

Critics & Fanatics

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Reading and Reviewing Gary Paulsen's Books

by Alexander Kress, Lincoln Elementary

Introduction

I am doing an inquiry project on Gary Paulsen's books. I am reading and reviewing them. This is what I did.

I got my project probably because of my teacher, Mr. Jeff. We have these things in our room called book groups. Some of the book groups I have been in have been about books written by Gary Paulsen. These book groups have inspired my interest in Gary Paulsen's books. That is where my project came from.

When I did my project I thought I would probably like most of his books because a lot of his books have detail and are about things I like.

Procedure

I read five books for my Gary Paulsen literature project. They are: Mr. Tucket, Tracker, Dogsong, Harris and Me, and The Winter Room. Here is what they are about.

I started the book Mr. Tucket on 3-6-97 and finished on 3-7-97. The book is about a kid named Francis Alphonse Tucket. He is in a wagon train heading to Oregon with his family and two others. He gets captured by Indians and the whole book is about him escaping and becoming a man of the wilderness.

I started the book Tracker on 3-12-97 and finished on 3-13-97. In it, there is a boy named John Brown who's parents died in a plane crash when he was young so his grandparents are taking care of him. Now his grandfather is sick with cancer and can't come deer hunting with him this year because of his cancer. That's not right for John because his grandpa coming with him is a family tradition. The rest of the book is about him

tracking this deer and somehow changing.

I started the book Dogsong on 3-19-97 and finished on 3-22-97. In it, there is a boy named Russell whose Eskimo village is not doing things the old way. He goes on a quest by himself with a dog team to find the old way again.

I started the book Harris and Me on 3-31-97 and finished on 4-3-9. In it there is a boy whose parents get drunk regularly so he moves from family to family and finally ends up with his second cousins. They have a boy named Harris. The book is about the kid learning about the lifestyles on a farm.

I made a rating system based on humor, plot, action, characters, entertainment, and an overall rating. I rated each book by numbers: 0 = none, 1 = fair, 2 = okay, 3 = good, 4 = very good, and 5 = great. Here is a chart telling how I rated each book.

Results

	Dogsong	harris and me	Tracker	Mr. Tucket	Winter room
Humor	0	5	0	1	1
Plot	3	4	2	5	2
action	3	4	2	5	2
Characters	2	5	3	5	2
Entertainment	4	5	2	5	2
Overall	3	5	2	5	2

As you can see in my chart I rated the books overall: Dogsong three, Harris and Me five, Tracker two, Mr. Tucket five and The Winter Room two.

Interpreting Results

I have learned a great deal about Gary Paulsen's writing styles. Most of his books are about the out-of-doors. Also his books have many details and don't have the biggest plot, but still are good books because of the details. I have learned a great deal about literature from Gary Paulsen's books. They have opened up a whole new kind of genre to read for me. I have really enjoyed this literature inquiry because it lets me do one of my favorite things: read.

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New Directions

New projects that could be done as a result of my inquiry are reading Gary Paulsen's books and seeing how fast you could read all of them, seeing how long it would take you.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my teacher, Mr. Jeff. I would also like to thank my mom for helping me along the way and encouraging me when I needed it.

Jaguar Cars

by Ben Antoniewicz, John Muir School

Introduction

My name is Ben Antoniewicz and I am in third grade at John Muir School. I am very interested in cars so I did my project on the history of Jaguar cars.

History

Sir William Lyons was the Jaguar founder. Jaguar started in 1922 in Blackpool, England. The original name of the company was Swallow Coachbuilding Corporation. Sir William Lyons was 20 years old when Jaguar was started! He changed the name of the Swallow Coachbuilding Corporation to Jaguar in 1935. He thought the name Jaguar suggested feline (cat) grace, power and agility and was a good name for his cars.

