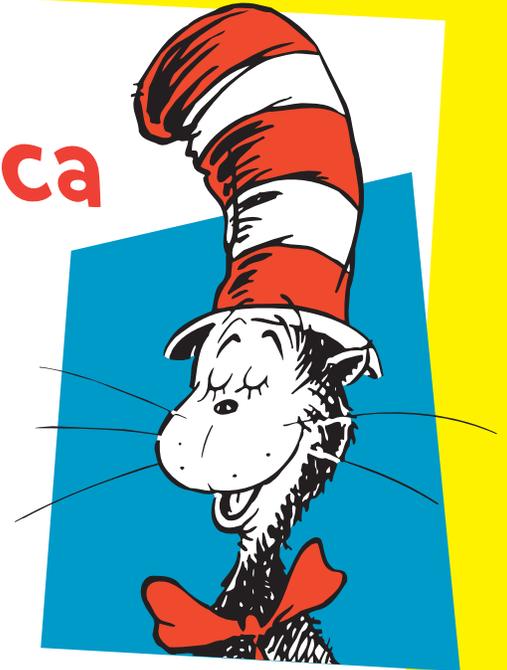


# NEA's Read Across America 2009 Teacher Activity Guide



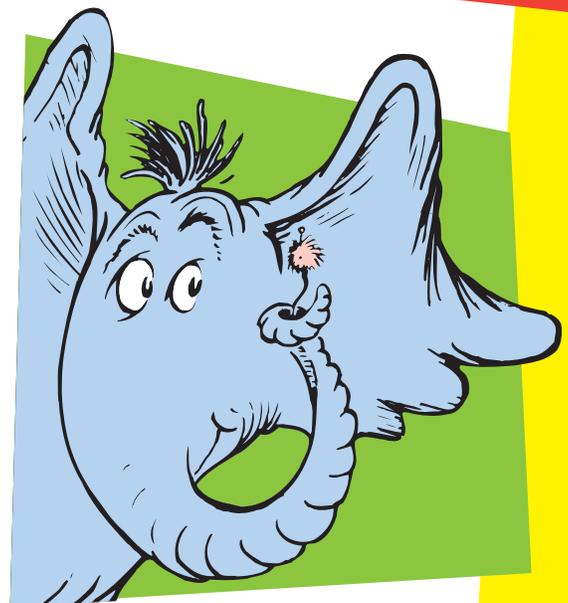
## Celebrate Stellar Authors!

Join in the 12th annual NEA's Read Across America Day!

This nationwide literacy event will take place on March 2nd, the birthday of Dr. Seuss, the author whose books epitomize reading fun! Last year, close to 45 million children, adults, and celebrities shared books together across the nation. And this year promises to be bigger than ever!

Young readers love to find out more about the authors of their favorite books, and that knowledge can inspire them in their own writing. What reader wouldn't want to learn about what the writers were like as children, where they get their ideas, what they like to read, what their hobbies are, and more?

We hope you use this activity guide to celebrate stellar authors such as Dr. Seuss, Mary Pope Osborne, and Louis Sachar with your students.



TM & © 1997 Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P., and NEA. Cat in the Hat image.  
TM & © 1957 Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. All Rights Reserved.

[www.randomhouse.com/teachers](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers)  
[www.nea.org/readacross](http://www.nea.org/readacross)

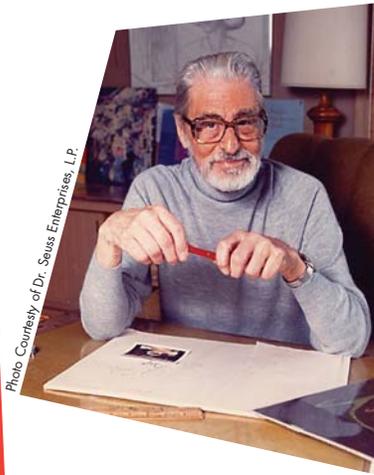


Photo Courtesy of Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P.

# All About Dr. Seuss

“A person’s a person, no matter how small,” Theodor Seuss Geisel (a.k.a. Dr. Seuss) said. “Children want the same things we want. To laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained and delighted.”

Brilliant, playful, and always respectful of children, Dr. Seuss charmed his way into the consciousness of four generations of youngsters and parents. In the process, he helped millions of kids learn to read.

