

Let's Talk: New Books to Spark Conversations

Note to educators: We recommend that you pre-read these titles to determine if the books are a good fit for your class.

Most students, no matter how young or how old, look forward to the moment in a school day when their teacher opens a book and begins to read aloud to the class. Listening to a read-aloud not only provides a common experience for the class, but it opens the door to conversations about issues and experiences that are important to students.

The following books have the potential to evoke strong feelings, broaden points of view, or raise questions for discussion, such as:

- How do you know when someone is your friend?
- What can we learn from historical events?
- How does it feel to be different?
- What are some ways to solve problems?

A Bike like Sergio's, Maribeth Boelts (grades 1-3)

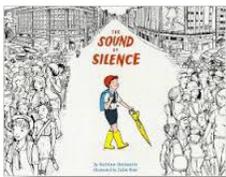
What would you do if you found a one-hundred dollar bill?

Ruben is faced with a moral dilemma when he finds a one hundred dollar bill. The money would help him buy a new bike and help his family with everyday expenses, but what about the person who lost the money?



The Sound of Silence, Katrina Goldsaito (grades K-2)

What's your favorite sound? Where can you find silence?

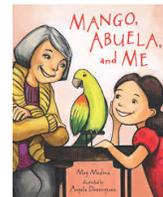


Yoshio notices many different sounds in Tokyo, but he has a hard time finding silence. This story invites readers to listen for silence in unexpected ways.

Abuela, Mango and Me, Meg Medina (grades K-2)

How might you overcome communication barriers?

Mia is upset when she has to share a room with Abuela, who doesn't speak English. Their relationship deepens as they find ways to understand each other.



School's First Day of School, Adam Rex (grades K-2)

What if a school building had feelings?



On the first day of school, a school building has many of the same feelings as the students who fill its classrooms. Just like students, the school makes mistakes and regrets them.

Towers Falling, Jewel Parker Rhodes (grades 4-5)

What do you know about 9/11?

Three friends in New York City learn how the events of 9/11 connect to each of them and their families. This book is meant to introduce students to the tragedy that unfolded on 9/11. A facilitated reading and discussion of this book is recommended to support students as they learn about and discuss this topic.



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Save Me a Seat, Sarah Weeks (grades 4-5)

How does it feel to be different? What do you want your teacher to know about you?

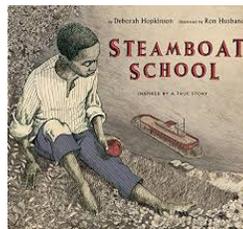


Ravi, a new student from India, feels misunderstood by his new teacher and mistreated by his classmates. Only Joe, another student who is marginalized at school, understands Ravi's pain.

Steamboat School, Deborah Hopkinson (grades 3-5)

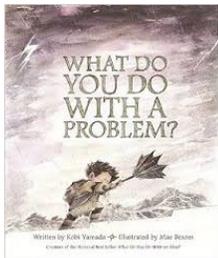
How did one Missouri teacher make a difference for his African American students in the 1800's?

This piece of historical fiction describes how Reverend John Meachum got around the discriminatory laws of Missouri to provide an education for his African American students.



What Do You Do with a Problem?, Kobi Yamada (grades 2-4)

What is your problem-solving process?



When a child tries to ignore a problem, it just gets bigger. What happens when the child faces the problem head-on?