

## **Character Education:**

Ida, Always  
All Are Welcome Here  
The Big Umbrella  
We're all Wonders  
My Mouth is a Volcano  
Rosie Revere, Engineer  
Henry's Freedom Box  
Zen Shorts  
Going Places  
The Friend Ship

## **Math:**

### **Number Sense:**

**One Hundred Hungry Ants:** You can cover quite a few skills with this one! Reinforce factors, prime/composite, square numbers, skip counting, and patterns with these ants who are determined to make it to a picnic.

**Math Curse:** I love this one for the beginning of the year! Your students will realize math is almost everywhere in their daily lives with this one. As an extension, challenge your students to identify math in the real world and create their own word problems.

**Math Appeal, The Grapes of Math, and Math Potatoes:** This series of math riddles will stretch your students' problem solving abilities and encourage faster/easier math computations.

**Great Estimations:** This book is such a hit! Do you know those people who are just uncannily good at those "guess how many objects are in a jar" questions? THIS book will help your students master estimations too.

**Math-terpieces The Art of Problem Solving:** Explore the four basic rules of problem solving. This one is challenging and also incorporates art history.

## **Measurement and Geometry**

**How Big Is A Foot:** The king wants to give the queen a bed, but how on earth will he figure out what size to make it?? Practice standard and nonstandard measurements with this fun read aloud.

**Spaghetti and Meatballs for All:** This is a *delicious* book for practicing perimeter and area.

**The Greedy Triangle:** Find out what happens when this triangle keeps adding angels and shapeshifting into other polygons.

## **Multiplication**

**One Grain of a Rice:** This is an engaging folktale that is great for higher level problem solving and multiplication skills.

**Even Steven and Odd Todd:** Two cousins, one who prefers evens and one who prefers odds, spend some time together and you can probably guess how that goes. Activities are included at the end of the book for extensions.

**Two of Everything:** This is a great book for discussing doubles.

**Hershey's Milk Chocolate Multiplication:** Who doesn't love enjoying a little treat once in a while with their class? It's packed with arrays and multiplication skills.

## **Division**

**The Doorbell Rang:** Uh-oh, guests keep arriving which means the cookies keep dividing. It's easy to see why this one is an Amazon teachers' pick!

**A Remainder of One:** The ants are back and this time they're working on division skills. You can practice remainders and divisibility rules with this one, as well brush up on even number skills.

## **Fractions**

**The Cookie Fiasco:** Three cookies. Four hungry animals. Your students will quickly do the math and realize fractions are at play here.

**Full House: An Invitation to Fractions:** The Strawberry Inn is full of guests and there isn't enough cake to go around for dessert, so your students will use their fraction skills to make sure everyone gets a bite.

**Apple Fractions:** This is a nice introduction to fractions and when used at the beginning of the year, it's perfect for fall apple themed units too.

**Polar Bear Math:** This true story of baby polar bears from the Denver Zoo uses lots of math as the caretakers learn to take care of the new babies.

**Equal Shmequal:** This book serves double duty. You can use it early in the year to help students solve missing factor equations, but you can also use it again for equivalent fractions.

**Twizzlers Percentages Book:** Learning percentages is more fun with Twizzlers!

## **Decimals**

**Pigs Will Be Pigs:** Pigs want to buy dinner, but they need to find more coins first. Your students will practice adding and subtracting decimals to what the pigs can order.

## **Graphs**

**Tiger Math:** If your students loved the polar bear math, then this book is a must-have for graphing skills. It's also based on a real animal at the Denver Zoo, whose caretakers must make sure the Siberian tiger cub is growing healthy and strong.

## **Inspiring Mathematicians**

**The Boy Who Loved Math:** Paul Erdos traveled the world to work with other mathematicians. This biography follows his eccentric life.

**Nothing Stopped Sophie:** Sophie Germain overcame challenges of her time to become the first woman to win a grand prize from France's prestigious Academy of Sciences. Her work laid the groundwork for modern architecture, which is featured in the book's illustrations.

**The Girl With a Mind for Math:** Raye Montague wanted to become an engineer, but had to overcome sexism and racial inequality to breakthrough in the field. Now she's known as a pioneer who changed the course of ship design forever.

**I'm Trying to Love Math:** This book is about things and people who use math in amazing ways. Your students will discover that math is all around them in music, spacecrafts, and even cookies!

**Counting on Katherine:** This book tells the story of Katherine Johnson, an African-American mathematician who worked for NASA during the space race and was depicted in the film **Hidden Figures**.

