Title: Horace and Morris, but Mostly Dolores
Author: James Howe
Illustrator: Amy Walrod
Publication Date: 2003
Genre: Fiction
Recommended Grade Range: Primary

Plot Summary
Three mice join together in this fictional genre Horace and Morris, but Mostly Dolores. The setting takes place in a mice sized world surrounded by sewers, rust, meadows, and clubs for boy mice, and clubs for girl mice. Horace, Morris, and Dolores are the main characters of this book which focuses on timeless themes of friendship, and choosing to be yourself even though others don’t believe you should. The book’s Plot begins with three friends who love to hang out together and play together. One day the boy mice decide “a boy mouse must do what a boy mouse must do.” The two boys leave Dolores and join an all boy club where no girls are aloud. Feeling left out Dolores decides to join a girls club because that is what a girl mouse is supposed to do. Throughout the children’s book Dolores faces literary conflict of person v. self because she the struggles with herself in determining what she wants to do. The climax of the story takes place when Dolores decides she does not want to go to an all-girls club and that she misses her friends, Morris and Horace. In the end the book resolution takes place when all three of the friends are united again and they create a boys and girls club with the help of their new friend.

Features of Quality
Horace and Morris, but Mostly Dolores contains many elements that would identify this book as a feature of “quality”. This book has timeless themes of friendship and self-acceptance. Dolores learns that she does not care what other people think and she also learns that she should not change herself to fit the ideal image that the other mice believed she should be. These themes transcend beyond the grade range of children into an age group that is more mature. This book also has beautiful illustrations that add to the text and provide an appealing story. The illustrations truly do add to the text. On one of the chalkboards in the girls club, it says, “How to catch a man”. Then it actually continues to show the reader the contraption and how to build the contraption to catch a man. These elements truly do make this a “quality” read for children.

Curriculum Connections: Reader Response Activities
1. Dolores stood up for herself and learned that she has great worth. Have the students write letters to Dolores explaining to her how they thought she was a great example for choosing what was right. Have the children further explain a time where they chose what was right. (Primary)
2. Horace, Morris, and Dolores were all involved in a club. Split the classroom into groups and have them create their own clubs. Have the children make a diorama of what their club would look like, club rules, and have them make a pamphlet enticing children to join their club. Make sure that their pamphlet has directions on how to get there, times that the club is open, and at least six things on what people can do there. (Intermediate)
Plot Summary
Detective Blue is on the case in this derivative fairytale genre, Detective Blue. Although this book is a derivative story it also could be included in the mystery genre because throughout the novel the main character is trying to find a missing person. The book's main character is Detective Blue, but he is also well known in Mother Goose’s nursery rhymes as Little Boy Blue. He is all grown up now and explains in the story, “at one time, I blew a horn, and looked after cows and sheep, but that’s in the Past!” The setting takes place in a town where all the characters of mother goose’s nursery rhymes live. The plot begins with Detective Blue starting out his day like any ordinary day. It usually begins by dealing with “The dish that ran away with the spoon”, but today reports arrive explaining the disappearance of Miss Muffet. The climax of the story comes when Detective Blue questions the spider that usually hangs down beside Miss Muffet. Detective Blue then remembers a key piece of information resulting in a surprising twist at the end of the book. Miss Muffet ends up being Goldilocks as well. The resolution takes place as everyone in the kingdom celebrates the safe return of Miss Muffet. The theme of this children’s book presents a positive message of never giving up and also sends a message that asking questions is something important to do.

Features of Quality
Detective Blue is considered a “quality” read because of the many elements of literary quality that it contains. This story is a derivative story and is based off of Mother Goose Fairytales. Because there is a new perspective and a continuous story it presents originality and innovativeness. For example, Detective Blue is based off of the Mother Goose Rhymes. Detective Blue used to be known in Mother Goose Rhymes as Little Boy Blue. In this piece of literature he plays a detective. Other characters are in the book as well such as Humpty Dumpty. Miss Muffet also in the book ends up being Goldilocks as well. In Mother Gooses rhymes those characters have no relation or correlation. This is an innovative take on Mother Goose’s nursery rhyme. The illustrations in the book are those that could be found in a graphic book. The text throughout the book also is presented in a way that supports the illustrations. A lot of the words throughout the book are bolded to emphasize their meaning. For example the book states, “Mary’s Lamb almost made it into the schoolhouse. I see through your disguise.” The text throughout the book also gets larger when there is a problem. For example Jack Sprat says, “Miss Muffet is Missing! Miss Muffet is Missing!” This word art truly adds emphasis and importance to the text in the book.

Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Ideas
1. Students can become their own detectives by formulating questions to find answers to problems they may not know how to solve. This could be used in teaching children to ask questions (context clues) when they are reading and can also be easily used in reference to different subjects as well. (Intermediate Grades)
2. Students can get into groups and read a bunch of Mother Goose Poems. Once they read the poems the students can select one of the nursery rhymes and create a derivative story. This would be a good opportunity to teach about what derivative is and is also a good opportunity for the students to be creative and use their imagination. (Primary Grades)
**Plot Summary**

*Math Curse* was written by Jon Scieszka and illustrated by Lane Smith. This Mathematical fiction book presents the theme that math can be found all around us and that math is important. The setting of the book takes place at school where the main character learns from Mrs. Fibonacci that “you can think of almost everything as a math problem.” After Mrs. Fibonacci tells that to the children all day the main character begins to find that everything relates to math. She just caught the math curse! Science, art, and physical education are no exception to this curse; he finds several problems and works hard at trying to figure out each equation. The climax of the story begins when she has a dream about math problems. She has no idea what to do until the resolution arrives and she solves a problem and escapes his dream. Finally, she has been freed from the math curse.