The 1940's

Jaguar cars were always sporty cars. In 1948, Sir William wanted a new kind of car for the 1948 car show. Jaguar made the XK120 which stole the show. The XK120's top speed was 126 miles per hour. That was amazingly fast for the 1940's.

The 1950's

In 1950, Lyons wanted a new kind of car so he designed the MK7. The MK7 made \$30 million in just a few months. It was great! In 1954 Lyons

made the MK2. It stayed in production for over ten years. In 1957, Lyons made a racing car into a car that made him famous. It was the XK SS which is still made today as the XJ S. The XJ S is a very powerful and fast car.

The 1960's

In 1961, Sir William introduced the XK E sports car. It was very fast and good looking also. In 1971, the XK E became even faster when the Jaguar V-12 engine was added.

The 1970's

In 1972, the XJ12 had a V-12 engine and claimed to be the world's fastest four-seater. In 1972, Sir William retired and gave his job to Lofty England. Sir William stayed interested in Jaguars until he died in 1985. In 1975, Jaguar came out with the XJ5 which could go 150 miles per hour

The 1980's

Jaguar introduced a new popular kind of car which many people really liked. The car was the XJ6. The XJ6 had the new Jaguar six cylinder engines which were smaller and not as expensive as its V-12 engine.

The 1990's and Beyond

In 1991, the XJ220 was made. It was one of the greatest cars ever made by Jaguar (my favorite!). Ford Motor Company bought Jaguar in 1989 and Jaguar is now a part of Ford. In 1996, the XK8 was introduced and it is the newest for the Jaguar cars and is wonderful. The XK8 is very powerful and nice looking (I got to ride in the first one in Madison).

Acknowledgments

I want to thank my dad for helping me and my brother for getting me interested in cars.

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Number The Stars

by Eli Temkin, John Muir School

Number the Stars is a 132 page book by Lois Lowry.

It starts out in the early 1940's when the Germans invade Poland, during the Holocaust (in World War II). Meanwhile a Polish girl named Annemarie has a best friend, Ellen, who is a Polish Jew.* After almost being captured by the Germans, Ellen goes into hiding with Annemarie's family. Ellen goes with Annemarie's family when they visit Annemarie's Uncle Henrik. There Annemarie is asked to risk her life and go on a secret mission.

At Uncle Henrik's house Annemarie finds out that her great aunt Birte has "died." She thinks and thinks but she can't remember any great aunt Birte. At the funeral she sees people she doesn't know speaking a language she doesn't know. At the funeral they open the coffin and instead of seeing a body, they see clothes and food. After the clothes and food have been distributed, and Ellen's dad was given a mysterious package, the guests from the funeral (which included Ellen's mom and dad) were taken to Henrik's boat. On the way out of the house, Ellen's dad tripped and fell on a loose stair.

Just before Annemarie's mom left for the boat, she said she'd be back in an hour. In a little while Annemarie fell asleep. When she woke up it had been over two hours and her mom wasn't home! Then she saw a heap outside. Annemarie went outside and saw that the "heap" was her mom! She found that her mom had hurried home, tripped on a twig, fell and broke her ankle and has to crawl the rest of the way home. Then Annemarie found the "mysterious package" near her mom on the ground. Her mom said that Henrik needed the package and fixed it so it looked like a lunch. Annemarie ran along the path and when she was near the dock, she ran

into German soldiers.

To find out if she gets past the soldiers, read the book Number the Stars.

The book is one of the best I've ever read.

*The Germans tried to kill everyone that wasn't like them including the Jews during the Holocaust.

Shakespeare in Translation: The Taming of the Shrew

by Caitlin LaFlash, Randall School

Setting: A banquet hall at the home of Lucentio in Padua

Characters: Baptista (Bianca and Katherina's father)

Vincentio (Lucentio's father)

Gremio (a merchant)

Lucentio and Bianca (recently married)

Hortensio and the Widow (recently married)

Petruchio and Katherina (the main characters, and recently married)

Tranio, Biondello, Grumio (servants)

Lucentio: At last, though it has been a long time,
Our differences are done,
It's time to stop fighting,

To smile at escapades and adventures gone by.