## **More Favorites**

If you're looking for more math picture books and great math resources, check these out!

**Sir Cumference Book Series:** This series of ten books covers tons of math skills. Number sense, geometry, graphing, and more are all represented.

**Greg Tang** is an author and math expert with a great website.

## **Reading Skills**

These books are perfect companions for teaching key reading skills.

- Sequencing: **Manji Moves a Mountain**
- Cause and Effect: **Stuck**
- Point of View/Perspective: **Voices in the Park**
- Inference: **The Memory String**
- Compare/Contrast: **Tea With Milk**
- Fact/Opinion: **Saturday**
- Author's Purpose: **The Watcher**
- Theme: **Blackout**

## **Informational Text Picture Books**

- **Who Is/Who Was Box Set**
- **Interesting Stories for Curious People**
- **50 American Heroes Every Kid Should Meet**
- **If the World Were a Village**
- **Bet You Didn't Know**

## **Figurative Language Picture Books**

- Similes and Metaphors: **Firebird**
- Personification: **The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors**
- Hyperbole: **Dona Flor**
- Idioms: **In a Pickle**
- Alliteration: **Animalia**
- Onomatopoeia: **The**
- **Remarkable Farkle McBride**

## **Fluency Picture Books**

These books are hand-selected to improve your students' fluency. Fluency is such a crucial skill because the faster and more accurately students can read and decode, the more effectively they can comprehend.

- **No David**
- **Good Boy, Fergus**
- **Help! We Need a Title! (Great for punctuation!)**
- **Rude Cakes**
- **You Read to Me, I'll Read to You**
- **Very Short Fairy Tales to Read Together**
- **Very Short Tall Tales to Read Together**
- **Very Short Fables to Read Together**
- **Very Short Scary Tales to Read Together**

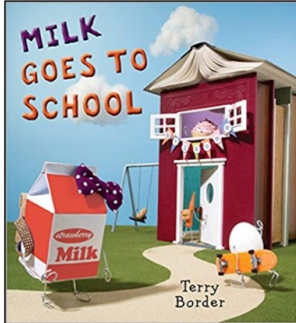
## **Growth Mindset Picture Books**

These books will help your students develop a growth mindset, which has truly become a staple life skill in our classroom

- **What the Road Said**
- **What Do You Do with a Problem?**
- **Rosie Revere, Engineer**
- **Jabari Jumps**
- **Maybe**
- **Trying**
- **The Book of Mistakes**
- **A Splash of Red**

## BEST BACK TO SCHOOL PICTURE BOOKS

### Milk Goes to School BY TERRY BORDER



**WHY I LOVE IT:** I love this entire series by Terry Border, and the school theme of this one is no exception. Kids are drawn in by the pictures, the funny puns, and the relatable story. (I also highly recommend Peanut Butter & Cupcake.)

**THEMES:** Friendship, Kindness, Don't judge a book by its cover

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Any time, really. It's light-hearted, kids LOVE diving into the creative pictures, and older kids will be able to appreciate the puns and creative plays on words.

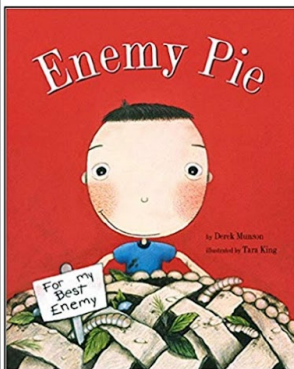
### After the Fall BY DAN SANTAT



**WHY I LOVE IT:** The connection to a familiar story, the illustrations, the pick yourself back up and try again mentality... there is just so much to love here, and every child I've ever read it to appreciates this book.

**THEMES:** Growth, Grit, Persistence, Change

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Day one. Day two. Day three. All the days. It's that good.



### Enemy Pie BY DEREK MUNSON ILLUSTRATED BY TARA KING

**WHY I LOVE IT:** The best way to get rid of an enemy? This book tells you how! It shows how opinions can be wrong, that it's good to make change, and it is a great resource on dealing with conflict. I love watching the wheels spin as we go through the scenes and students process what is happening.

**THEMES:** Friendship, Kindness, Conflict, The Golden Rule

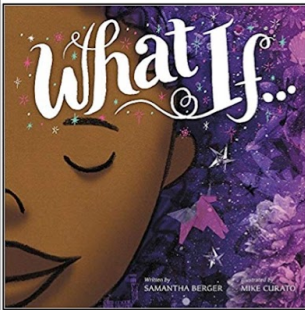
**WHEN TO READ IT:** Day two and beyond, only because it does bring up the idea of not liking someone, they experience a bit of conflict (there's mention of an enemy list), and, well, he does make the pie to get RID of his enemy. 😊 But the ending is redeeming and beautiful.