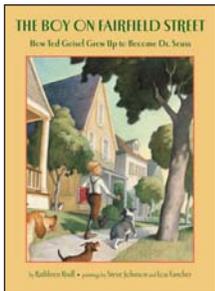
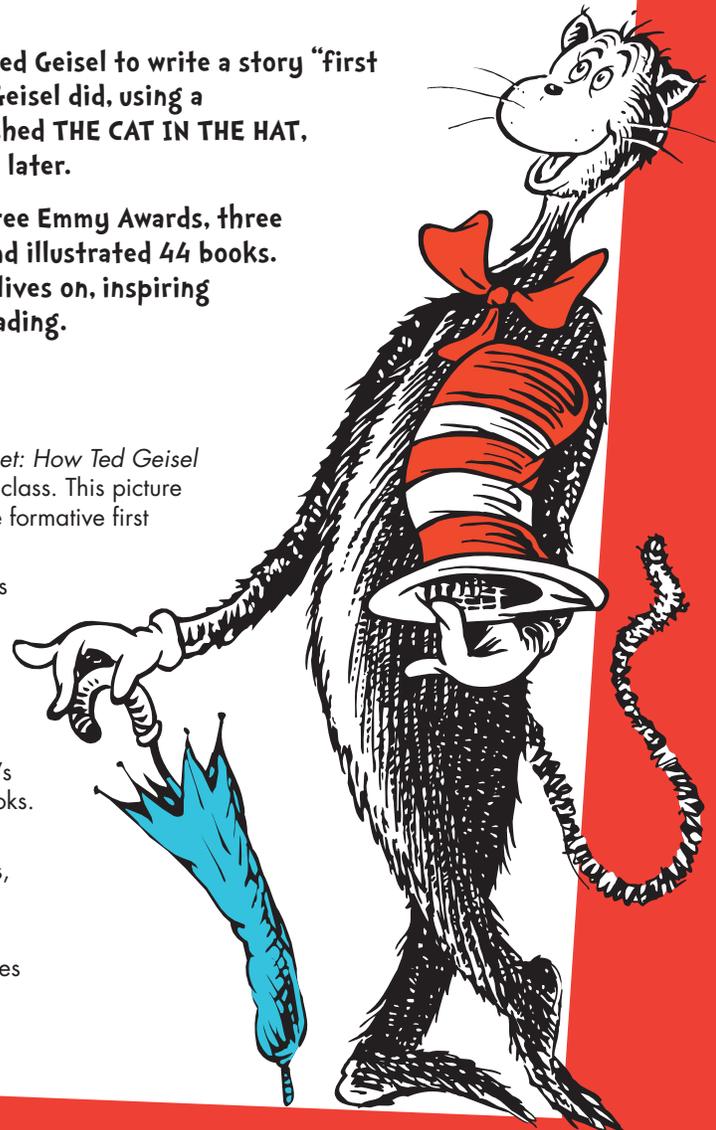
Dr. Seuss was born Theodor Geisel in Springfield, Massachusetts, on March 2, 1904. After graduating from Dartmouth College in 1925, he went to Oxford University, intending to acquire a doctorate in literature. At Oxford, Geisel met Helen Palmer, whom he wed in 1927. Upon his return to America later that year, Geisel published cartoons and humorous articles for JUDGE, the leading humor

magazine in America at that time. His cartoons also appeared in major magazines such as LIFE, VANITY FAIR, and LIBERTY. Geisel gained national exposure when he won an advertising contract for an insecticide called Flit. He coined the phrase, “Quick, Henry, the Flit!” which became a popular expression.

Geisel published his first children’s book, AND TO THINK THAT I SAW IT ON MULBERRY STREET, in 1937, after 27 publishers rejected it.

In 1954, Pulitzer Prize-winning author John Hersey challenged Geisel to write a story “first graders wouldn’t be able to put down.” And that’s just what Geisel did, using a vocabulary of only 236 words. In 1957, Random House published THE CAT IN THE HAT, a book that continues to charm children more than 50 years later.

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1984, an Academy Award, three Emmy Awards, three Grammy Awards, and three Caldecott Honors, Geisel wrote and illustrated 44 books. While Theodor Geisel died on September 24, 1991, Dr. Seuss lives on, inspiring generations of children of all ages to explore the joys of reading.



