SIXTH EDITION

CHILDREN’S BOOKS

in CHILDREN’S HANDS

An Introduction to Their Literature
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To the memories of my late wife Frances Temple and my inspiring classmate Bill Teale; in gratitude to Kent Brown, Jr., and the Highlights Foundation for their support of quality children’s literature; and in celebration of Reno and Frankie.

—C.T.

To Sky, Emma, Annabelle, Elia, and Alyssa with thanks for the opportunities to share stories with you.

—M.M.

To the International Youth Library and the Stippis, from whom I have learned much.

—J.Y.
ABOUT the AUTHORS

This book grew out of the collaboration of three teacher-friends who are joined by a love of good stories, amazing facts, lively poetry, an appreciation of cultural diversity, and a sense of awe at the power of good books to open children’s minds and make them more wholesome individuals.

Charles Temple is a guitar-and banjo-picking storyteller, poet, and sometime children’s author who teaches courses in children’s literature, storytelling, writing for children, literacy, and international education at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York. He has written many books in the fields of literacy and children’s literature. Internationally, he serves as an advisor to projects in Tajikistan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone helping authors and illustrators produce books for children, and helping teachers teach with them, with the support from CODE of Canada, USAID, and the World Bank. He co-chairs the International Literacy Association’s Special Interest Group on Literacy in Developing Countries, and serves on the board of Storytellers in Higher Education, an affiliate of the National Storytelling Network.

Miriam Martinez teaches children’s literature and literacy courses at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She is actively involved in the Children’s Literature Assembly, the National Council of Teachers of English, the International Literacy Association, and the Literacy Research Association. Her research and publications have focused on the nature of children’s literary meaning-making, children’s responses to literature, and their understanding of various literary genres and formats. She also conducts content analyses of children’s books.

Junko Yokota is director of the Center for Teaching through Children’s Books and is professor emeritus at National Louis University in Chicago. She held research fellowships at the International Youth Library, and the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, and a Fulbright at the University of Wroclaw in Poland. She served on the Caldecott, Newbery, Batchelder, Pura Belpré, and Ezra Jack Keats committees and on the Bologna, Nami, and Hans Christian Andersen Juries. Her research focuses on picturebooks, and multicultural and international literature.

For more teaching ideas related to *Children’s Books in Children’s Hands*, the authors invite you to see the companion volume to this book—Martinez, Yokota, and Temple (2017), *Thinking and Learning Through Children’s Literature*, published by Rowman and Littlefield.
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Welcome to—wow!—the sixth edition of Children’s Books in Children’s Hands. It is our happy task in these pages and chapters to acquaint you with the best and most recent books for children, in many genres. We will share ideas for discussing those books and analyzing them with young people, too.

We understand that as a teacher-in-training or a practicing teacher, you may feel pulled in many directions these days. Our urging you to put good books into children’s hands is competing with many other voices, especially those demanding that you help children meet rigorous new standards for reading skills. Is knowing children’s literature still relevant in this era of intense accountability? Of course it is. Children need to learn how to read, but there are many values to reading—not just knowing how to read but reading—that teachers cannot overlook, because they are vital to children’s education and to their well-being.

Having the habit of reading good books helps children better understand other people and themselves. It takes them into the lives of people from other neighborhoods in the United States, from other parts of the world, and from other times. It gives them bigger vocabularies, boosts their world knowledge, and even gives them measurably higher intelligence than those who know how to read but don’t. It gives them deeper knowledge of things from the real world worth knowing. It excites their curiosity and furnishes their imaginations. And it gives them a ready source of enjoyment and inspiration that will last them all their lives.

It is a generous and nurturing act to put good children’s books into children’s hands, and to create meaningful experiences with those books. It is our honor and pleasure to help you make the most of it.

New to This Edition

- They haven’t been replaced by drones yet, so the friendly drivers for UPS, USPS, and Fed Ex can still easily find their way to our houses in Upstate New York, San Antonio, and Chicago as they have every day for decades delivering new children’s books. “New to this edition” most importantly are the new books we are reviewing and presenting—dozens of new titles and many new authors in each chapter.
- Just as in previous editions, at the end of each chapter there are hundreds of annotations of newer titles for children in Children’s Books in Children’s Hands, Sixth Edition, with a strong emphasis on books from many cultural groups.
- New Teaching Ideas populate each chapter, along with the best of the tried and true.
- Newly updated “Top Shelf” lists of books are included in each chapter.
- Traditional genres of children’s books are being challenged and reworked in exciting ways, and our presentation is updated to reflect changes in the genres with a new feature called “Bending Genres/Shifting Formats” that highlights ways contemporary authors and illustrators are blurring the lines between traditional categories of children’s books.
- The needs of English Language Learners are addressed in many places in the book. English Language Learners are now found in classrooms in most states, and constitute more than one student in ten.
- There are entire chapters on Multicultural Books and International Books, and both are updated from the last edition.
The chapter on Traditional Literature has been updated with special emphasis on storytelling in the school and the classroom, as a bridge to having children appreciate children’s books. We have as a new feature an interview with a noted multicultural storyteller.