**Features of Quality**

This piece of literature has impeccable illustrations. The illustrations throughout the story add to the meaning of the text. When the main character mentions her equation with the pizza at lunch, her eyes are cut into the actually fractions of the pie and the pizza. These pictures add to the text because not only does the text provide us with the fraction but the girl’s eyes show us what that fraction looks like. It also allows teachers ease when teaching fractions because the book does an excellent job illustrating the equations for the reader. It also can be easily relatable to different learning styles because not only do the text make it easy for the teacher to read aloud (Audible) but the students can visually see the fraction. The book also is very visual. The text also plays a role in the illustrations. Sometimes in the book the words are either larger or smaller. For example, Mrs. Fibonacci says, “YOU KNOW, you can think of almost everything as a math problem.” This book also tells the truth about the human experience. Throughout the book the young girl is struggling with math and is stuck in this ‘math curse’. She learns how to solve problems at the end of the book and learns that it can be easy. Similarly, when a child learns an equation for the first time it may seem hard but through more experience and practice children can break out of their own math curse.

**Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Activities:**

1. The main character in the book became stuck in the math curse and the only way to get her out was to solve the problem. Have the students create a guidebook or a list of rules giving advice to those who might be stuck in a math curse. Have them offer words of advice or explain what someone should do if they get stuck while solving a math problem. Compile them together to create the guidebook for the math curse. (Intermediate)

2. The main character learned that math truly did exist around all around her. Have the students make a list of all of the places where math could be. Math truly does exist all around us through the use of shapes. Teach the students about four different shapes. Examples could include a parallelogram or a trapezoid. Once done have the students create Geocritters by using the shapes that they have just learned. (Primary)
Title: *Sister Anne’s Hands*
Author: Marybeth Lorbiecki
Illustrator: K. Wendy Popp
Publication Date: 1998
Genre: Multicultural/Historical Fiction
Recommended Grade Range: Intermediate

**Plot Summary**
*Sister Anne’s Hands* was written by Marybeth Lorbiecki and illustrated by K. Wendy Popp. This Cultural/Historical Fiction book presents the theme that all people should be accepted regardless of color or race. The main character of the book is a young girl named Anna Zabrocky. The setting takes place in a time where colored people were treated differently and were not able to have the same things that white people could have. The Plot begins with Anna Zabrocky getting ready for a brand new school year. Anna was entering the second grade. When she arrived at school she met her teacher. An African American nun named Sis. Anne. Sis. Anne was not like the other teachers either. They were enjoying their day at school playing and learning until a note flies to the front of the room and Sis. Anne reads the poem. “Roses are red, violets are blue. Don’t let Sis. Anne get black on you.” The children giggled but Sis. Anne froze. The next day Sis. Anne taught the class learned, “Some folks have their hearts wide open and others are tight as a fist. The tighter they are the more dangerous.” The children learned that everyone is all different and all should be accepted.

**Features of Quality**
*Sister Anne’s Hands* tells the truth about the human experience. In the book real people are portrayed in real situations. In those times of inequality many people were treated the same way as Sister Anne was in the book. Anna Zabrocky was an innocent child learning from others about the situation that was happening all around her. Anna Zabrocky had to learn by herself about the true intent of Sister Anne’s heart and learned through many experiences what it meant. People today have to learn about other people by themselves and cannot rely on the testimony of others to insure their knowledge. This book has a timeless theme. Cultural awareness and acceptance transcends all generations. Everyone has dealt with race and culture and is easily relatable to all. This book also expands awareness to self and others. Anna Zabrocky learned that there were people who were different colors than she was, and she learned through many experiences that it is okay to be different. It also brings awareness to the fact that everyone did treat people this way and now our country knows it is not acceptable but that is the past. We learn from our mistakes and choose to do better. These features add to the “quality” of the children’s book.

**Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Activities**
1. At the end of the book Anna Zabrocky colors a hand in a variety of colors to show that she accepts everyone and that it does not matter what color you are. Have the students trace their own hands and color them however they want. Then at the end have each child explain why they colored their hand that way. (Primary)
2. Learn about other African Americans who made a difference in America. Have them choose one African American person they are inspired by and write a paper on that person and why they inspire them. Then have them share with the class. (Intermediate)
Plot Summary
The book *Wave* was written and illustrated by Suzy Lee. This fictional wordless picture book presents the theme that children should have fun. The main character is a young girl who is spunky and playful. The setting takes place on a sunny day at the beach. The plot begins with a young girl and her mom heading to the beach. They are going to spend the whole day at the beach. The beautiful charcoal and acrylic illustrations tell the story of this spunky, playful little girl, who wants nothing more than to play with the waves, and collect seashells. She is chasing the waves, and building sandcastles with the sand. The climax of the book arrives when she plays a game of tag with the waves but unfortunately for her, she loses after being splashed with the water from the waves. She plays all day until unfortunately the day has come to an end and she has to say goodbye to the waves, seashells, and birds for today.

Features of Quality
This book is a wordless picture book and depends solely on the illustrations to tell the story. Therefore, the books illustrations add literary quality. The pictures are so detailed that you can discover information about the text and the characters by just looking at the pictures. For example, the reader knows that the girl is fun and playful because she is playing tag with the waves. The reader also know that this is a young girl versus an adult because she is finding excitement in finding seashells and running away from waves and having fun. The illustrations are done in charcoal and acrylic paint so they really add depth and allow you to focus on the main thing in the book, the waves. This book also presents realistic situations in which people would be found. This book is about a young girl going to the beach. Many people all over the world go to the beach, discover seashells, and get wet. It is also easily relatable to children and adults because they can all remember a time when they went to the beach and did the same things that the young girl did in the book. These features all add to the “quality” of this children’s book.

Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Activities
1. Have the student’s create their own water story. Have them illustrate a book of them spending a day around water and what they did. No text may be allowed in the book because it is a wordless book; the illustrations need to tell the story. (Primary)
2. Have the students learn about the ocean and what they can find in the ocean. Have them research about an aquatic ecosystem. Then have the students create a diorama of the ocean and what can be found. (intermediate)
**Plot Summary**
*Where the Wild Things Are* was written and illustrated by Maurice Sendak. This Fantasy book presents the theme of imagination and also helps the reader understand that people need to love. The Main Character of the book is a wild, mischievous little boy named Max. The Setting begins at Max’s house but after being sent to his room, it turns into a magical land where the wild things live. The Plot begins with Max being sent to his room after talking back to his mother. As he is in his room, his room begins to change into a magical land where the wild things live. He takes a boat and finally arrives. The wild things greet him as their king and he exclaims, “Let the wild rumpus start!” All the wild things hang in trees and act in their normal wild way. The conflict in this story is person vs. self. Although Max loved being with the wild things he missed what he had back home and knew that he needed to go back to someone who loved him. The climax of the story is when Max decides to leave and go back home to his mother.

**Features of Quality**
This piece of literature has impeccable illustrations that support and add to the text. In the book Maurice Sendak does an excellent job illustrating the events that take place throughout the book. There are parts of the story where the reader needs to depend on the illustrations in order to understand the text. For example right in the beginning of the book the author talks about all of the mischievous things that max does, but the author never comes out and directly states what max did. For example the book illustrates max chasing his dog with a fork and using a hammer and nails to make a fort. It takes the reader to look at the illustrations to determine what is happening. This happens throughout the book. It also happens when Max is with the wild things and is climbing in tress and having a good time. The book illustrates Max dancing around and hanging from tress, and bossing all of the wild things around. The reader would not know this without the pictures depicting what was happening. This book also relates to the human experience. There are times when children get upset and are sent to their room and they use their imagination to take them to a new and faraway place where everyone adores them. This familiarity is one that many have experienced and know and love. These features add to the “quality” of the book.

**Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Activities**
1. Just like Max, students can experience their wild side. Have the students draw a picture of what they look like when they turn into a wild thing. Once they have drawn their picture have them write a story about what they did when they turned into the wild thing. (Primary)
2. Max created a new land when he was upset. He came up with the environment, the people, and what you could do there. Talk with the children about what you need to have in order to survive and maintain a country or state. Have the children create their own country. Have them pick the type of environment, money, people, culture, everything. Give them some guidelines and encourage them to have all of the components that would make a successful world. (Intermediate)
The Lion and the Mouse

Author: Jerry Pinkney
Illustrator: Jerry Pinkney
Publication Date: 2009
Genre: Wordless/Fable
Recommended Grade Level: Primary

Plot Summary
The Lion and the Mouse was beautifully illustrated by Brian Pinkney. This wordless picture book is based off of the Aesop’s fable The Lion and the Mouse. The main characters of this piece of literature are the lion and the mouse who come together to save each other. The setting takes place in an African savanna on a sunny day in Africa. The plot begins with a mouse that is running away from a hungry owl who wants the little mouse as his food. Consumed in running from the owl, the mouse stumbles upon a lion. The scared mouse feels he has no chance but the lion generously lets him go. The mouse is thankful and returns to his family. The next day the lion gets caught in a net and with the help of the mouse the lion is saved from the hunters. This piece of literature presents the theme of helping others and working together to benefit others.

Features of Quality
Because this piece of literature is a wordless picture book, it relies solely on the impeccable images to present the story and theme of the book. Brian Pinkney uses beautiful illustrations to portray his story and the theme he wants to portray. The characters look so life like. The characters could jump out of the page and look realistic. The illustrations engage the reader and bring them into the story because it is the only thing that the reader can depend on to interpret the literature. Brian Pinkney also presents a timeless theme that is easily relatable to people of all ages. The theme of helping other transcends generations or age barriers. The lion and the mouse both helped each other in different circumstance that for each were not ideal. This piece of literature is not only a good read for children but it can be read and understood by adults as well. People of all ages can relate to the feeling of helping others and how they felt when someone helped them. These features add to the “quality” of the book.

Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Activities:
1. The Lion and the Mouse takes place in the African Savannah. Have the children learn about Africa and what an African Savanna looks like. Have them learn about the animals that live there and have them discover if any of the other animals rely on others to survive. To finish have the students create a diorama of the ecosystem. (Intermediate)
2. Have the students read more Aesop’s fable. Have the children pick their favorite ones and have them get into groups and perform the fable. Have them write the moral of the story in their journal and have them expand on what it means to give to others. (Primary)
Title: Verdi
Author: Janell Cannon
Illustrator: Janell Cannon
Publication Date: 1997
Genre: Fiction
Recommended Grade Range: Intermediate

Plot Summary

Janell Cannon is the author and illustrator of this fictional book Verdi. This children’s book presents the theme that change can be a good thing. The Main character of the book is a young baby python named Verdi. The setting takes place in the jungle where the snake lives. The plot is similar to Janell’s book Stellaluna. This book follows the life of a baby python whose skin is changing from yellow to green. This young snake does not want to grow up green. He is scared that he won’t be able to do the same things he can do now and did not like how all of the green snakes behaved and acted. Verdi decided he was going to do everything he could to stop turning green. In the end of the book the climax arrives when Verdi realizes that he cannot change what is happening to him and he learns to accept the change. He discovers that is not only bad but a lot of great things can come because of change as well. The Literary Conflict in the book is Person vs. self. He is scared of change and he tries everything he can not to.