The Boy on Fairfield Street: How Ted Geisel Grew Up to Become Dr. Seuss

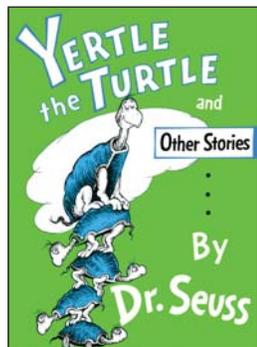
HC: 978-0-375-82298-8  
GLB: 978-0-375-92298-5

## A SEUSSIAN STUDY

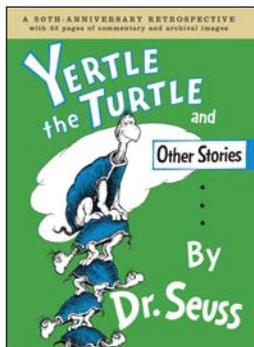
- Start off by reading *The Boy on Fairfield Street: How Ted Geisel Grew Up to Become Dr. Seuss* aloud to your class. This picture book biography of Dr. Seuss zeroes in on the formative first 22 years of his life.
- Surround students with the genius of Dr. Seuss by having as many of his books on hand as you can. Give the class free time each day to read Seuss books on their own or with a friend and to play interactive games at [www.seussville.com](http://www.seussville.com)
- Create a time line of key events in the author’s life, including the publication dates of his books.

- Post a United States map and have students mark locations that were important in Dr. Seuss’s life, such as Springfield, Massachusetts, and La Jolla, California.
- Have young readers dress up as their favorite Seuss character and introduce themselves to the class. Challenge them to invent new stories for these characters.

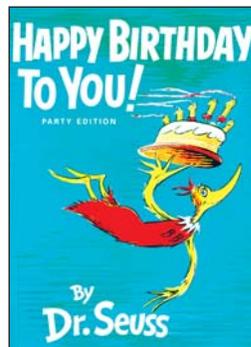
# Fiftieth Anniversary Special Editions



**Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories:  
Party Edition**  
HC: 978-0-394-80087-5

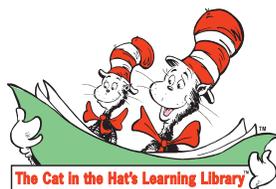


**Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories:  
A 50th Anniversary Retrospective**  
HC: 978-0-375-83850-7  
GLB: 978-0-375-93850-4



**Happy Birthday to You!  
Party Edition**  
HC: 978-0-394-80076-9

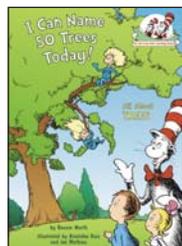
Includes the complete, original text and illustrations by Dr. Seuss, along with 32 pages of commentary and archival images written and compiled by Charles D. Cohen, the world's foremost Seuss scholar and collector.



The Cat in the Hat, a perennial favorite character, introduces beginning readers to basic nonfiction in the Cat in the Hat's Learning Library program.



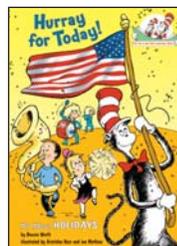
**Oh, the Things You Can Do  
That Are Good for You!  
All About Staying Healthy**  
HC: 978-0-375-81098-5  
GLB: 978-0-375-91098-2



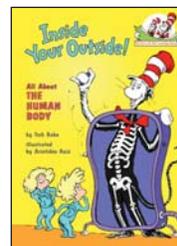
**I Can Name 50 Trees Today!  
All About Trees**  
HC: 978-0-375-82277-3  
GLB: 978-0-375-92277-0



**One Cent, Two Cents,  
Old Cent, New Cent**  
HC: 978-0-375-82881-2  
GLB: 978-0-375-92881-9



**Hurray for Today!  
All About Holidays**  
HC: 978-0-375-82275-9  
GLB: 978-0-375-92275-6



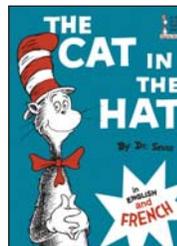
**Inside Your Outside!  
All About the Human Body**  
HC: 978-0-375-81100-5

## More Seuss to Enjoy

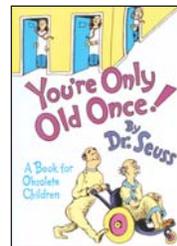
PERFECT FOR  
EARTH DAY  
CELEBRATIONS!