# What If...

BY SAMANTHA BERGER

ILLUSTRATED BY MIKE CURATO



**WHY I LOVE IT:** You don't need a million fancy art supplies or endless materials to be creative, and this book exemplifies that idea. It's the perfect progression of cause and effect... if her pencil disappears, she's going to fold paper into stories. Paper disappears? Chisel a table!

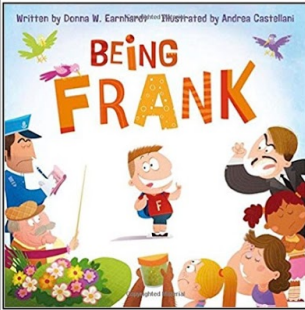
**THEMES:** Using your imagination, Creativity, Self-expression, No Limits

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Any time, but I love to use it when we officially start writing. It's definitely not only a writing book, but it's so great to see her explain that you can craft a tale from literally anything.

# Being Frank

BY DONNA EARNHARDT

ILLUSTRATED BY ANDREA CASTELLANI



**WHY I LOVE IT:** It's hilarious. Frank believes honesty is the best policy, but he takes that belief a little too far! He's a little too blunt and lacks a filter. Even though this is often recommended for the younger set, I believe this book is great for ALL ages, and my 4<sup>th</sup> graders howled when we read it!

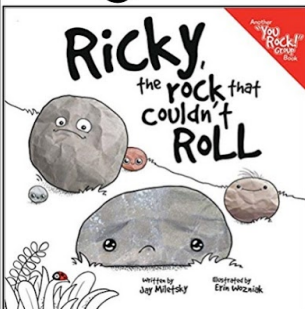
**THEMES:** Honesty, Compassion, Finding and Being the Good

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Any time. It's lighthearted enough that you can read it on the first day of school or anytime thereafter. It will definitely take some discussion afterwards, though, so prepare time for that.

# Ricky, the Rock that Couldn't Roll

BY JAY MILETSKY

ILLUSTRATED BY ERIN WOZNIAK



**WHY I LOVE IT:** This book is incredibly endearing, and the illustrations are precious. It tackles some stereotypes present in a lot of schools and encourages students to not only see and appreciate the differences in others but to also lend a helping hand when it's needed.

**THEMES:** Friendship, Perseverance, Being Yourself, Embracing Differences

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Any time. It tackles a tough subject in a way that is accessible to all students, it's a great story, has funny captions, and kids just love it.



# Sticks

BY DIANE ALBER



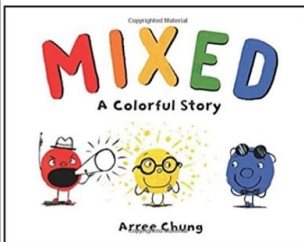
**WHY I LOVE IT:** Stick was a popsicle, but when he accidentally melts, he feels like he doesn't know his place in the world. Through a series of challenges, he finds his way (and his place) in life, and becomes exactly what he was meant to be. It is an easy read, and it will leave kids feeling inspired.

**THEMES:** Finding your place, Embracing differences, Everything Happens for a reason, Life is a journey

**WHEN TO READ IT:** This is a great one for the first day of school. It's fast-paced and sweet, and you could serve kids popsicles, too!

# Mixed: A Colorful Story

BY ARREE CHUNG



**WHY I LOVE IT:** This is a vibrant, colorful, sweet book that tackles incredibly important topics in a way that children can understand. Upper elementary teachers might think it's too young because it *looks* like a book about primary colors, and it's fairly short, but there is so much inside this story that everyone (adults included) can benefit from. It's a **MUST HAVE**.

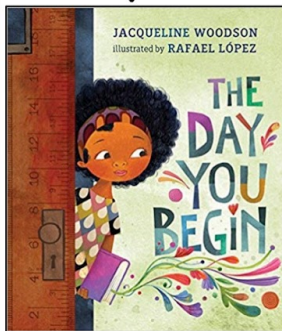
**THEMES:** Embracing differences, Tolerance, Kindness, Discrimination, Diversity, Inclusion

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Any time, but *as soon as possible*.