My fair Bianca, make my father welcome,

While I kindly welcome yours.

Brother Petruchio, sister Katherina,

And you Hortensio, with your loving widow,

Feast with the best, and welcome to my house.

My banquet is to end our quarrels

After our great happiness. Please sit down,

For now we sit to chat as well as eat.

Petruchio: Nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat!

Baptista: Padua provides this kindness, son Petruchio.

Patruchio: Padua provides nothing but what is

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kind.
Hortensio: For both our sakes, I wish that were true.
Petruchio: Oh my gosh, Hortensio is afraid of his widow!
Widow: Then never trust me if I'm afraid.
Petruchio: You are very clever, yet you miss my meaning:
I mean Hortensio is afraid of you.
Widow: He that is giddy thinks the world turns around him.
Petruchio: Good answer.
Katherina: Widow, what do you mean by that?
Widow: Petruchio understands me.
Petruchio: Yes I understand you. How does Hortensio like that?
Hortensio: As long as my widow says her story is understood.
Petruchio: Well said. Kiss him for that, good widow.
Katherina: "He that is giddy thinks the world turns around him"—
Please tell me what you mean by that.
Widow: Your husband, being married to a shrew, thinks my husband should be as unhappy as he is —
And now you know what I mean.
Katherina: A very insulting meaning.
Widow: Yes, I insult you.
Katherina: My behavior isn't bad, compared to yours.
Petruchio: Go get her, Kate!
Hortensio: Go get her, widow!
Petruchio: \$100 says my Kate will win.
Hortensio: I'll take that bet.
Petruchio: Spoken like a true gentleman. Here's to you.
(He drinks to Hortensio)
Baptista: How do you like these clever folks, Gremio?
Gremio: Believe me, they butt (*argue*) well together.
Bianca: Head and butt! Any half wit
Would say your head and butt were head and

horn,
Would say the devil made them do it.
Vincenzio: My bride, has this argument awakened you to speak?
Bianca: Yes, but not frightened me, so I'll be quiet again.
Petruchio: No you shall not. Since you have spoken,
Someone will surely make fun of you.
Bianca: Am I your target? I am too quick, And if you try to insult me, it will not work. You are all welcome to try.
{Exit Bianca, Katherina, and Widow. The men joke about whose wife is least obedient. Petruchio proposes a wager—each husband will send for his wife to see which one obeys most promptly.}
Petruchio: She has shut me up. Here, Mr. Tranio,
Though you missed your target,
Good luck to all who try.
Tranio: Oh sir, Lucentio unleashed me like his greyhound,
Which runs and catches for its master.
Petruchio: A good comparison, but something is not right.
Tranio: It is good that you have hunted for yourself —
But it is thought that she keeps you at arms length.
Baptista: O, O, Petruchio! Tranio hit a sore spot.
Lucentio: I thank you for that joke, good Tranio.
Hortensio: Confess! Confess! Has he not irritated you with the truth?
Petruchio: He's annoyed me a bit, I confess, And as this joke does apply to me,
Ten to one it was meant for both of you too.
Baptista: In all seriousness, my son Petruchio, I think you have the most shrewdest wife of all.
Petruchio: Well, I disagree, and so, Mr. Know-it-all,
Let's each of us send for his wife,
And the one whose wife is most obedient
To come first when he sends for her

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Will win the wager which we propose.

Hortensio: OK. What's the wager?

Lucentio: \$20.

Petruchio: \$20?

I'll bet that much on my hawk or dog,
But twenty times that on my wife.

Lucentio: \$100 then.

Hortensio: OK.

Petruchio: The bet is made!

Hortensio: Who shall begin?

Lucentio: I will.

Biondello, tell your mistress to come to me.

Biondello: I am going.