The chapter on Poetry is brimming with new poems from contemporary poets to show examples of features of children’s poetry, thanks to a collaboration with noted children’s poet and anthologist Janet Wong.

The chapter on Nonfiction emphasizes the notable artistry of recent nonfiction picture books. The artistry of nonfiction picturebooks is highlighted through a new “Ask the Author and Illustrator” feature that engages the reader in an in-depth exploration of how the award-winning book Giant Squid was crafted.

The chapter on Historical Fiction features more international historical fiction along with many newly published historical fiction titles. There is new emphasis on using the internet as a tool to support readers of historical fiction by bringing to life settings far removed from readers in terms of both time and place.

How This Book Is Organized

PART 1 “Understanding Literature and the Child Reader” orients the reader to the study of children’s literature and gives the critic’s perspective. Chapter 1, “Children’s Books in Children’s Hands,” introduces children’s literature as a distinct category and discusses the genres of children’s books as well as their qualities. Chapter 2, “Literary Elements in Works for Children,” introduces a set of literary concepts with which to approach children’s books, describing how plots are organized, how characters are drawn, and how themes are developed. Chapter 3, “Picture Books,” focuses on how art and text combine to form unique works. Chapter 4, “Literature Representing Diverse Perspectives,” reflects this book’s strong emphasis on multicultural literature. It investigates the ways various cultural groups are depicted in children’s literature, highlights the progress that has been made in publishing children’s books that represent various cultural groups more extensively and fairly, surveys the multicultural books that are available, and sets out guidelines for selecting high-quality multicultural books for children. Chapter 5, “International Literature,” introduces books that come to us from other parts of the world. It investigates international children’s literature, surveys the international books that are available, and sets out guidelines for selecting high-quality international books for children.

PART 2 “Exploring the Genres of Children’s Literature” surveys the books that have been written for children, type by type or genre by genre. Each of the chapters in this part outlines the historical development of a particular genre, examines the literary qualities that distinguish the genre and the reading demands those qualities place on the child, reviews outstanding examples of works from the genre, and sets out criteria for selecting good works in the genre. Each chapter closes with an extensive annotated list of recommended books in the genre. Chapter 6, “Poetry for Children,” surveys the genre from nursery rhymes to contemporary multicultural poetry for children. Chapter 7, “Traditional Literature,” looks at folk literature from many times and cultures, with a new emphasis on storytelling. Chapter 8, “Modern Fantasy and Science Fiction,” considers the artistry that enables readers to enter hypothetical worlds. Chapter 9, “Contemporary Realistic Fiction,” looks at ways authors create believable books that are set in the “here and now” and that address the wide-ranging problems and delights of today’s children. Books set in times that may be many generations removed from our own are discussed in Chapter 10, “Historical Fiction,” which also explains the current emphasis on meticulous accuracy in this genre. Chapter 11, “Nonfiction” surveys a growing area of children’s literature in which talented writers present the real world and its people to young readers in skillfully focused works that can be as riveting as fiction.
Pedagogical Enrichment and Features of This Book

The richly illustrated sixth edition is packed with practical applications and unique pedagogical features:

TEACHING IDEA 1.1
ASK THE CHILDREN!

Have a conversation with a group of children about children's books. Ask these questions in a conversational way:

1. How do you know a book is a children's book?
2. What are three of your favorite children's books?
3. What makes them good—that is, if you met someone who was going to write a book for children, what advice would you give her or him to make it a good book?
4. How do you feel after you've read a really good book? What are you thinking about?

Note carefully what the children say. Is there a difference in what children of different ages admire in books? How do their criteria for good children's books compare with those set out in this chapter?

“Teaching Ideas” provide valuable, practical lessons and activities for sharing literature with children in the classroom.

TECHNOLOGY in PRACTICE 10.2

Setting is a critical detail in many works of historical/fiction such as in I Lived on Butterfly Hill by Marjorie Agosín, which is set in Valparaiso, Chile. Chile, the story’s main character, lives her home located high on a hill overlooking the harbor. Descriptions of brightly colored buildings perched on steep hills and funicular lifts that traverse the hills overlooking a sparkling harbor paint a picture of a unique city. Students will likely benefit from a Google search for photographs of Valparaiso, a World Heritage site.

Ask the Author . . . Jane Yolen

What do you say to those who criticize your choice to write and publish fantasy books for children?

I think that fantasy books speak to reality heart to heart. They are metaphorical shorthand. No one reading them—children or adults—is fooled into believing them word for word; that is, the reader does not believe in the actuality of dragons, unicorns, flying horses. But these stories are like points on a map, acting as a guide to life as we actually live it by showing us life as it could be lived.