# The Day You Begin

BY JACQUELINE WOODSON

ILLUSTRATED BY RAFAEL LOPEZ



**WHY I LOVE IT:** Oh, this book. I can tell you all the reasons I love it, or you can just trust me that you need this one in your classroom. The first page reads, "There will be times when you walk into a room, and no one there is quite like you." I guarantee you this book will hit you with all the feels, and it will resonate with your students.

**THEMES:** Everyone is Unique, Acceptance, Finding Courage

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Day one. And make an anchor chart that highlights why everyone in **YOUR** classroom is unique.

# Seeds and Trees

BY BRANDON WALDEN

ILLUSTRATED BY KRISTEN & KEVIN HOWDESHELL



**WHY I LOVE IT:** This book blew my away the first time I read it. It is deeply emotional, the symbolism is intense, and the message that every single word matters is just amazing. It's a book that I think every child should hear at least once.

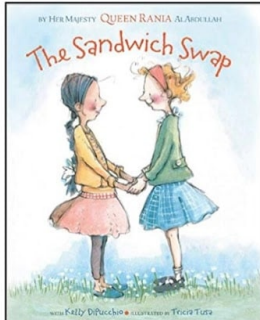
**THEMES:** Kindness, Acceptance, Bullying

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Since it's a pretty intense message and can spark some important discussions, I'd recommend saving this one for later during the first week of school.

# The Sandwich Swap

BY HER MAJESTY QUEEN RANIA ALABDULLAH

ILLUSTRATED BY TRIGIA TUSA



**WHY I LOVE IT:** This book shows that being different is great, and it helps develop an appreciation for other cultures. It is light-hearted, but oh-so-meaningful.

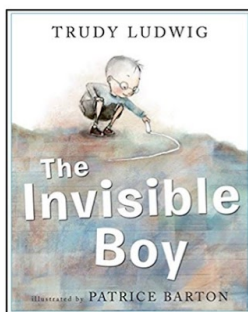
**THEMES:** Appreciating other Cultures, Accepting Differences, Friendship

**WHEN TO READ IT:** I like to read this one during the first two or three days of school. I've found that even though the cover can look a bit young, even 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders love this story.

# The Invisible Boy

BY TRUDY LUDWIG

ILLUSTRATED BY PATRICE BARTON

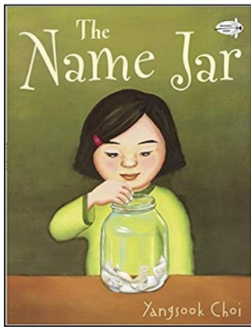


**WHY I LOVE IT:** There is an Invisible Boy in every classroom, and if this book can make them feel visible, it is worth it. This is a sweet book that will encourage students to think twice about the rest of the kids in their classroom. It's a little hard to swallow at first because it's sad, but the ending is joyous and redeeming.

**THEMES:** Kindness, Friendships, Acceptance,

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Probably after the first day or two, since the first half of the book is pretty sad. However, it's an important book for all kids and should result in some meaningful conversations.

# The Name Jar

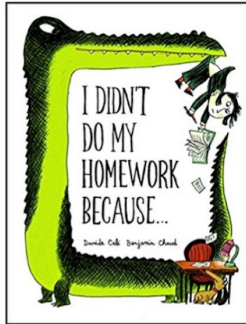
 BY YANGSOOK CHOI

**WHY I LOVE IT:** This book has been around for a while, but the topic is just as timely as ever. Unhei just moved to America from Korea, and naturally, she is worried about how she will be received. She goes on a journey to find a new, more “acceptable” American name, and teaches children an important lesson.

**THEMES:** Diversity, Acceptance, Embracing Uniqueness, Immigration, Cultural Awareness

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Absolutely any time. This is a gem of a book.

# I Didn't Do My Homework Because...

 BY DAVIDE CALI ILLUSTRATED BY BENJAMIN CHAUD

**WHY I LOVE IT:** It's funny, lighthearted, has a great ending, and big kids will totally love the hilarious illustrations...put it under a document camera and give them time to really digest the illustrations!

**THEMES:** Don't make excuses, You can't fool the teacher 😊

**WHEN TO READ IT:** I like to read this right before I introduce letter writing, which is the only homework I give. It's fun to have them create their own hilarious excuse as to why they didn't do their homework, too!

# The Most Magnificent Thing

 BY ASHLEY SPIRES

**WHY I LOVE IT:** This is a fabulous book about putting your mind to something and seeing it through. The main character is pretty relatable, and she works hard to make The Most Magnificent Thing, even when it isn't easy.