(He exits)

Baptista: Son, I'll pay half your bet if Bianca comes.

Lucentio: I'll take no halves, I'll pay it all myself.
(Biondello returns.)

What is the news?

Biondello: Sir, my mistress sends you word
That she is busy, and cannot come.

Petruchio: What? She is busy and cannot come!
What kind of answer is that?

Gremio: Yes, but a kind one.

Pray God that your wife doesn't send you a
worse answer.

Petruchio: I hope a better one.

Hortensio: Biondello, go and beg my wife to
come to me right away.

Petruchio: Oh! "Beg" her!

Well, then she must come.

Hortensio: Do what you can, your's will not
come if you beg.

(Biondello returns)

Now where's my wife?

Biondello: She says the joke's on you.

She will not come. She asks you to come to her.

Petruchio: Worse and worse. She will not come!
That is terrible, intolerable.

You should not have to put up with this.

Grumio, go to your mistress.

Say I command her to come to me.

(Exit Grumio)

Hortensio: I know her answer.

Petruchio: What?

Hortensio: She will not.

Petruchio: That is just my bad luck.

(Enter Katherina)

Baptista: Wow, here comes Katherina!

Katherina: I am here, what is it you want of me?

Petruchio: Where is your sister and Hortensio's
wife?

Katherina: They sit talking by the parlor fire.

Petruchio: Go get them. If they do not come,
Herd them to their husbands.

Now go, and bring them here right away.

*(Exit Katherina. Baptista congratulates Petruchio
and adds another dowry. On Katherina's
return with Bianca and the Widow, Petruchio
instructs her to tell the other women the duty
they owe their husbands.)*

Lucentio: That was a miracle.

Hortensio: It was. I wonder what comes next.

Petruchio: To be married, it brings you peace,
And love, and a quiet life,
The right to rule supremely,

In short, everything that is sweet and happy.

Baptista: What luck you have had, Petruchio!

The bet you have won, and I will add
Another \$20,000,

Another dowry for another daughter,

For she is changed, as she has never been.

Petruchio: Not only that, I will win even better,
And show you more of her obedience—
Her new virtues and obedience.

(Enter Katherina, Bianca, and the Widow)

Here she comes, bringing your contrary wives

Who are prisoners of her womanly persuasion.

Katherina, your cap does not look good on you:

Off with it—throw it to the ground!

(She obeys)

Widow: My husband, let me never be asked to
do such a silly thing.

Bianca: What foolish thing do you call this?

Lucentio: I would call what you have done fool-
ish too.

Your actions, fair Bianca,

Have cost me \$100 since suppertime.

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Bianca: The more foolish of you for betting on me.

Petruchio: Katherina, I ask you to tell these stubborn women

What obligations they owe to their lords and husbands.

Widow: Come now, you are teasing.

We will have no telling from Katherina.

Petruchio: Come on not, and start with her.

Widow: She shall not.

Petruchio: I say she shall. And first begin with her.

(Katherina scolds Bianca and the Widow for their aggression and for failing to recognize their husbands' superior status. She compares women with a prince's subjects who should serve and obey.)

Katherina: Oh, stop frowning,

And take not scornful glances

That will hurt your lord, your king, your governor.

It blots your beauty as frost does the fields,

Shakes your reputation as wind shakes fair flowers,

And is in no way likeable.

A women made angry is like a troubled fountain,

Muddy, unpleasant, clogged with dirt, without beauty,

And while it is so, on one dry or thirsty

Will want to sip, or touch one drop of it.

Your husband is your lord, your life, your keeper,

Your head, your king; one that loves you

And takes care of you; devotes his body

To hard work at sea or land,

To be watchful at night, in cold,

While you stay warm at home, secure and safe,

And asks no other payment from you

But love, fair looks, and true obedience —

Too little payment for such a great debt.

The same duty as a subject owes a prince,

Does a woman owe her husband.