Features of Quality

Verdi by Janell Cannon uses vivid language and onomonopia to bring the characters and atmosphere alive. For example, he saw a green stripe forming on his back. Verdi was so disgusted he said, “Kack”. This vivid onomonopia adds to the book and helps Verdi come to life. This book also has literary integrity by staying true to literary elements such as plot, setting, and resolution. Verdi experiences it all. The rising action begins when he tries everything he can to not turn green then the climax comes when he realizes that he doesn’t have to be like all of the other pythons. Then the book resolves with him playing with other snakes. The theme is also timeless. The theme in the book is that change is okay and that we all respond to change in different ways. At firs Verdi did not want anything to do with change because he was scared that he would not be the same person because everyone that he knew was lazy and just laid around. Verdi learned that just because he has changed he can still be the same person. This is easily relatable to the reader’s lives because they can learn that although change may have come they can still be the same person they always have been.

Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Activities:

1. This book is a great resource in which students can learn more about snakes. Read the book aloud to the students. Then read the snake notes that Janell Cannon added at the end of her book. Explain that there are many snakes in the world. Each student will choose a snake. The students will research the snake and find out facts. Then the students will create a life size model of the snake and then will present its snake to the class. (Intermediate)

2. This book could also be used to in creating an art project. Create a paper plate snake. To do this, begin in the center and draw a spiral all the way around looping many times. Then have the students decorate their snakes using patterns that they have researched or learned. Then have the students write a story about their snake and hang in the classroom. (Primary)
**Plot Summary**

*The Promise Quilt* was written by Candice F. Ransom and illustrated by Ellen Beier. This *Historical Fiction* children’s book, focuses on the Civil War and a family who is torn apart because of it. The *setting* takes place in a small town in Virginia. The *main character* of the book is a young girl named Addie. The *plot* begins with a young family whose father has been asked to participate in the war. All the young girl could see and hold on to of her father was the hope that he would come back and take her to school. As her father left for the war, she could only see the bright red flannel shirt. The war continues and the soldiers begin taking things from the family. Finally the war ends and everyone returns home except for this family’s father. All that comes home was the red flannel shirt that her father wore. Life progressed for the family and they worked hard on their farm. It was time to go to school and Addie was excited and wanted to go, but mother told her that there was no school so she could not attend. She was upset. Then the mother had an idea. She decided to make a beautiful quilt and sell it to buy books for school. The *climax* of the story comes when her mother didn’t have enough material to make the quilt so she asked Addie to give her the red flannel shirt that belonged to her papa. After internal struggles she gave her mother the shirt and they had enough money to provide books for the school. This book presents the *theme* that a lost one will always be with you and it also presents the theme of courage.

**Features of Quality**

*The Promise Quilt* has a young child *protagonist* which allows this book to be relatable to the issues that a child may face. This story although set in a historical time period can still be easily applied to the lives of many of the children today. For example, Addie the *main character* in the book experiences the loss of her father. This book goes through her reaction to her father’s death and through her loss the reader sees how she handles the situation. For example in the book mama is singing to her a song that she always sings to Addie. She says, “Beyond the sunset’s radiant glow, there’s a brighter world, I know. I wonder if the world would ever be bright again.” Throughout the book she learns that her papa is still there. This book also is written by a well-known author who knows children. She is not only known for this piece of literature but she has also written over 100 books, including the chapter book series *The Boxcar Children*, as well as books like *Time Spies*. She has had great experience incorporating historical events into fiction. The Promise Quilt is written about the Civil War. Although this topic can be tough for children to understand she does an excellent job bringing up the subject in a way in which children will understand.

**Curriculum Connections: Reader Response Activities**

1. Have the classroom create a promise quilt. Give each child a piece of paper and have them draw on their quilt one way that they can promise to remember the many things soldiers do to keep us safe. Once done tape all of the pieces together and hang in your classroom. (Primary)

2. This book is about the Civil War. Lead the students in a debate. Have one side be the confederates and the other side will be the union. Have them debate the issues and try to sell the judge (Teacher) on which side is right. (Intermediate)
Plot Summary

*Baloney Henry P.* was written by Jon Scieszka and illustrated by Lane Smith. This *science fiction* children’s book presents the theme that lies can lead to more lies. The *main character* of the book is Henry P. Henry P. is an alien boy from another planet who is always running late to school. The *setting* takes place in outer space. The *plot* begins with Henry P. arriving late to school. His teacher tells him “Permanent lifelong detention... unless you have one very good and very believable excuse.” That is when Henry tells the biggest lie he has ever told. Throughout the book he explains all of the things that happened to him that day. After the long spiel of his lies, the *resolution* comes when he finishes his story and his teacher believes him. The teacher also adds, “That is unbelievable. But today’s assignment is to compose a tall tale.” This book not only contains a funny story but it also includes words that can be found in other languages or from outer space.

Features of Quality

*Baloney Henry P.* uses vivid *language* throughout the novel. Jon Scieszka the author of the book writes this piece of children’s literature as if he received this transmission from outer space. This book uses new vivid language. For example he uses words like szkola which means school, and razzo which means rocket. Jon Scieszka received these words from other languages. Jon Scieszka is also a well-known author and is well known for his other books such as *The Math Curse*, and *The Science Verse*. He has written many books and understands how to write for children. The illustrations are beautifully depicted and add to the meaning of the text. Because Scieszka uses such vivid language to describe what happened Lane Smith uses the vivid illustrations to allow the reader to understand what the words mean. Without the illustrations it would be difficult for the reader to understand what the words mean. For example on page 21, they talk about a sighing flosser. Looking at the pictures the reader can depict that a sighing flosser is actually a flying saucer. All of these elements are used to create a “quality” read.

Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Activities

1. Throughout this piece of literature the author uses vivid text that is unknown the reader. Teach the students about context clues. Use this book to have them discover what each word means. Have them take one of the pictures and write the word and then draw the picture of what they think it means. (Intermediate)

2. Teach the children about outer space. Have them learn about the different planet as well as phases of the moon. (Primary)
Plot Summary
*Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters* was written by John Steptoe. This African folktale presents the theme that the beauty of a person is not only on the outside by the inside as well. This piece of literature focuses on two main characters Manyara and Nyasha. Both daughters were very fair but one daughter had something the other one did not. The setting takes place in a small village in Africa. A king requested for daughters to become his new wife. Because both daughters were so fair, their father decided to send both. Manyara was always in a bad mood and never forgot to tell her sister that someday she will be queen and that Nayara, her sister, would be her servant. Nayasha had a garden full of vegetables, and one day she met a small garden snake and decided to name him Nyoka. Both daughters were supposed to leave the same day but Manyara decided to leave early so the king would lay eyes on her first. Along the way many people warn her or ask for help and she refuses to do anything. The next day Nyasha wakes up and begins her journey. She experiences the same people and presents them each with kindness. The climax of the story arrives when she meets the king and it is the garden snake Nyoka. The Resolution arrives when the king sees all of the kindness she gave to all of the people and she becomes the queen. The literary conflict arises throughout the book as person versus person.

Features of Quality
*Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters* presents a timeless theme. The theme that this book presents of kindness and internal beauty transcends the generations of time. Throughout the book Nayara always treated the people with respect and kindness. She treated the green garden snake with kindness by letting him stay in the garden and giving him a name. She also treated all of the people throughout her walk to the king’s village with kindness as well by giving the young boy some food. She was also kind to her sister. Although Manyara was upset and always yelled at her sister, Nyasha always responded with, “I will be pleased to serve you. But why do you say those things? You are clever and strong and beautiful.” She always treated others with respect. Kindness truly does make a better person. This book also presents a multicultural view and perspective. This book is an African American Folktale and allows us to see into the African culture. Through the illustrations and the text the reader can see and learn more about the African American culture. This view into the African culture allows the reader to see the stories and legends that they have. The reader can also see the way they dress and where they live. These features add to the “quality” of the book.

Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Activities
1. Provide students in your class with materials to make an African village. Once they have made their own village have them write a story that took place in their African village. (Intermediate)
2. This book is a Folktale. Explain to the kids what a folktale is. Explain that this is part of Africa’s culture. Have them learn more about Africa and have them make the African flag. (Primary)
Plot Summary

_Babymouse Queen of the World_ was written and illustrated by Jennifer Holm and Matthew Holm. This piece of children’s literature is written as a _graphic novel_. A _graphic novel_ is a series of pictures with a story similar to a comic book. The _main character_ of the book is a young girl mouse named Babymouse. Babymouse wants to be the queen of everything, but unfortunately for Babymouse Felicia, a popular cat, was perceived as queen of the world. Felicia always got what she wanted and was always teasing Babymouse. The _setting_ mostly takes place at Babymouse’s school. While there she has a strange locker that is always getting stuck, a best friend named Wilson, and Felicia the most popular girl at the school. The _literary conflict_ arises throughout the book as person versus person. Babymouse will do anything to be invited to Felicia’s slumber party; she even goes as far as giving Felicia her book report. Babymouse, after constant tries, finally is invited to Felicia’s party but she discovers that it is the same night she made plans with her best friend Wilson. She decides to go to Felicia’s house, and the _climax_ of the book comes when she realizes that Felicia is mean and that she does not want to be with her. The _resolution_ arrives when Babymouse and Wilson watch the movie attack of the squid. Throughout the book Babymouse also escapes into these wild imaginations where she turns into an astronaut, detective, and a cowboy which add to the excitement of the book.

Features of Quality

This book has _illustrations_ that add to the text. This book is a _graphic novel_. A _graphic novel_ relies on the pictures to help tell the story. The text bubbles help the reader understand the internal thoughts that the _main character_ is thinking or saying. Because this book is a _graphic novel_ the illustrations are crucial. For example if the reader did not see Babymouse being sucked into her locker and ending up in deep space the author would not be able to understand what is occurring throughout the book. The few words that are actually present in that part of the book are words such as “Hey! Help! Slam! Burp!” These simple words would not allow us to know what is happening in the story. This book also has a timeless _theme_ that transcends generations. Everyone can remember a specific person who may have been the popular person at school. This book helps the reader realize that although they may think the person is they are not. Babymouse throughout the book learned that it does not matter what other people think of you and she also learned through her imagination that Felicia the cat is not a great person. She learned through the many actions throughout the book that she was not the friend that she wanted. This message allows the reader to think about their own friends and question the relationship that they may have with them.

Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Activities
1. Have the students make a comic strip. Have them illustrate it based on the book. Have them depict themselves being sucked into something (locker like Babymouse) and coming out on the other side somewhere else. Have them then add quotation bubbles to the illustrations. (Intermediate)
2. Have them write a story about what they would do if they were queen of the world. (Primary)
Title: The Napping House  
Author: Audrey Wood  
Illustrator: Don Wood  
Publication Date: 1984  
Genre: Fiction  
Recommended Grade Level: Primary

Plot Summary
The Napping House was written by Audrey Wood and illustrated by Don Wood. This fictional children’s picture book is about a family sleeping all in one bed. This silly book’s setting takes place in a house where everything is sleeping in the evening. The book is told through a repetitive phrase or language play. The plot begins with just a grandma sleeping in the bed and as the book progresses a boy, dog, cat, mouse, and flea all join grandma on the bed. All are sleeping fine until a flea decides to fall asleep on the cat. The flea bites the mouse, which wakes up the cat and so forth until they are all awake. This book presents the theme that it only takes one person to cause a chain reaction or to make a change. It only took the flea to make a difference and to wake everyone up and therefore reiterates the theme that the author is sending to the reader. This simple book is charming and is a “quality” read for children.