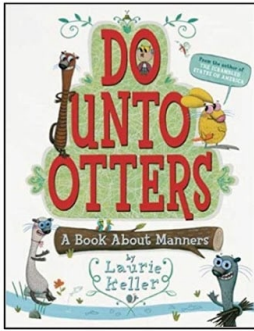
**THEMES:** Perseverance, It's Okay to Make Mistakes, Creativity, Dealing with Emotions

**WHEN TO READ IT:** This one is perfect for introducing any STEAM projects, centers, etc. You can read it any time to encourage growth mindset and creativity!



# Do Unto Others

BY LAURIE KELLER



**WHY I LOVE IT:** This super lighthearted book is a great reminder about manners, which every child can benefit from. It's funny, so it doesn't feel like you are just rattling off a list of manners.

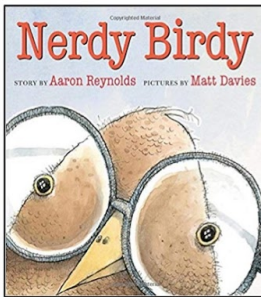
**THEMES:** The Golden Rule, Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover, Kindness

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Any time at the beginning of the year, middle of the year, or end of the year when kids need a good, humorous reminder about how to treat others.

# Nerdy Birdy

BY AARON REYNOLDS

ILLUSTRATED BY MATT DAVIES



**WHY I LOVE IT:** This book lifts kids up and helps them realize that being a Nerdy Birdie is just as awesome as being a so-called Cool Bird.

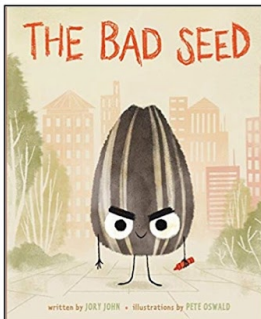
**THEMES:** Finding friends who understand you, Acceptance, Being Different

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Any time! It's a sweet book, and I usually try to fit it in during the first day or two because of the positive message it sends about kindness and finding friends who understand you rather than constantly trying to fit in.

# The Bad Seed

BY JORY JOHN

ILLUSTRATED BY PETE OSWALD



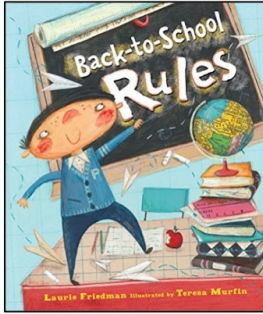
**WHY I LOVE IT:** Again, this (and The Good Egg) is another must-have in your classroom. It is relatable to kids, funny, and it sends an important message about being able to make changes but also accepting yourself.

**THEMES:** Acceptance, Loving yourself, Change is good

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Any time!

# Back to School Rules

BY LAURIE FRIEDMAN  
ILLUSTRATED BY TERESA MURFIN



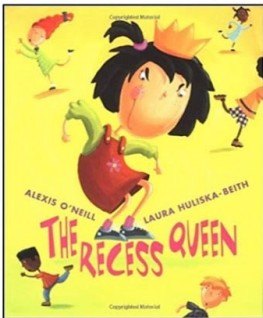
**WHY I LOVE IT:** Nobody loves sitting down and talking about rules all day, but this book, with its catchy rhyme scheme and humorous presentation, covers so many bases for you! It's definitely better for bigger kids because there's some super outlandish rules here, and you don't want to give them any ideas...!

**THEMES:** Following directions

**WHEN TO READ IT:** This is the perfect first day of school book, or you can use it when you are discussing expectations.

# The Recess Queen

BY ALEXIS O'NEILL  
ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA HULISKA-BEITH



**WHY I LOVE IT:** I prefer this one for older kids because The Recess Queen (Mean Jean) is really, really mean and all of the kids bow down to her! However, a new kid shows up and changes everything. It is perfect for instilling confidence in students.

**THEMES:** Bullying, Conflict Resolution, Standing up for Others

**WHEN TO READ IT:** Any time, but it would be great for reinforcing or possible introducing recess expectations!

...and if you still need more amazing back to school, here are a few more that I love!

[What if Everybody Did that?](#)

[Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun](#)

[Iggy Peck, Architect](#)

[The Bear and the Fern](#)

[The Dot](#)

[How I spent my Summer Vacation](#)

The Juice Box Bully

The Jelly Donut Difference

Chocolate Milk, Por Favor