And when she is contrary, peevish, sullen, sour,

And not obedient to him,

What is she but an enemy,

And a sinful traitor to her loving lord?

I am ashamed that women are so simple

To offer war instead of kneeling for peace,

Or to want to rule,

When they are meant to serve, love, and obey.

Why are our bodies soft, and weak, and smooth,

Unable to work and deal with all the troubles of the world,

Except that the softness and our hearts

Should equal the softness of our bodies?

Come, come, you weak and unable creatures,

I have been as proud as you,

My heart as great, and as reasonable,

To trade word for word, frown for frown with you.

But now I see things are not what they appear:

Our lances are but straws,

Our strengths are weaknesses, our weaknesses are great,

That we think we are more than we are.

Hold your pride, for it is no use to you,

And place your hand below your husband's foot.

As a sign of respect, if he please,

My hand is ready, may it please him.

Petruchio: Why there's a babe! Come on and kiss me, Kate.

Lucentio: Well done, old lad.

Vincentio: It's good to hear when children are docile and obedient.

Lucentio: But not good when women are contrary.

Petruchio: Come Kate, we'll go to bed.

We three are married, but you two are done for.

(Speaking to Lucentio)

It was I who won the bet, although you got the white (BIANCA'S NAME MEANS WHITE)

and being the winner, God give you good night.

(Petruchio and Katherina exit)

Hortensio: Now go your own way, you have tamed a shrew.

Lucentio: It's a wonder that she was tamed so.

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Reading About Dogs

by Fue Vang, Randall School

Introduction

I chose these books on dogs because I thought that they were neat and I like dogs. And I think they tell you more about how dogs react. And I think they are caring and nice and well loved. I like these books because I think dogs are fun to play with.

Sally Foster, A Pup Grows Up

This book is about puppies that grow up. It's about puppies and how they react. I learned that Basset Hounds grow up to be hunting dogs. After that is a Border Collie that helps people chase sheep and round up ducks and geese. You know about Dalmations. They get trained to be a fire fighter's dog. They can see very well and smell anything close or far away. You probably know more about a Springer Spaniel too! They grow up to be bird dogs. They have long hair on their legs.

Allan Fowler, It Could Still Be a Dog

This book tells you about dogs playing and stuff. It tells you how dogs react. It tells you how they play.

William R. Sanford and Carl R. Green, The German Shepherd

The book gives you facts in the bottom or in the top. It tells you how much they weigh and how they are trained.

Heather Zenk, The Siberian Husky

This book tells you about Siberian Huskies attending a sled race and how they send things to people. Siberians eat bread only when they are in sled races. They have been through blizzards carrying food and medicine to people. This book also tells you everything about a dog.

"Don't you think they look like wolves?"

"Well, I certainly do."

A Siberian Husky can weigh up to about eighty or ninety pounds. They have nice soft coats that keep them warm like any other old dogs. Siberians can beat two big polar bears in a fight. Pitbulls are just like Siberians because they can beat two huge lions in a fight. Siberians, from what I've heard, are nice. They learn quickly, and they are strong. Siberians can run up to forty miles per hour. They have sharp teeth and a powerful jaw. Their jaw is as long as a wolf's.

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Conclusion

I think the books are good and they gave a lot of facts. My favorite books are A Pup Grows Up and The German Shepherd because they gave more data on dogs. I don't like the others as much because I feel that they didn't give much data. I like reading these books because I like to learn about dogs. I also liked the pictures in the books because they look excellent and cool. Even those pictures that were drawn look good. My favorite dog in the books is a German Shepherd because they learn quickly, unlike other dogs. German Shepherds are very strong.

Space Jam

by Harsha Nair, John Muir School

Hi, my name is Harsha Nair. I am in third grade at John Muir School. I just saw the movie Space Jam. The stars of the movie are Michael Jordan and Bugs Bunny.