**The Lorax**  
HC: 978-0-394-82337-9  
GLB: 978-0-394-92337-6



**The Cat in the Hat  
in English and French**  
HC: 978-0-394-80171-1  
GLB: 978-0-394-90171-8



**You're Only Old Once!  
A Book for Obsolete Children**  
HC: 978-0-394-55190-6  
GLB: 978-0-375-95890-8



Photo Credit: Will Osborne

# Meet Mary Pope Osborne

## On discovering the magic tree house . . .

I spent a year trying different ways to get two kids back in time. I tried an enchanted cellar with magic whistles, an enchanted museum, and an enchanted artist's studio. I wrote seven different manuscripts using different magical devices and nothing worked. Then on a walk in the country with my husband, we passed an old dilapidated tree house. We started talking about the tree house . . . and continued talking about it. The next day I tried writing about it—to see if it might possibly be magic. And it was.

### CLASSROOM CONNECTION

Below is a writing lesson for kids on the subject of setting from Mary Pope Osborne herself.

Think about a setting for a story.

- Is the setting indoors or outdoors? Is it a place you know? Or is it a place you create in your imagination?

Pretend that Jack and Annie have an adventure in your setting.

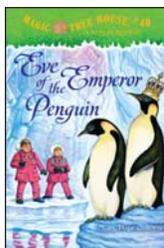
- Write the first chapter of their adventure.
- Start the chapter by describing the setting.

## MAGIC TREE HOUSE®

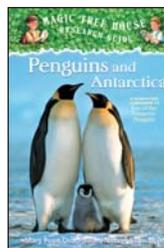
To join the Magic Tree House Classroom Club and for a complete list of the Magic Tree House books, visit [www.randomhouse.com/teachers/magictth](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/magictth)



Free author podcast at [www.rhcbclassroomcast.com](http://www.rhcbclassroomcast.com)



**Magic Tree House #40: Eve of the Emperor Penguin**  
 HC: 978-0-375-83733-3  
 GLB: 978-0-375-93733-0



**Magic Tree House Research Guide #18: Penguins and Antarctica**  
 HC: 978-0-375-84664-9  
 GLB: 978-0-375-94664-6



**Magic Tree House #38: Monday with a Mad Genius**  
 PB: 978-0-375-83730-2  
 HC: 978-0-375-83729-6  
 GLB: 978-0-375-93729-3



**Magic Tree House Research Guide #19: Leonardo da Vinci**  
 PB: 978-0-375-84665-6  
 GLB: 978-0-375-94665-3



Photo Credit: Pamela Tidwell

# Meet Barbara Park

## On developing a love of writing . . .

The truth is that as a kid I had absolutely no interest in writing at all. In fact, for me, a writing assignment was more upsetting than finding out my mother was cooking liver and onions for dinner.

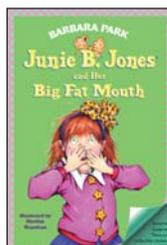
Still—even though I didn't love to write—I did enjoy school. And, for some reason, I found myself amusingly chatty in the classroom. To quote a comment on my first-grade report card, "We are trying to help Barbara remember not to talk when someone else is talking."

Anyway, I'm happy to report that in high school, I developed a love for reading that continues to this day. And I think it was this love of reading that made me eventually try to write a book of my own.

### CLASSROOM CONNECTION

Read Barbara Park's quote aloud to the class. Are students surprised that the author didn't enjoy writing when she was a child? Do they think that there is a bit of the author in her character Junie B.? Share *Junie B. Jones and Her Big Fat Mouth* with the class. In this book, Junie B. brags that she will come to school on Job Day dressed as the best job ever, but she spoke before she really knew what that job would be. Discuss interests and careers that might suit your students down the road.

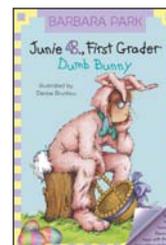
## Junie B. Jones®



**Junie B. Jones and Her Big Fat Mouth**  
 PB: 978-0-679-84407-5  
 GLB: 978-0-679-94407-2



**Junie B., First Grader: Aloha-ha-ha!**  
 PB: 978-0-375-83404-2  
 HC: 978-0-375-83403-5  
 GLB: 978-0-375-93403-2



**Junie B., First Grader: Dumb Bunny**  
 PB: 978-0-375-83810-1  
 HC: 978-0-375-83809-5  
 GLB: 978-0-375-93809-2

To join the Junie B. Jones Classroom Club and for a complete list of the Junie B. Jones books, visit [www.randomhouse.com/teachers/junieB](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/junieB)

Photo Credit: Sigrid Estarab



# Meet Judy Blume

## On her writing process . . .

Before I begin to write I fill a notebook, jotting down everything that pops into my head about my characters and story—bits of dialogue, ideas for scenes, background information, descriptions of people and places, details and more details. But even with my notebook, I still don't know everything. For me, finding out is the best part of writing.