Features of Quality
The Napping House was written by a skilled author who knows children. Audrey wood is well known for her books such as Jubal’s Wish, Silly Sally, and Quick as a Cricket. Because she is so well-known and has written and illustrated several books she understands what children want to hear and what they can understand. She also has won awards such as the Caldecott Honors award, as well as many other certificates and rewards. This book also uses language play throughout the book. It follows the same pattern. For example the story says, “And on that… There is a ….a… on a cozy bed in a napping house where everyone is sleeping.” This language pattern allows children to pick up the words easily and adds to the story. It also allows the story to be sequenced easily. The students simply need to follow the language play in order to sequence the story. For example the students know that first the grandma is sleeping on the bed, and then the boy falls asleep on the grandma because the language play starts over. These features add to the “quality” of the book.

Classroom Connections: Reader-Response Activities
1. Have them create a story that has language play as well. Once they are done have the students sequence another child’s story. Then have them discover the cause and effects of the story. (Primary)  
2. The bed in the book could hold a lot of weight. Have the students conduct a science experiment in which they have to make a model bed that can hold a lot of weight. Tell them that their model bed needs to hold at least 15 lbs. provide them with a series of materials. Have them make predictions and experiment with materials. (Intermediate)
**Plot Summary**

*The Stranger* was written by Chris Van Allsburg. This mysterious **Fantasy book** explores a world where a man holds a key component to the weather. The **Setting** takes place in the home of Farmer Bailey. The **plot** begins with Farmer Bailey driving when he hit something. That something turned out to be a person. Father Bailey takes the strange man back to his house to care for him. They notice that the man is mute and that he does not really understand what he is supposed to do. After days of confusion and wonder, the man looks at the leaves. He realizes that the leaves were not like all of the other leaves. They were not changing colors. The **climax** of the book came about when the stranger realized that if he blew on the leaves they would change to the color orange. The **Resolution** arrives when the man decides that he needs to leave and as the friends ran outside all of the leaves were orange and it was cold. This book presents the **literary conflict** of person versus self. Throughout the book the stranger struggled with his identity and discovering where he was and who he was, until at the end of the book when he realizes who he is.

**Features of Quality**

*The Stranger* shows originality and a unique viewpoint. This book depicts a stranger that falls into the lives of these families and can control the weather. When the reader thinks of the seasons they think of environmental reasons of why the weather is changing. This book presents an alternative method of why the seasons change and also adds a magical feel to the book. This book’s originality and magical quality allow children to use their imagination and truly ask the question, ‘what does happen with the weather?’ The stranger in the book was depicted that he could control the weather and that he was responsible for doing so. The book’s illustrations also add to the literary “quality” of the book. Without the illustrations throughout the book the reader would not understand some of the vital parts that happen throughout the book. For example the book says, “He held it in a trembling hand and, without thinking, blew on it with all his might.” Without the illustration the reader would not realize that when he blew on the leaf it turned to the color orange. At that moment the reader can also see that he finally discovered what he was supposed to be doing and who he was.

**Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Activities**

1. Learn about the different seasons. Compare and contrast the seasons with the students. Have the students pick one season and create a diorama of that season. (Primary)
2. Read the book aloud to the students. Have them become detectives and discover clues about the stranger throughout the whole book. Have them write their predictions down and have them write their conclusion down as well. Have them share with the class. In the end put all of these together and make a book. (Intermediate)
Plot Summary

*Duck on a Bike* was written and illustrated by David Shannon. This animal fiction book presents the theme that all ideas can be accepted and although people not believe in the ideas they might be good ones. The setting of this book takes place on a farm. The main character of the book is a Duck who decides one day to ride a bike. As he gets on the bike he rides around and shows all of his friends the fun thing that he is doing. All of the other animals do not take interest. The lamb is nervous that the duck would fall off of the bike, and the horse responded that the duck was still not as fast as him. He rides his bike and talks to a bunch of animals until he gets caught up in a bunch of children riding bikes. The climax of the story arrives when all of the children leave their bikes outside and all of the animals decide to hop on a bike and take a ride. They are all enjoying their time and no one noticed all of the animals riding on the bike. Throughout the book the literary conflict was person versus person because duck was constantly being made fun of and ridiculed buy the other characters.

Features of Quality

*Duck on a Bike* contains a timeless theme that is relatable to people of all ages. Every person can think of someone in their lives that did not believe in their ideas. In the book all of the animals made fun of Duck or did not agree with what Duck was doing. But in the end of the book the animals say, “This is Fun! Good idea Duck!” This theme of staying true to your ideas relates to all because it is something that all people can do. Because this theme is one that is easily relatable adults will enjoy reading the book as well. The book also presents different personalities throughout the book that allows the reader to relate to one of the characters. For example the horse in the book says, “You’re still not as fast as me duck” and the pigs say, “duck is such a show off.” These different personalities allow the text to be more relatable as well. “This book is also written by an author who is well known and understands children. David Shannon has written several books including the David Book Series, like his book *No David.* These books are well popular and well known. He has also won many awards including a Caldecott honors award for his books. Because he has won many awards and written popular books it adds to the literary “quality” of the books.

Curriculum Connections: Reader-Response Activities

1. Have the students create their own page of the book. Throughout the book Duck visits all of the other farm animals. Have them pick a farm animal that was not in the book and have them write the dialogue and depict the picture for that animal. (Primary)

2. Have the children write their own animal story in which an animal does something that they cannot do in real life. Have them illustrate the book and share with the class. (Intermediate)
Plot Summary

*A Sick Day for Amos McGee* was written by Philip C. Stead, and beautifully illustrated by his wife Erin E. Stead. This fictional children’s book captures the theme of friendship and companionship. The main character of this piece of literature is an older gentleman named Amos McGee. The setting of this book begins with Amos at his home preparing to go to work. Amos works at a zoo and has a lot of friends that he enjoys playing with and helping out. He plays chess with an elephant and even helps the rhinoceros blow his nose with a hanky. All of Amos McGee’s friends love seeing him at works every day until one day Amos McGee does not show up. Amos was at home sick that day. All of the friends climb into a bus and go to Amos McGee’s house. The animals take turns playing and helping Amos McGee out. The resolution of the book arrives when Amos McGee thanks all of the animals for their help and they go to sleep.