The story starts when the Nerdluks try to capture The Looney Tunes. The Looney Tunes challenge the Nerdluks to a basketball game. The Nerdluks suck the talent out of Charles Barkley, Patrick Ewing, Shawn Bradley, Mugsy Boggs and Larry Johnson and put that talent into themselves. The Looney Tunes get Michael Jordan to help them out in the game. The Nerdluks change their name to the Monsters.

On the night of the game, the Monsters boss, Swakhammer, is there. The Looney Tunes are getting squashed by halftime 64-18. In the locker room Michael Jordan gives the Looney Tunes a comeback speech and it works! The Looney Tunes play hard and with ten seconds left the score is Monsters 88, Looney Tunes 87.

It is the Monster's ball. One of Michael's friends, Dan, helps out. He tells Daffy Duck to bump a Monsters player. Daffy does that and steals the ball, passes it to Dan, who passes it to Michael. Michael slam dunks the ball to score the winning

basket.

I thought that Space Jam was a very good movie. If you have not seen Space Jam see it !!

Redwall Series Book Review

by Jamil DeMontmorency, Lincoln Elementary

I would like to dedicate this literature project to Alexander Kress who helped me build my interests in books.

Introduction

Before I started reading fantasy I was reading things like "choose your own adventure." I was usually reading the sci-fi "choose your own adventure" until I was a Sixer! Then I started reading the "Redwall" series because of Alex.

My question started when Al got me into this fantasy genre. All of a sudden I was sort of warped into this fantasy world. So then I liked the books so much that I decided to make up the questions, "I wonder which Redwall series book I think is the best? What will I rate them?"

I read and rated the books because I thought that it was a comfortable way of reading/rating and creating an inquiry. I thought that I was able to do what I did because I liked to do what I was doing: reading. I usually read at home because at school, during D.E.A.R. time, I usually can't concentrate.

I thought that there wasn't any one right way of doing a project. I think the meaning of this project was to have fun and do something I like. I also wanted to expand my imagination.

I expected to be able to use and expand my judgment on books by doing this reading and rating project. I also hoped to expand my ability not to mix fantasy with reality.

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Procedure

To answer my question I bought some books at the school book fair: Mattimeo, The Bellmaker, and Merial of Redwall. Then about ten days after that I went to Barns and Noble book store and bought Mossflower. Then I checked out Redwall from the library. Then I started reading.

I used books, paper, and pencils. The resources I used were a library and a computer.

The observations I made about the books were the books always had a character that was young and wild. That character became the abbot or abbess of Redwall abbey. Also, usually the characters go out on long journeys to find something or to rescue someone.

What I did to collect my data is I read the book then I wrote a paragraph or two about that book. Then I put what date I started the book and what date I finished the book. These are the books in the series I rated. They may not be in order, but I still think I rated these books fairly.

Interpreting Results

I used two criteria to rate the books. I rated these books on their basic plot and on how heroic and adventurous the characters were. I used a 1 to 5 star scale where 1 is the worst and 5 is the best.

Book: Redwall

Started: Sep. 9th

Finished: Oct. 9th

Rated: **** (4)

Why I rated it "4": I rated this book "4" because in the beginning of the book the first two or three pages are pretty boring because there isn't much talking. In my opinion I personally like talking in a book. In the middle of the book there is lots of suspense and talking and the book has a lot of

war. The main character, Matthias, is a fat little mouse with a hasty attitude. Clunny the Scourge, the bad rat, is very mean. I think that personality fits Clunny. The bad guy has to be mean because if there isn't a bad guy the good guys don't have anything to do. For more information: READ THE BOOK FOR GREAT SUSPENSE!

Book: Mossflower

Started: Oct. 10th

Finished: Nov. 10th

Rated: ***** (5)

Why I rated it "5": Like Redwall, the beginning 2 or 3 pages are pretty boring. Though, in the middle of the book, the pages and characters are filled with suspense. The main character, Martin, tries to save Mossflower from the evil Tsarmina, Queen of a thousand eyes. He goes on a quest to find Boar, the fighter. READ THE BOOK FOR GREAT SUSPENSE!