For those who are afraid of fantasy books, seeing Satan where none exists, I tell them that they do not understand the role of metaphor in literature. But if they persist in seeing devils and the hand of hell in these stories, I cannot change their minds. And I do not try to.

What I look for in fantasy books is a strong storyline, a character who changes and grows, and wonderful chewy prose. I am not interested in generic sword and sorcery, but in invention, imagination, and a prose style that sings. I have read a lot of fantasy novels in my life. So I want to be surprised, delighted, and have the little hairs on the back of my neck stand up with recognition, just as I do when I read a poem by Emily Dickinson. A fantasy book should force me to confront my real world with the imagined world.

Jane Yolen, who has been referred to as “America’s Hans Christian Andersen” and the “Twentieth-Century Aesop” because of her many fairy tales and fantasy stories, is the author of over 170 books for children and adults. Her professional book Touch Magic: Fantasy, Faerie and Folktale in the Literature of Childhood (2000) is considered a classic reference in the field.

Each chapter includes an “Ask the Author” (or Illustrator, Editor, or Educator) box, in which a prominent children’s author, illustrator, editor, or educator responds to a question related to the chapter content.

“Technology in Practice” teaching tips in each chapter reflect our collective experience with the intersection of electronics and print, and provide activities for the classroom utilizing new media technology (e.g., how to create a student book referral database).

“Top Shelf” book lists in every chapter list our best picks of titles that exemplify a particular concept discussed in the chapter (e.g., Humorous Picture Books, Multicultural Audiobooks).
Can Reading Fantasy Be Inappropriate for Children?

Fantasy literature has often been the subject of controversy. Some adults do not consider children capable of distinguishing between reality and fantasy, even though school curricula often state (and psychological studies hold) that children in the primary grades should be able to make that distinction. Others worry that fantasy is a genre that allows an escape from reality and that reading works of fantasy takes time away from more important kinds of reading that children need to be doing. Still others complain that fantasy literature is inappropriate for children because it refers to the supernatural.

In recent years, some parents and others in various communities have opposed the reading of fantasy literature in schools and called for censorship of certain types of books. In his experiences with such groups, school administrator Rick Traw (1996) found that the presence of magic, witchcraft, and animism caused the most concern. Traw found that even the slightest hint of the supernatural caused a book to appear on the list of censored materials. For example, a reference to Halloween or a story about a city witch and a country witch might get the work into trouble.

Michael Tunnell (1994) writes about fantasy and censorship as the “double-edged sword.” He believes that “fantasy is fundamentally the most important kind of story to share with [children].” He also believes that “children vicariously vent frustrations in healthy ways by subconsciously identifying with . . . heroes.” In addition, Tunnell believes that fantasy gives children “a sense of hope about their ultimate abilities to succeed in the world.”

What do you think?

“Issue to Consider” boxes in each chapter present a highly debated issue in children’s literature.

“Experiences for Further Learning” are end-of-chapter activities that help readers deepen their own understanding of the chapter content.

1. Reread the vignettes on page 4. Can you think of books that served you in each of those ways when you were a child? Are there other ways in which books appealed to you? Compare your answers with those of your classmates.
2. Choose a children’s book. Evaluate it according to the criteria of a good children’s book set out on pages 8–9. How does it fare? Are there other criteria of excellence that you would propose?
3. This chapter stated that children’s books have changed throughout history, roughly as views of childhood changed. What trends do you see at work in society that may change children’s literature in the near future? What qualities or values would you expect to remain the same in children’s literature?
4. Interview three teachers of the elementary grades. Ask them how many different ways they use children’s books with their students. Compare their answers with the vignettes found on page 4.
5. Find a school librarian or a children’s librarian who has worked in the field for 30 years or more. Ask her or him to talk about the ways in which books for children have changed, children’s interests have changed, and parents’ concerns about their children’s reading materials have changed—and how these issues have remained the same. Prepare a two-column list of ways in which children’s books have remained the same and ways in which they have changed. Share your list with your peers.

Each chapter concludes with extensive lists of “Recommended Books” that offer publication data, a brief annotation, and interest level by age for every book listed. These lists have been extensively updated for the sixth edition with scores of new entries.
Supplements to Aid Teachers and Students

Students and instructors will find these supplements invaluable:

*Instructor’s Manual and Test Bank* provides a variety of instructional tools, including chapter overviews, “pre-reading” directions, questions for class discussion, classroom activities, and extending the reading assignments, plus multiple choice and essay questions. (Available for download from the Instructor Resource Center at http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc.)

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We are thankful for the book communities to which we belong, the committees we serve, and the professional friends with whom we have many intense conversations about books—for this is how we learn, how we refine our own thinking, and how we prepare to write this book.