### CLASSROOM CONNECTION

**MEET THE PAIN:** My sister's name is Abigail. I call her The Great One because she thinks she's so great. Who cares if she's in third grade and I'm just in first?

**MEET THE GREAT ONE:** My brother's name is Jacob Edward, but everyone calls him Jake. Everyone but me. I call him The Pain because that's what he is. He's a first grade pain.

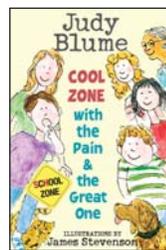
Read aloud a chapter from the Pain's perspective and a chapter from the Great One's perspective in any of the three books to introduce students to the characters and the setup. Next have them invent two characters and write a chapter of an original story from each character's point of view. Encourage students to start out by brainstorming details in their notebooks, just like Judy Blume does.

## The Pain & the Great One

For a complete book list, visit [www.judyblume.com](http://www.judyblume.com)



**Soupy Saturdays with the Pain & the Great One**  
PB: 978-0-440-42092-7  
HC: 978-0-385-73305-2  
GLB: 978-0-385-90324-0



**Cool Zone with the Pain & the Great One**  
HC: 978-0-385-73306-9  
GLB: 978-0-385-90325-7



**Going, Going, Gone! with the Pain & the Great One**  
HC: 978-0-385-73307-6  
GLB: 978-0-385-90326-4

Photo Credit: Jeff Pfeiffer



# Meet Graham Salisbury

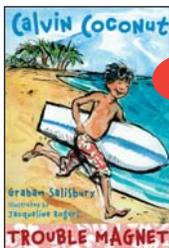
## On his favorite place . . .

I spent my entire childhood on the islands of Oahu and Hawaii, the most glorious days in the most remote, most beautiful place in the world. In my teens I skipped a small glass-bottom boat and worked as a deckhand on a deep-sea charter fishing boat. I also surfed my brains out. My friends were of every imaginable race, mostly all mixed up—haole, Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiian, Filipino, Portuguese, and many more. My stories mostly come from those guys and those times.

### CLASSROOM CONNECTION

Discuss with the class that Graham Salisbury's books are set in his beloved Hawaii. Why is this such an effective background for his stories? Why is setting so important to a story? Why do young writers often hear "write what you know"? Brainstorm a list of places that your students know well and cherish. Have each student write and illustrate a story in this special place that they know best.

## Calvin Coconut

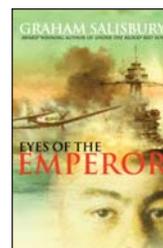


NEW SERIES!

**Calvin Coconut: Trouble Magnet**  
HC: 978-0-385-73701-2  
GLB: 978-0-385-90639-5



**Under the Blood-Red Sun**  
PB: 978-0-440-41139-0



**Eyes of the Emperor**  
PB: 978-0-440-22956-8  
HC: 978-0-385-72971-0



**House of the Red Fish**  
PB: 978-0-440-23838-6  
HC: 978-0-385-73121-8

For a complete book list, visit [www.grahamsalisbury.com](http://www.grahamsalisbury.com)

# Meet Jennifer and Matthew Holm

## On being siblings and collaborators . . .

### SO, WHAT'S IT LIKE TO WORK TOGETHER?

**JENNI:** Oh, that's easy! I'm older so I'm always right.

**MATT:** Except when I'm right.

**JENNI:** Really?

**MATT:** Ow! Stop punching me!

**JENNI:** He's more annoying.

**MATT:** She's bossier.

**JENNI:** What was that?

**MATT:** Ow! I mean, she's "always" right.

**JENNI:** That's more like it.

**MATT:** Illustrating is dangerous work, kids.

## BABYMOUSE



#8: Puppy Love

PB: 978-0-375-83990-0  
GLB: 978-0-375-93990-7



#9: Monster Mash

PB: 978-0-375-84387-7  
GLB: 978-0-375-93789-7



#10: The Musical

PB: 978-0-375-84388-4  
GLB: 978-0-375-93791-0

### CLASSROOM CONNECTION

Ask students what they think are the rewards and challenges of working with a sibling. Can they imagine working with a sibling or other family member in the future? Divide the class into pairs and have them collaborate on their own graphic novel character who could become a friend of Babymouse. They should decide on the type of animal, name, personality, and interests before writing and illustrating a page of the character's debut book.

