives Upstairs*, *Mozart Tonight* (biographies)

Jenkins, Martin. *Chameleons Are Cool* (illus. Sue Shields). Cambridge: Candlewick Press, 1997. ISBN 0763601446.

This is one cool book! The text starts on the beginning end pages, drawing children into the life of a chameleon at first glance. The last end pages have an index and a reminder to the reader to read both types of font that are used throughout the book. The watercolour illustrations have a cartoonish effect, which, coupled with the informational text, offer an unusual presentation. This is sure to be a favourite among children.

☞ Related Reading: *What Is A Reptile?*, *Verdi* (reptiles); *The Mixed-Up Chameleon* (fiction)

Jenkins, Martin. *The Emperor's Egg* (illus. Jane Chapman). Cambridge: Candlewick Press, 1999. ISBN 0763605573.

From the front end pages to the last, information jumps out at the reader in various formats. The large fonts are fantastic, accompanied by magnificent illustrations. Facts about Emperor penguins are interspersed with the story about a specific Emperor penguin. The paintings are irresistible and the facts are authentic. This book is a feast for penguin lovers.

☞ Related Reading: *Antarctic Antics*, *Antarctica*, *Solo*, *Ice Continent: A Story of Antarctica* (Emperor penguins)

Kalman, Bobbie. *Hooray for Orchards!* New York: Crabtree Publishing Company, 1998. ISBN 0865056536.

This informational book, complete with glossary and index, takes us through the many stages of fruit growing. Drawings and photographs are used to illustrate the abundance of information. We learn about the many kinds of fruit, orchards, pollination, pests and harvesting. We end with a recipe for apple crisp which involves the reader in a multi-sensory way.

☞ Related Reading: *The Life and Times of the Apple*, *The Apple Pie Tree*, *The Apple Trees* (apples)

Krupp, E. C. *The Rainbow and You* (illus. Robin Rector Krupp). New York: HarperCollins, 2000. ISBN 0688156029.

Both the text and the brilliant illustrations provide interesting facts about the rainbow. The reader is informed of various myths and legends of ancient cultures in an effort to explain the rainbow. The scientific principle for the formation of rainbows is discussed with an excellent diagram showing the colours of sunlight passing through a raindrop.

☞ Related Reading: *Ulaq and the Northern Lights*, *Theodoric's Rainbow* (natural phenomena)

Locker, Thomas. *Sky Tree*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. ISBN 0060248831.

Thomas Locker combines poetic text with magnificent oil paintings to connect Science and Art. We are taken through one year in the life of a tree. We learn the effect of the seasons on the tree and how this in turn, affects the animal life in the tree. Each page has a question to elicit discussion amongst people who share the book. Then, when the text ends, there are discussion pages for further reflection. This book can be enjoyed at many levels - for its sheer beauty, for the story of the tree's life and for further exploration.

☞ Related Reading: *The Gift of the Tree, Have You Seen Trees?, A Tree Is Nice, Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf, The Kids Canadian Tree Book, Old Elm Speaks: Tree Poems* (trees)

Micklethwait, Lucy. *Spot A Dog: A Child's Book of Art*. New York: Dorling Kindersley, 1995. ISBN 0751353353.

As children search through each painting trying to spot the dog, they will be exposed to art from different periods. The text is simple and the font large, making it appealing to young readers. However, the artwork, emphasizing colour, shape, light and pattern, makes the look suitable for many ages. It is a valuable introduction to the world of fine art.

☞ Related Reading: *I Spy Numbers, I Spy Animals, A Child's Book of Art: Discover Great Paintings, A Child's Book of Art: Great Pictures First Words, Michelangelo* (art)

Rockwell, Lizzy. *Good Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999. ISBN 0060274344.

This children's guide to nutrition describes the six categories of nutrients needed for good health, how they work in the body, and what foods provide each nutrient. Included, as well, is the food pyramid, a special calorie section, and recipes designed for adults and children to cook together. The visual format in this book is effective for classifying information.

☞ Related Reading: *Why are pineapples prickly?, Questions children ask about food, Bread Bread Bread* (food/nutrition)

Rosen, Michael J. *All Eyes on the Pond* (illus. Tom Leonard). New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 1994. ISBN 1562824759.

Written in rhyming text, this book presents a view of a pond environment as seen through the eyes of many creatures that inhabit it. Beautifully-detailed illustrations invite the reader into the "muddy deep", to "where air and water form a line" and to many other parts of the pond. The views are as diverse as the creatures themselves.

☞ Related Reading: *Pond Seasons* (poetry); *Marshes and Swamps, Pond Year* (information); *Gilbert de la frogponde* (fiction)

Ryan, Pam Munoz. *A Pinky Is a Baby Mouse and other baby animal names* (illus. Diane deGroat). New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 1997. ISBN 0786802405.

Did you know that a baby boa is a neonate and a baby eel is an elver? The rhyming text helps us to learn the newborn names of over 100 creatures, many of them captured in their habitats in the beautiful watercolour illustrations. One can hardly resist the sweet baby faces found in the barnyard, the forest, the ocean and the rainforest.

☞ Related Reading: *A Time for Babies*, *Does A Kangaroo Have A Mother, Too?*, *Mothers Are Like That, Is Your Mama A Llama?* (baby animals)

Schnur, Steven. *Spring: An Alphabet Acrostic* (illus. Leslie Evans). New York: Clarion Books, 1999. ISBN 0395822696.