Features of Quality

*A Sick Day for Amos McGee* presents a positive theme that people of all ages can relate to. Friendship is something that most people have. This book demonstrates how friends should act and how they should treat others. For example, Amos McGee helped the animals at the zoo. In the story it says, “He would play chess with the elephant” and “at sunset, he would read stories to the owl.” These actions illustrate how the reader should treat their friends and encourages them to help others. This book talks about the importance of helping others and being there for another person if they need someone’s help. This book also has beautiful illustrations that add to the text. Throughout the book Erin E. Stead uses the pictures in the book to explain more about what is happening in the book. Similar to a wordless picture book, the author left text out in the book to provide space for the reader to infer what is happening in the story through the illustrations. For example, when all of the animals in the zoo find out that Amos McGee is not at work, they all load into a bus and go to his house. Without the illustrations in the book the reader would not have known that they went to Amos McGee’s house. This positive theme and the beautiful illustrations that contribute to the overall text are just a few features that classify this piece of literature as a “quality” read.

Curriculum Connections: Reader Response Activities

1. Erin E. Stead creates her illustrations in this book through the use of woodblock printing. Teach the students what that means and what it takes to make an illustration. Have the students create their own woodblock print art and display in the classroom. (Primary)
2. Write a list of qualities that make a good friend. Then have the students write “Glad to have a good friend like you” letters. Have them follow the proper format and deliver to the other student if possible. (Intermediate)
**Plot Summary**

*If You Give a Pig a Pancake* was written by Laura Numeroff and illustrated by Felicia Bond. This fictional *genre* presents a series of cause and effect situations of giving a pig a pancake. The *setting* takes place in the home of a young girl. The *main characters* of this children’s literature are a young girl and a pig who loves pancakes. The *plot* begins with a young girl sitting down for her breakfast of pancakes. A pig stops by and asks her for a pancake. The girl allows the pig to have a pancake and then the pig starts needing everything. For example, the pig asks her to give the pig a bath because of the syrup was sticky. This silly pig keeps asking her for everything until the *climax* of the book arrives when the pig gets all sticky from hanging the wallpaper and this reminds him of the sticky syrup he had earlier. The *resolution* arrives when the pig sits down to have some pancakes and the girl falls asleep on the table. This book presents the *theme* that it is important to think about actions before making them.

**Features of Quality**

*If You Give a Pig a Pancake* uses *language play* to send its overall theme. Throughout the entire book a cause and effect phrase is stated. For example right at the beginning of the book when the pig is asking for a pancake the book states, “If you give a pig a pancake, she’ll want some syrup to go with it.” This if… then statement is included in every situation throughout the piece of literature. Each time the phrase is said it can make it easier for children to sequence the story because it is already written in a way in which it would easy to sequence. For example, students will be able to say first the pig ate the pancake, and then the pig was sticky, and so forth. The *language play* also sends the authors *theme* across in a manner in which children can easily pick up on. The author’s main *theme* is that children can learn from their actions. Throughout the book, the girl learns that because of her actions something else happens. For example the pig asks her for some wallpaper and glue to hang in the tree house. The young girl runs and gets the pig the things that he asked for. Then the pig gets sticky and asks for more syrup and pancakes. The young girl is tired at the end of the book. Although the book does not specifically mention it through the text the girl is tired from all of the things that she did today because of her actions. The authors *theme* transcends generations because the theme is easily relatable to people of all ages. Everyone makes choices. The choices that a person chooses to make can affect their lives, and this book clearly illustrates that through the pig and his actions throughout the book. All of these features add to the “quality” of this children’s book.

**Classroom Curriculum: Reader-Response Activities:**

1. Laura Numeroff has many If you give series books. Have the students create their own book where they have to use the if…then set up. (Primary)
2. Read the book and explain to the class that our choices have consequences. Take the students on a historical look in the past of choices that have led to consequences whether good or bad. (Intermediate)
Title: The Invention of Hugo Cabret
Author: Brian Selznick
Illustrator: Brian Selznick
Publication Date: 2007
Genre: Historical Fiction
Recommended Grade Level: Intermediate

Plot Summary
The Invention of Hugo Cabret was written and illustrated by Brian Selznick. This historical fiction book presents the theme of fate, dreams, and secrets. The main character of this book is a young boy named Hugo Cabret. The setting of this book takes place in a train station in France. The Plot begins with Hugo Cabret entering the passageway that leads to his home in a secret apartment that was made for the person who fixes the clock. Hugo’s father passed away when he was young. Hugo remembers the small automaton that his father was always working on. After his father’s death, Hugo goes and lives with his uncle who works at the train station. His uncle disappears one day and Hugo is left to manage the clocks. One day Hugo finds the automaton that his dad was always working on. Through this story Hugo learns the secrets of the automaton and through Hugo’s help brings one man, Georges Méliès, back to his dreams and passion. The literary conflict of this book is person versus person and person versus self. Although most of the book includes Hugo conflicting with Georges Méliès, Hugo does conflict with himself on what he wants to do and what he should do.

