

2011-2012 Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Awards Program Booktalk Script
Grades 6-8

The Nine Pound Hammer by John Claude Bemis

The only thing that Ray has left of his father is the lodestone, a dark stone he received some eight years ago before his father disappeared. His father told him to keep it safe, that it would guide him if he ever had a need. For some time, since his mother died, the stone has been pulling Ray towards who knows what. He has been having strange dreams and nightmares.

On an orphan train, Ray, his sister Sally and others head towards new homes. Ray has no intention of staying on the train; he jumps off and makes his way south, guided by the lodestone. Injured by a bear protecting her cubs, he is taken in by a medicine show travelling by train. With them and other characters from folklore, Ray will be pulled into a battle against an evil industry baron named the Gog.

<http://johnclaudebemis.com/biography/>

School of Fear by Gitty Daneshvari

Everyone's afraid of something, aren't they? Well imagine your life being dominated by your fears. Things have gotten so frightfully bad for the four kids in this book that their parents are sending them to an exclusive and secret summer camp called School of Fear. After a dreadful bus ride, the campers meet the headmistress of the School of Fear, Mrs. Wellington, a former beauty queen. Here each camper will have to face their fears and work with the other campers just to get out of the school alive.

Book Trailer: <http://www.hachettebookgroup.com/features/enrollinschooloffear/index.html>

The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman

Late at night, a toddler wakes and discovering the back door is open heads out into the night. The door had been opened by an assassin who had murdered the adults and is on his way to kill the child. But our unlikely hero has entered the graveyard across from his home and ended up in the care of the friendly ghosts who reside there. It turns out that the child is the focus of an ancient order that wants him dead. If you like adventure, horror mixed with humor this book is for you.

<http://www.neilgaiman.com/>

<http://www.mousecircus.com/> (The Official Neil Gaiman Website for Young Readers)

My Life in Pink and Green by Lisa Greenwald.

Lucy Desberg's life is in trouble! Her family's pharmacy is about to close for good and her mom and grandma can't stop worrying...and fighting...about it. Lucy has ideas to help, but no one seems to want to listen to a 7th grader. When Lucy unexpectedly saves the high school

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homecoming queen from a humiliating hair disaster, word spreads and customers begin to visit the family store again. Add some behind-the-scenes scheming, good friends, eco-friendly ideas and it looks like Lucy might save the day! But will it be enough, or in time, to save the store and the family from breaking up?

<http://www.lisagreenwald.com/>

<http://www.epa.gov/students/>

<http://www.ecospas.com/>

Theodore Boone Kid Lawyer by John Grisham

Both of Theo's parents are lawyers, so naturally, he knows everything about the law. When his class visits a real murder trial at the local court house, he becomes involved in the mystery. Will he be up to the challenge? Can he help find the real criminal?

Checkout this interview with this famous author:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwAH2vG0SDM>

"YouTube - Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer, John Grisham - 9780525423843." YouTube - Broadcast Yourself. Penguin Group, 26 Mar. 2010. Web. 13 Apr. 2011.

Watch for the sequel, *Theodore Boone and the Abduction*.

Uprising by Margaret Peterson Haddix

The noise was deafening, the heat was intense, and the smoke was getting thicker and thicker. The girls were fighting for every breath; they were fighting to survive. March 25th 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire, a tragedy that should never have happened. Follow three young girls as they live through one of the most tumultuous periods in early 20th century America.

Want more information-

Flesh & Blood So Cheap: Triangle Fire and Its Legacy by Albert Marrin Alfred A. Knopf, 2011

Remembering the Triangle Factory Fire 1911- 100 Years Later -2011

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/>

Cornell University - ILR School - The Triangle Factory Fire. Cornell University - ILR School - Home. 2011. Web. 13 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/>>.

Closed For the Season by Mary Downing Hahn

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Logan had no intention of ever living in that house, it was creepy. Rumor had it, that someone had been murdered there. Little did he realize that this was the beginning of a deep, dark mystery involving stolen money and an old abandoned amusement park.

For fun watch the author's Book Trailer:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xH4JtB3xhHI&feature=related>

YouTube - Mary Downing Hahn: Closed for the Season." YouTube - Broadcast Yourself. 19 May 2009 Web. 13 Apr. 2011

Operation Yes by Sara Lewis Holmes

Meet Bo Whaley who attends the run down base school at the Air Force base in Reform, North Carolina, where his father is commander. Bo has the reputation for being a bit of a trouble maker at school, much to the dismay of his father. But he really likes his new teacher, Miss Loupe, and especially enjoys the lessons in improvisational theater. Most of Bo's classmates, as well as his teacher, have been touched by the war in the Middle East as parents and siblings are deployed there or transferred to other bases in supportive roles. Even Bo's family is concerned when his aunt is sent to Iraq and his cousin Gari comes to live with them. When Miss Loupe's brother is reported missing in Afghanistan, she is consumed by grief and worry. Bo rallies the class in a project to support her and her family. The project snowballs into a community effort of praise for all enlisted servicemen and women. Take a room full of sixth graders and a new teacher who loves art and improvisational theater. Mix these together for an exciting look at the power one group of kids have when they work together for a cause.

www.saralewisholmes.com

Popularity Papers by Amy Ignatow

Meet Lydia and Julie, two fifth grade girls, who are not in the in-crowd.. Next year will be their first year in Middle School and they are determined to be popular. Since the girls are not quite sure what it takes to be popular, they start a year long diary with lots of illustrations. Lydia wants to be involved with the theater. Julie is shy and a very good artist. On their quest for popularity, the girls write down their observations in a notebook and then carry out experiments to try to determine what makes the popular girls tick. When Lydia and Julie try to imitate the popular girls, Lydia ends up with a bald spot, a lady bug baby cell phone, and sprains her ankle at camp while Julie finds out that Roland has a crush on her. Roland writes a love poem to Julie that gets sung at the chorus concert. Is this a way to gain popularity? Read about all the experiments gone wrong in this girl version of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*.

