

Picture Books for Middle Grade Students

- [*Twenty-One Steps: Guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*](#) by Jeff Gottesfeld. Oh boy, I teared up on the first page of text. A beautiful, moving, and important book.
- [*Pink and Say*](#) by Patricia Polacco. This book is sure to make students care about the injustices of slavery and the senselessness of war.
- [*After the Fall: How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again*](#) by Dan Santat. Written as a love letter to his wife, who has struggled with anxiety, this is one of my favorite read-alouds of all time.
- [*The Day You Begin*](#) by Jacqueline Woodson. My district is highly diverse, and I know some of the students in our school have felt exactly this way.
- [*The Wolf, the Duck & the Mouse*](#) by Mac Barnett. During the pandemic, I couldn't help but love the line "I may have been swallowed, but I have no intention of being eaten."
- [*Once Upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude*](#) by Kevin O'Malley. This is crazy fun, and just might inspire some new writing partnerships in your room.
- [*Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear*](#) by Lindsay Mattick. Sophie Blackall's incredible art is the perfect background for learning the history behind a bear we all love.
- [*The Matchbox Diary*](#) by Paul Fleischman. A lovely immigration story that will not disappoint.
- [*The Heart and the Bottle*](#) by Oliver Jeffers. Both simple and deep, this beautiful book deals with loss and being willing to open our hearts again.
- [*The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota's Garden*](#) by Heather Smith. Inspired by a true story, this book is sure to move your students.
- [*A Different Pond*](#) by Bao Phi. This book celebrates family, tradition, and hope.
- [*Step Right Up: How Doc and Jim Key Taught the World About Kindness*](#) by Donna Janell Bowman. This is a fascinating story, and your students will be glad to learn about this man and his horse.
- [*A Poem for Peter*](#) by Andrea Davis Pinkney. Poetic, beautiful language and a rich and wonderful story about Ezra Jack Keats.
- [*The Junkyard Wonders*](#) by Patricia Polacco. Another moving story mined from the depths of Patricia's childhood.
- [*The Wretched Stone*](#) by Chris Van Allsburg. Originally an allegory about the dangers of television for children, this just as easily translates to the perils of too much screen time for the students in our lives today.
- [*On a Beam of Light: A Story of Albert Einstein*](#) by Jennifer Berne. Did you know he didn't talk until the age of three? Neither did I until I read this fascinating book.
- [*The Harmonica*](#) by Tony Johnston. This is a powerful story about a Holocaust survivor.
- [*Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad*](#) by Ellen Levine. Your students will experience a vast array of emotions when you read them the story of Henry Brown.
- [*The Cat Man of Aleppo*](#) by Irene Latham. This book introduces us to Mohammad Alaa Aljaleel, a Syrian ambulance driver who creates a sanctuary for homeless cats after war brings devastation to his city.
- [*Winged Wonders: Solving the Monarch Migration Mystery*](#) by Meeg Pincus. This beautiful book is a perfect example of how collaborative science can be.
- [*Grace Hopper: Queen of Computer Code*](#) by Laurie Wallmark. This is a perfect example of a book that amazed and inspired me, and sent me on a journey to learn more about Grace.
- [*Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofose Yeboah*](#) by Laurie Ann Thompson. This will undoubtedly inspire everyone in your classroom.

- [*Otis and Will Discover the Deep: The Record-Setting Dive of the Bathysphere*](#) by Barb Rosenstock. There is an element of suspense in this that made me hold my breath as Otis and Will braved the deepest part of the ocean in a small sphere.
- [*The Bell Rang*](#) by James E. Ransome. A simple but stunningly beautiful book that will make you ache, grieve, and wonder.
- [*Pocket Full of Colors: The Magical World of Mary Blair, Disney Artist Extraordinaire*](#) by Amy Guglielmo and Jacqueline Tourville. If you are interested in shining a light on women who have made significant contributions in their field, then you'll love Mary Blair.
- [*Rescue & Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship*](#) by Jessica Kensky. Based on a true story, this is both moving and inspirational.
- [*I Like, I Don't Like*](#) by Anna Baccelliere. This book takes on a very serious subject and simplifies it into a powerful and meaningful picture book. Thought-provoking. Moving. Important.
- [*Tadpole's Promise*](#) by Jeanne Willis. They are going to groan at the beginning of this love story, and be won over by the surprise ending.
- [*Fauja Singh Keeps Going: The True Story of the Oldest Person to Ever Run a Marathon*](#) by Simran Jeet Singh. You can't help but be inspired by this amazing man!

List curated by Lori Sabo.