Features of Quality
The Invention of Hugo Cabret does something that most other novels do not do. This piece of literature tells most of the story through the use of beautiful illustrations by Brian Selznick. The illustrations add to the meaning of the text. Similar to a wordless picture book, the illustrations require the reader to infer the text through looking at the pictures. This innovative technique allows the reader to truly visualize what is occurring in the book, and prompts the reader to pay close attention. Generally the parts that are illustrated throughout the book are the parts that the reader needs to pay close attention to. For example, on page 206, Brian Selznick illustrated Hugo and Isabelle running through the train station. Isabelle falls to the ground and a heart shaped key flies out from beneath her clothes. This was the key that Hugo needed to turn the automaton on. This important part of the story was illustrated through beautiful illustrations and they add to text. This piece of literature depicts innovativeness and originality through the use of beautiful illustrations in the text. This book relies solely on the illustrations at times throughout the book to tell the story. Brian Selznick thought produced an original piece of literature by incorporating text and illustrations together. Throughout the book the reader is jumping from text to illustrations with ease. Although it seems that this book would be difficult to read it is easily readable. These features add to the “quality” of the book.

Classroom Connections: Reader-Response Activities
1. Have the students watch several silent movies. Have them pick their favorite one and write the dialogue to go along with it. (Intermediate)
2. Automatons illustrate pictures for magicians. Have them draw their own advertisement for a show that they will be making that an automaton could draw. (Primary)
Plot Summary

A Million Fish... More or Less was written by Patricia C. McKassik and illustrated Dena Schutzer. This fantasy book is about the magic that a simple bayou can have. The Main Character of the book is a young boy named Hugh Thomas. The setting takes place on the Bayou Clapateaux. The plot begins with Papa-Daddy and Abbajon telling Hugh Thomas the magic that the bayou can have. They begin telling him a story about a time when they found the biggest turkey but they never did get to keep the turkey because a huge cottonmouth with legs chased them off and the turkey got away. Astonished by the tale the boy goes fishing and the boy catches a million fish. He was excited to bring them home but alligators, raccoons. The climax of the story arrives when the boy returns to find that the cat ate all of his fish except for three. The resolution follows as the boy goes home he tells his family about the million fish that he had caught and Abbajon says, “So, you’ve learned that the Bayou Clapateaux is a mighty strange place.

Features of Quality

A Million Fish... More or Less expands awareness of others. Throughout the book the characters speak in a dialect. For example characters in the book state, “Y’all are just funning- right?” and “You must be addled, Hugh Thomas! Come tellin’ that whopper, then layin’ blame on my poor precious kitty cat.” This vivid dialect allows the reader to see what how people talk in the south near the bayou. It allows the reader to make connections on their own dialect and allows the reader to interpret words they say such as “Funning” to words that they might say like “joking”. The text also allows us to relate to things that people used to do. For example the text says, “Since slavery times, fisherman believed that feeding these birds would bring them luck the next time out.” This detail allows us to learn more about the culture. This piece of children’s literature also uses vivid, expressive, and playful language. The book introduces new words to the reader and also uses very descriptive words throughout the book. For example, the author describes the river of the bayou as “gauzy” The book also uses words such as peculiar, commenced, worrisome, and magnificent. All of these words are very descriptive and allow grabs the reader’s attention. Instead of the author using words like strange they use peculiar. Not only is the author providing opportunities to teach new words but is allowing the story to be more expressive.

Curriculum Connections: Reader –Response Activities:

1. This story is told through exaggeration. Have the students write their own exaggerated stories. (Intermediate)
2. Throughout the book the illustrations are beautifully illustrated and are silly. Explain to the children what an expression is such as “It’s raining cats and dogs”. Explain that it is not really raining cats and dogs, it is an expression. Have them create their own silly pictures using an expression.
The Boy in the Striped Pajamas was written by John Boyne. This historical fiction book presents the theme of innocence and forgetting differences and coming together. The main character of the book is a young German boy named Bruno. The setting takes place mostly in their new home in Auschwitz. The plot begins with their family moving from Berlin to their new home called “out-with” because their father got a new job with the “fury”. The boy notices a huge fence and sees a bunch of people wearing striped pajamas. Bruno has no idea what the people are and why they are over there. Bruno, after exploring, meets a new friend named Shmuel. Through Shmuel, Bruno learns important lessons and gains a new friend. One day Shmuel tells Bruno that his papa is missing. Bruno decides to help out and go in and find him. The climax of the book arrives when Bruno and Shmuel do not find his father and they end up being taken by the soldiers and killed in a death march.

Features of Quality
The Boy in the Striped Pajamas does not overtly preach or teach. John Boyne had a specific message that he wanted the reader to understand but in order for it to be effective he could not just state it. There are many times throughout the book when he implies something but does not come out directly and state it. For example in the end of the book when the children are going into the gas chamber he does not say, ‘they are going to die now’ he says “There was a loud gasp from all of the marchers who had filled the room, as the door at the front was suddenly closed and a loud metallic sound rang through from the outside.” These statements are indirectly stated. John Boyne did this for a specific purpose. John Boyne wrote in a unique and innovative way. John Boyne put the perspective of the book into the eyes of a young German boy named Bruno. The readers are used to reading books like The Diary of Anne Frank where the book is written by a Jew. This point of view really sends his message across. Throughout the book Bruno didn’t always know what was going on and I think that the point that the author made was strong. Many people during the Holocaust did not know what was happening and why it was happening. I love the words that Bruno uses when he is talking to his sister Gretel about the concentration camps. He says, “I see and the opposites and the Jews don’t get along… Well, can’t someone just get them together and-.” What wise words from such a young boy. These Features add to the “quality” of the book.

Classroom Connections: Reader-Response Activities:
1. Throughout the book Bruno learned how to be a good friend. Have the children create a paper chain around the classroom about how they can be friendly. (Primary)
2. Teach the children about the holocaust. Have them write a book called ‘Always Remember’. Have them write a page and draw a picture of how they can remember and what they can do to make sure that it never happens again. (Intermediate)