Amina’s Voice by Hena Khan Amina has never been comfortable in the spotlight. She is happy just hanging out with her best friend, Soojin. Except now that she’s in middle school everything feels different. Soojin is suddenly hanging out with Emily, one of the “cool” girls in the class, and even talking about changing her name to something more “American.” Does Amina need to start changing too? Or hiding who she is to fit in? While Amina grapples with these questions, she is devastated when her local mosque is vandalized.

The Big Bad Fox by Benjamin Renner. The fox dreams of being the terror of the barnyard. But no one is intimidated by him, least of all the hens. When he picks a fight with one, he always ends up on the losing end. Even the wolf, the most fearsome beast of the forest, can’t teach him how to be a proper predator. It looks like the fox will have to spend the rest of his life eating turnips. But then the wolf comes up with the perfect scheme. If the fox steals some eggs, he could hatch the chicks himself and raise them to be a plump, juicy chicken dinner. Unfortunately, this plan falls apart when three adorable chicks hatch and call the fox Mommy.

Finding Perfect by Elly Swartz. What’s not perfect is Molly’s mother leaving the family to take a faraway job with the promise to return in one year. Molly knows that promises are often broken, so she hatches a plan to bring her mother home: Win the Lakeville Middle School Slam Poetry Contest. The winner is honored at a fancy banquet with table cloths. Molly’s sure her mother would never miss that. Right…? But as time goes on, writing and reciting slam poetry become harder. Actually, everything becomes harder as new habits appear, and counting, cleaning, and organizing are not enough to keep Molly’s world from spinning out of control.

I’m Just No Good at Rhyming: And Other Nonsense for Mischievous Kids and Immature Grown-Ups by Chris Harris. Meet Chris Harris, the 21st-century Shel Silverstein! Already lauded by critics as a worthy heir to such greats as Silverstein, Seuss, Nash and Lear, his hilarious debut poetry collection molds wit and wordplay, nonsense and oxymoron, and visual and verbal sleight-of-hand in masterful ways that make you look at the world in a whole new wonderfully upside-down way.

The Losers Club by Andrew Clements. Sixth grader Alec can’t put a good book down. So when Principal Vance lays down the law—pay attention in class, or else—Alec takes action. He can’t lose all his reading time, so he starts a club. A club he intends to be the only member of. After all, reading isn’t a team sport, and no one would want to join something called the Losers Club, right? But as more and more kids find their way to Alec’s club—including his ex-friend turned bully and the girl Alec is maybe starting to like—Alec notices something. Real life might be messier than his favorite books, but it’s just as interesting.

The Matchstick Castle by Keir Graff. Brian can think of a few places he’d rather spend his summer than with his aunt and uncle in Boring, Illinois. Jail, for example. Or an earplug factory. Anything would be better than doing summer school on a computer while his scientist dad is stationed at the South Pole. Boring lives up to its name until Brian and his cousin Nora have a fight, get lost, and discover a huge, wooden house in the forest. With balconies, turrets, and windows seemingly stuck on at random, it looks ready to fall over in the next stiff breeze. To the madcap, eccentric family that lives inside, it’s not just a home—it’s a castle. Suddenly, summer gets a lot more exciting.

Seven and a Half Tons of Steel by Janet Nolan, There is a ship, a navy ship. It is called the USS New York. It is big like other navy ships, and it sails like other navy ships, but there is something special about the USS New York. Following the events of September 11, 2001, the governor of New York gave the Navy a steel beam that was once inside one of the World Trade Towers. And then, seven and a half tons of steel, which had once been a beam in the World Trade Center, became a navy ships bow. This powerful story reveals how something remarkable can emerge from a devastating event.

The Wild Robot by Peter Brown. When robot Roz opens her eyes for the first time, she discovers that she is alone on a remote, wild island. Why is she there? Where did she come from? And, most important, how will she survive in her harsh surroundings? Roz’s only hope is to learn from the island’s hostile animal inhabitants. When she tries to care for an orphaned gosling, the other animals finally decide to help, and the island starts to feel like home. Until one day, the robot’s mysterious past comes back to haunt her…

Wisthtree by Katherine Applegate. Red is an oak tree who is many rings old. Red is the neighborhood "wisthtree"—people write their wishes on pieces of cloth and tie them to Red’s branches. Along with her crow friend Bongo and other animals who seek refuge in Red's hollows, this "wisthtree" watches over the neighborhood. You might say Red has seen it all. Until a new family moves in. Not everyone is welcomed, and Red’s experiences as a wisthtree are more important than ever.

Word of Mouse by James Patterson. What makes Isaiah so unique? First, his fur is as blue as the sky—which until recently was something he’d never seen, but had read all about. That’s right--Isaiah can read, and write. He can also talk to humans…if any of them are willing to listen! After a dramatic escape from a mysterious laboratory, Isaiah is separated from his "mischief" (which is the word for a mouse family), and has to use his special skills to survive in the dangerous outdoors, and hopefully find his missing family. When he meets an equally unusual and lonely human girl named Hailey, the two soon learn that true friendship can transcend all barriers.