For a complete list of Babymouse books, visit [www.babymouse.com](http://www.babymouse.com)



Photo Credit: Jodie Oite

# Meet Jeff Stone

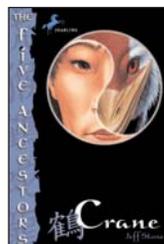
## On the birth of the Five Ancestors . . .

The idea for the Five Ancestors came from two main elements in my life. Like the Five Ancestors, I was an orphan and adopted at a young age. I spent 15 years looking for my birthmother, and had not yet found her when I started writing the series. Also, I studied kung fu. I decided to write a series that combined my passion for kung fu and my search for my birthmother. Remarkably, I found my birthmother the same week I finished the first draft of the first book, *Tiger*. I found my birthfather a year later.

### CLASSROOM CONNECTION

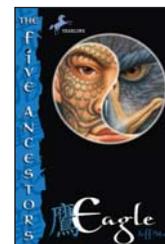
The Five Ancestors series follows five young "temple" brothers who have each mastered a different kung fu animal fighting style. Have students play the "Who's Your Animal Spirit?" game at [www.fiveancestors.com](http://www.fiveancestors.com) to see which animal spirits match their personalities. Have them write an essay about whether or not they agree with the assessment. Jeff Stone said, "My answers make me out to be a Crane, which sounds about right. However, I was different when I was a kid. There is one character in the series who thinks a lot like I used to, and his identity might surprise you. It's Ying, the main series villain."

## THE FIVE ANCESTORS



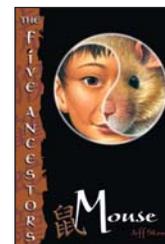
#4: Crane

PB: 978-0-375-83078-5  
HC: 978-0-375-83077-8  
GLB: 978-0-375-93077-5



#5: Eagle

PB: 978-0-375-83084-6  
HC: 978-0-375-83083-9  
GLB: 978-0-375-93083-6



#6: Mouse

HC: 978-0-375-83081-5  
GLB: 978-0-375-93081-2



Photo Courtesy of the Author



Free author podcast at [www.rhcbclassroomcast.com](http://www.rhcbclassroomcast.com)

For a complete list of Five Ancestors books and interactive games, visit [www.fiveancestors.com](http://www.fiveancestors.com)

# Meet Paul Stewart and Chris Riddell

## On working together from three doors down . . .

"The pair of us have created books together, from the plotting and planning stages, right through to the finished books. As far as I know, no other author and illustrator work this way, and so far—touch lufwood—we have not fallen out. In the end, it means that we produce work that surprises us both and that neither of us could have done on our own." —PAUL STEWART

"Often, illustrators don't meet the writers whose work they illustrate. I think this is an opportunity missed. Working as closely as Paul and I do isn't always easy, but in the end, it is tremendously enjoyable and increasingly addictive." —CHRIS RIDDELL

### CLASSROOM CONNECTION

Sometimes Stewart's text will inspire Riddell's illustrations. Sometimes it's the opposite, with Riddell presenting an image to Stewart that, in turn, inspires his writing. To experience this process, read aloud a passage from a classic fantasy, such as the Chronicles of Narnia, and have students take notes as they listen and then create an illustration to accompany the passage. To turn the process inside-out, share an illustration from a chosen fantasy book and have students write a passage to go with the illustration.

Photo Credit: Rolf Marriot



For a complete book list and interactive games, visit [www.edgechronicles.com](http://www.edgechronicles.com)

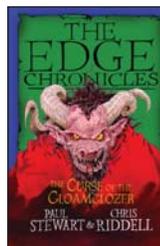


Free author podcast at [www.rhcbclassroomcast.com](http://www.rhcbclassroomcast.com)



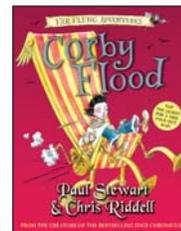
Return of the Emerald Skull

HC: 978-0-385-75128-5  
GLB: 978-0-385-75129-2



#4: The Curse of the Gloamglazer

PB: 978-0-440-42099-6  
HC: 978-0-385-75076-9  
GLB: 978-0-385-75077-6



Corby Flood

HC: 978-0-385-75090-5  
GLB: 978-0-385-75091-2

Photo Courtesy of the Author



# Meet Wendelin Van Draanen

## On the hero of her Sammy Keyes series . . .

Sammy's the friend I wish I'd had growing up and I think we'd get along great. She'd probably describe me as childlike and adventurous, but as she got to know me better, she'd recognize that there's an introspective, serious side to me, too. In Sammy's world, I'm part Marissa, part Dot, part Holly, part Hudson, and yes—although this one's hard to admit—part Lana.