The essence of Spring is captured in this acrostic verse, from the last vestige of Winter to the beginning of Summer. So many aspects of Spring - rebirth, outdoor activities, and the surrounding world - are vividly imprinted in our minds because of the evocative words and the vivid illustrations. The book enjoins the reader to explore the world of Spring.

☞ Related Reading: *Autumn, An Alphabet Acrostic* (author); *Spring, When Spring Comes, First Comes Spring* (season); *Cold Little Duck, Duck, Duck* (fiction/Spring)

Seuling, Barbara. *Winter Lullaby* (illus. Greg Newbold). New York: Browndeer Press, 1998. ISBN 0152014039.

For those children who wonder what animals do to keep safe and warm in Winter, this book supplies the answer in gentle verse. First a question is asked, to which it is responded with captivating illustrations and informational rhyme. The language is deceptively simple, combining prose and poetic text. The book progresses naturally from Fall through Winter, lending itself to be read in two seasons.

☞ Related Reading: *Each Living Thing*, *Dear Rebecca*, *Winter Is Here* (animals in Winter)

Singer, Marilyn. *A Wasp Is Not A Bee* (illus. Patrick O'Brien). New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995. ISBN 080502820X.

The illustrations and text help readers to distinguish between certain animals that people often confuse. Contrasts are made between wasp and bee, spider and insect, salamander and lizard, crocodile and alligator and others. The reader is informed how these animals vary in such characteristics as size, shape, colour, skin, voice and behaviour. The amazing diversity of the animal kingdom is portrayed throughout this book.

☞ Related Reading: *A Whale Is Not A Fish and Other Animal Mix-ups* (format); *The Dodo Is Dead and Other Questions About Extinct and Endangered Animals* (animal information)

Stevens, Janet. *From Pictures To Words: A Book About Making a Book*. New York: Holiday House, 1995. ISBN 0823412717.

“Writing a book is hard,” admits renowned illustrator, Janet Stevens, in this unique book that demonstrates one way to integrate the elements of a story - title, character, problem, plot, setting - with the processes that lead to publication - sketching the artwork, laying out a storyboard, discussions with editors, revisions, and making a dummy. The imaginary aspects of creating a book are brought to life in watercolour while the real-life features, including a self-portrait, are presented in pencil. An inviting book with humorous dialogue between the author and her imaginary characters, this is a great support for young authors and illustrators.

☞ Related Reading: *How A Book Is Published, What Do Authors Do?, Breaking Into Print* (writing)

Sturges, Philemon. *Bridges Are To Cross* (illus. Giles Laroche). New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1998. ISBN 0399231749.

This fascinating book of bridges takes the reader around the world, from olden days to the present day, crossing a myriad of bridges. Each double-page spread hosts an actual bridge intricately illustrated with cut paper. The text includes a descriptive sentence in large font, then the name, place and date of the bridge, and thirdly, information about the bridge in a small font. The design of the book allows it to benefit children of various ages.

☞ Related Reading: *The House Book, Homes Around the World, Tunnels Are Round and Other Questions About Building, The Busy Building Book, The Best Book of Trains* (architecture)

Swinburne, Stephen R. *Unbeatable Beaks* (illus. Joan Paley). New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999. ISBN 0805048022.

This enthralling book of bird beaks almost assaults the senses with its vibrant colours. Each bird collage is labelled so that the reader almost needs to go through the book for the first time just looking at the illustrations and reading the labels. A second reading will then allow one to enjoy the rhyming text which describes the beaks of the various birds. The book ends with a beak-matching page which children will enjoy and a glossary of the many birds.

☞ Related Reading: *Have You Seen Birds?, The Kids Canadian Bird Book, Birdsong, Watching Water Birds, About Birds* (birds); *Beach Feet* (format)

Waldman, Sarah. *Light: the first seven days* (illus. Neil Waldman). New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993. ISBN 0152208704.

A father and daughter combine their talents to retell the story of creation from the Book of Genesis. The colourful paintings and the simple text make this an enjoyable story for young children. The use of large white print on a black background is also a very effective format for this story.

☞ Related Reading: *Two By Two* (bible story); *One Wide River to Cross, The Dreamer* (gospel song)

Wistow, David and McKinley, Kelly. *Meet the Group of Seven*. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 1999. ISBN 1550744941.

This is an excellent choice to educate students about the Canadian artists known as The Group of Seven. The book provides the history of the group, telling how, what and where they painted. It contains many interesting facts, with artwork to illustrate each point. For those familiar with the Group of Seven, this will be an exciting book. For newcomers, it will be an inspiring introduction.

☞ Related Reading: *Art of the Far North, The Clay Ladies, Images of Nature: Canadian Poets and the Group of Seven, If you're not from the prairie...* (Canadian art)

Yolen, Jane. *Welcome to the Green House* (illus. Laura Regan). New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1993. ISBN 0399223355.

The exotic illustrations take us centre-deep into the rainforest. This book assails the senses as we are tempted to reach out and touch the hanging sloth or to dip our fingers into the waters with the silver fish. Written in poetic text, this book offers information that is rich in luxuriant language. One learns about the animals and their surroundings in a meaningful way. The last page provides information about the endangered rainforests and an address to help with preservation. This book will provide many avenues of thought for young readers.

☞ Related Reading: *Rain Forest, Here Is the Tropical Rain Forest, Nature's Green Umbrella: Tropical Rain Forests, Up A Rainforest Tree* (rain forests)