Past KBA Winners

Dog Man by Dav Pilkey. Graphix, an imprint of Scholastic, 2016. 2018 KBA Winner for Grades 3-5. Dog Man, who is born when a police dog’s head is surgically attached to his cop companion’s body, becomes a bit of a hero even though he doesn’t always follow the rules in his hilarious, crime-fighting adventures.

Tucky Jo and Little Heart by Patricia Polacco. Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2015. 2017 KBA Winner for Grades 3-5. During World War II, a fifteen-year-old soldier from Kentucky meets a sweet, young girl in the Philippines who helps him remember what he is fighting for as he helps her and others of her village avoid starvation, and many years later she returns his kindness.
**Duke** by Kirby Lawson. Scholastic Press, 2013. 2016 KBA Winner for Grades 3-5. In 1944, Hobie Hanson's father is flying B-24s in Europe, so Hobie decides to donate his beloved German shepherd, Duke, to Dogs for Defense in the hope that it will help end the war sooner--but when he learns that Duke is being trained for combat he is shocked, frightened, and determined to get his dog back.

**Giants Beware** by Jorge Aguirre; Rafael Rosado, ill. First Second Books, 2012. 2015 KBA Winner for Grades 3-5. Tough and spunky, Claudette, who has big goals of becoming a giant slayer, sets off on a super-secret quest outside of the safe walls of her city with her best friend and her brother in order to kill the rumored local giant.


**Smile** by Raina Telgemeier. Graphix, 2010. 2013 KBA Winner for Grades 3-5. The author relates, in graphic form, her experiences after she injured her two front teeth and had to have surgeries and wear embarrassing braces and headgear, all while also dealing with the trials and tribulations of middle school.

**Big Nate: In a Class By Himself** by Lincoln Pierce. 2012 KBA Winner for Grades 3-5. Supremely confident middle school student Nate Wright manages to make getting detention from every one of his teachers in the same day seem like an achievement.

You may also like....

**The BFG** by Roald Dahl. Captured by a giant! The BFG is no ordinary bone-crunching giant. He is far too nice and jumbly. It’s lucky for Sophie that he is. Had she been carried off in the middle of the night by the Bloodbottler, the Fleshlumpeater, the Bonecruncher, or any of the other giants-rather than the BFG—she would have soon become breakfast.

**Captain Underpants series**/Dave Pilkey. Who is the greatest, most hilarious superhero in the history of elementary school? What elastic-waist adventurer fights for "Truth, Justice and all that is Pre-shrunk and Cottony" and can "leap tall building without a single bound? Captain Underpants, of course!!

**Charlotte’s Web** by E. B. White. Wilbur the pig is desolate when he discovers that he is destined to be the farmer’s Christmas dinner until his spider friend, Charlotte, decides to help him.

**Dear America Series**. A series of historical fiction novels. In each book, an important event or period of American history is the setting of a story written through the eyes of a young girl. Each book is written in diary format and includes historical notes at the end which highlight the chosen time period.

**Frindle**/Andrew Clements. When he decides to turn his fifth grade teacher’s love of the dictionary around on her, clever Nick Allen invents a new word and begins a chain of events that quickly gets out of control.

**Geronimo Stilton series**. In this series, Geronimo is a talking mouse, is a best-selling author and works as a journalist for the fictional newspaper The Rodent’s Gazette. Geronimo is a nervous, mild-mannered mouse who would like nothing better than to live a quiet life, but he keeps getting involved in far-away adventures.

**Goosebumps & Mostly Ghostly series**/R. L. Stine. Check out books in these popular series for mystery stories with a scary twist. In the Mostly Ghostly series, meet Max Doyle who has two ghosts living in his bedroom that only he can see!

**Ida B & Her Plans to Maximize Fun, Avoid Disaster, & (Possibly) Save the World**/Katherine Hannigan. In Wisconsin, 4th grader Ida B is happy being home-schooled and playing in her family’s orchard, until her mother begins breast cancer treatment and her parents must sell part of the orchard and send her to public school.

**Love That Dog**/Sharon Creech. A young student, who comes to love poetry through a personal understanding of what different poems mean to him, surprises himself by writing his own inspired poem.

**Magic Tree House Series by Mary Pope Osborne** - These fantastic books revolve around eight-year-old Jack and his sister Annie, who stumble upon a magic tree house filled with books that transports them back in time to the places described in the books.

**Ramona series**/Beverly Cleary. A popular children’s book series revolving around the main character, Ramona Quimby, her family including her sister Beezus, and the various events that take place in her neighborhood.

**The Tale of Despereaux**/Kate DiCamillo. The adventures of Despereaux Tilling, a small mouse of unusual talents, the princess that he loves, the servant girl who longs to be a princess, and a devious rat determined to bring them all to ruin.

**Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing** by Judy Blume. Peter finds his demanding two year old brother an ever increasing problem. Also check out other books by the same author.

**Wait Till Helen Comes: A Ghost Story**/Mary D. Hahn. Molly and Michael dislike their spooky stepsister Heather but realize they must try to save her when she seems ready to follow a ghost child to her doom.

**Where the Red Fern Grows**/Wilson Rawls. A boy and his 2 dogs, Old Dan and Little Ann, go through adventure and tragedy in the Ozark Mountain Valley.