### CLASSROOM CONNECTION

Young readers can always relate to Wendelin Van Draanen's rich characters. Have students create a character web for the stars of Van Draanen's three series: Sammy Keyes, Shredderman, and the Gecko and Sticky. They should write the character's name in the center of the page and list three to five personality traits for that character. Finally, discuss the common traits between the characters and why they think those are important to the author.

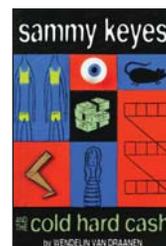
For a complete book list, visit [www.wendelinvandraanen.com](http://www.wendelinvandraanen.com)



The Villain's Lair

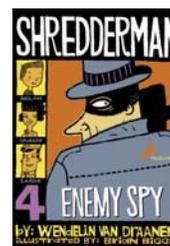
HC: 978-0-375-84376-1  
GLB: 978-0-375-94567-0

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SERIES!



Sammy Keyes and the Cold Hard Cash

HC: 978-0-375-83526-1  
GLB: 978-0-375-93526-8



Enemy Spy

PB: 978-0-440-41915-0

Photo Courtesy of the Author



# Meet Jeanne DuPrau

## On her favorite books . . .

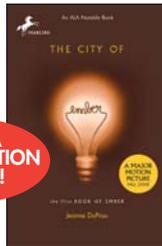
As a young reader, I loved the Narnia books by C. S. Lewis, *Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, the Doctor Dolittle books by Hugh Lofting, *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, and hundreds of others. Later I loved mystery and science fiction, especially books by Agatha Christie and Ray Bradbury. Some of favorite writers are Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, and the Brontë sisters. Among today's writers for young people, I admire Lois Lowry, Richard Peck, Hilary McKay, David Almond, and many more.

### CLASSROOM CONNECTION

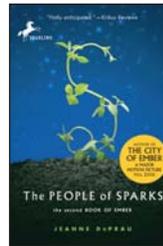
Many young adult novels are becoming movies, and *The City of Ember* is a new addition to the major motion picture list. In small groups, ask students to investigate the process of how a novel becomes a movie. Then come together as a class and list the steps on a classroom display. Have students brainstorm the names of other young adult novels made into movies. Then have them pick a favorite young adult book they believe would make a good movie. Have them write to a movie studio recommending the book and justifying its selection to be made into a motion picture.

## THE BOOKS OF EMBER

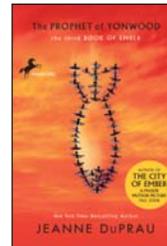
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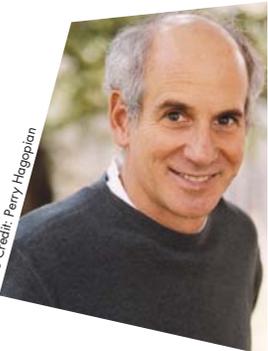


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# Meet Louis Sachar

## On staying focused . . .

I never talk about a book until it is finished. It took me a year and a half to write *Holes*, and I never told anyone anything about it during all that time. I do this for a variety of reasons, but mainly motivation. By not allowing myself to talk about it, the only way I can let it out is to finish writing it.

I write five or six drafts of each book. I start with a small idea, and it grows as I write. My ideas come to me while I'm writing. The story changes greatly during the first few drafts. By the time a book is finished, it is impossible for me to say how I got the various ideas.

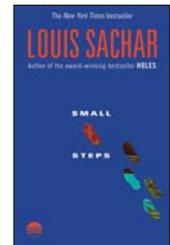
### CLASSROOM CONNECTION

*Holes* has been described by *Publishers Weekly* as a "dazzling blend of social commentary, tall tales and magical realism." Lead a class discussion about the social messages in the book. What are the literary differences between a tall tale and a story that uses magical realism? How does Sachar use a tall tale, the parallel story in the novel, to further define the social messages?

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