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<http://www.abramsbooks.com/popularitypapers>

The Clockwork Three by Matthew J. Kirby

Three young people with no obvious connection meet by coincidence one day. Guiseppe has just recovered a mysterious green violin when he bumps into Frederick, who has been at the docks looking for some metal for his clockworking project. Later, Frederick will bump into Hannah, a maid at a grand hotel, who has just been given a great opportunity to work with a mysterious hotel guest. Little do these three know there is something that will draw them together and change their lives forever. In the course of the book we solve a mystery and hunt for buried treasure until we come to a conclusion not far from the start of our story. If you enjoyed *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, you will be drawn to the similarities in *The Clockwork Three*.

Book Trailer: <http://www.scholastic.com/clockworkthree/> (also author interview)

Hero by Mike Lupica

Did you ever want to have super powers? After Zach's father dies in a plane crash, Zach Harriman has trouble believing that his father died the way it was reported so he visits the site of the crash. There he meets a strange man, who explains that Mr. Harriman was killed because of his special powers and that Zach shares them as well. Suddenly, the adventure begins with Zach being attacked and realizing that it is up to him to protect the President of the United States. Find out how Zach masters his unique talents and decides who to trust in this new role he is thrust into.

<http://www.mikelupicabooks.com/mikelupica.html>

Book Trailer <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HHmtQmvrRQ>

The Brilliant Fall of Gianna Z by Kate Messner

Seventh grader, Gianna Z. loves running and art but not doing school work. She has waited until the last minute to do her 25 leaves science project, due in one week. Her cross-country Coach has told Gianna she will not run in sectionals if her science project is not done. Her back-up runner is a pretty and arrogant girl named Bianca. Gianna's good friend, Zip, helps her collect and label leaves but many things keep her from finishing the work. Her father is busy with the funeral business, her grandmother is showing signs of Alzheimer's and Bianca destroys her project. Read about Gianna's race against time to see if she finishes the leaf project in time to compete.

<http://www.katemessner.com>

The Red Pyramid by Rick Riordan

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Imagine that you only see your older brother/younger sister twice a year? Since their mother's death, Carter and Sadie Kane only see each other twice a year when Carter and their father visit Sadie and her maternal grandparents in London. This particular winter visit, Carter notices a strange man shadowing them as they walk to Sadie's house. This man shows up later after Mr. Kane blows himself up in the archeological wing of the National Museum. Seems the Kanes have connections to Egyptian royalty, as in pharaohs. The children have been kept apart for their safety, but with their father's disappearance, Carter and Sadie are going to have to bond together to rescue their father, and save the rest of the world from the Red Lord and his evil plans. A working knowledge of Egyptian mythology helps the reader negotiate the duat as the days race forward to the time of Chaos. Despite its whopping 516 pages, this novel is very fast paced as readers alternate between Sadie and Carter's points of view as the action unfolds and the Kanes are thrust into what will be the beginning adventure of their lives.

Book Trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXh2FTLdO68>

Author website: <http://www.rickriordan.com/home.aspx>

Puzzle website: <http://www.redpyramidpuzzle.com/>

Egyptian religion : <http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/egypt/religion/index.htm>

On the Blue Comet by Rosemary Wells; illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline

The stock market crash of 1929 changed Oscar Ogilvie's life. The bank has taken his home and everything in it including his beloved model train collection. He had the biggest train set in Cairo, Illinois. Someday Oscar and his dad had planned to take a transcontinental trip on the Blue Comet, their favorite. But now that Dad has lost his job and is in California looking for work, Oscar doubts that dream will ever come true. Forced to move in with his humorless aunt and mean cousin, Oscar makes friends with a drifter and witnesses a crime which leads him on a time traveling train trip across America. While on the train he meets famous historical figures including Hollywood stars and future presidents. Will you recognize Dutch and the other stars from by-gone years?

<http://www.thebluecomet.com/>

<http://www.amazon.com/Blue-Comet-Rosemary-Wells/dp/076363722X>

http://rosemarywells.com/?page_id=88

The Mysterious Howling by Maryrose Wood (*The Incurrible Children of Ashton Place*)

When fifteen year old Miss Penelope Lumley accepts a position as governess to the children who live at Ashton Place, a fabulous estate, she has no idea what she is facing. She finds three children, two boys and a girl, who have been found living in the nearby woods, apparently raised by wolves. Alexander nips to keep his siblings in line; Cassiopeia has a bark that is worse than her bite; and Beowulf is quite proficient at chasing squirrels. Rescued by Lord Ashton who is

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determined to give them a home, and tame these wild creatures, Penelope comes to oversee their education and train them to be children, not wolves. However, someone on the estate doesn't like the idea of these half-wild children being around. Penelope is making great strides in teaching them how to behave in society when, at the Christmas party where they are to be introduced, a mysterious someone sabotages their success and turns the guests against the children. Who could dislike them so much? After all, they are only poor, unfortunate, orphaned children.

<http://www.maryrosewood.com/>