Book: Mattimeo

Started: Nov. 29th

Finished: Dec. 29th

Rated: ***** (5)

Why I rated it "5": I rated Mattimeo "5" because I think that the book (like all of the others) has a few boring pages. In the book Mattimeo there is great action and adventurous journeys when Matthias' child Mattimeo and other children of Redwall get kidnapped by Slagar The Cruel and get enslaved by Malkariss. While at Redwall they are attacked by ravens. For more info... READ THE BOOK!

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Book: Merial of Redwall

Started: Nov. 30th

Finished: Dec. 30th

Rated: *****(5)

Why I rated it "5": I rated Merial of Redwall "5" because I like the fact that it has a female heroine. Most of the books had a male hero. At first I thought that the series was a little bit sexist. In this book there is an evil villain named Gabool the Wild. He had thrown Merial overboard in a sea storm. Merial hit her head on a rock and totally wiped out her memory. She is found and taken to Redwall abbey by a group of hares. The abbey dwellers are determined to help Merial recover her memory. When they try, Merial reveals her whole history and her life as a servant to Gabool the Wild.

Book: Salamandastron

Started: Nov. 31st

Finished: Dec. 31st

Rated: *****(5)

Why I rated it "5": I rated Salamandastron a "5" because I like the overall plot. The weasel assassin, Ferahgo, wants to take over the mountain Salamandastron. He is willing to sacrifice as many soldiers of his horde to get the mountain. The story is gripping and it is also sad. If you DON'T like war, I suggest you do not read this book.

What I learned by doing this inquiry was I should look at books in a different way. I mean, I learned how I should select books to read and how (if I'm doing an inquiry like this one) to rate books.

What Next?

What I hope to create for an inquiry project next year is that I hope to see who plays Magic. The

Gathering and why they play it or why they don't play it. I also want to see if they think playing Magic The Gathering is a way you worship Satan, the Devil. Then I would have to research the Devil and how you worship him. Also, I want to do another reading and rating project, but this time I want to do it with J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord Of The Rings series. I also want to do a project on Tae Kwon Do, a martial art I take. I would like to do a demo but I want it to have to do with my inquiry.

Our "Reading Rainbow" Video Project

by Leah Bretl and Becky Nieber, John Muir School

Introduction

Our names are Leah Bretl and Becky Nieber. We are fourth graders in Mary Bostrom's Multi-age Third/Fourth grade class at John Muir School. We got our video camera idea from our moms', Kathy Bretl and Laurie Werth. Mrs. Beck, our school librarian, started a video class for fourth graders at our school. We learned so much and thought it was so interesting that we decided to do a project using a video camera.

Procedure

We decided to take the video class and learn how to use the video camera. We took classes from Mrs. Beck during lunch and also helped to film some of the events at school with the camera. After the class was over, we decided to do a project with the video camera like the end of "Reading Rainbow." That is the part where children tell about their favorite books.

We went around to other classrooms and asked the teacher if his or her classroom would be able to participate in our project. All the teachers answered our question the same, "Yes!" Once we decided who to video tape, we asked them when they would be available to be taped. When

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someone wanted to be video taped, we told them to pick out their favorite book and they would be talking about that book and why they like it.

First we had a practice round and then we rolled the camera. Each person told her/his name and what book s/he chose, then s/he told about the book and held up her/his favorite picture in the book. We zoomed up on the picture and once we were done zooming up, we would give them the thumbs up sign. Then we faded out and said, "da na na." That person would be done.

Results

We reached our goal of doing a video project and we feel that it would be enjoyable for anyone to see. We learned a lot about the video camera and putting a production together and had a lot of fun doing it!

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the people who made our video possible: Kindergarteners - Karly Klagos, Laura Fahrney and Jesse Leung, 1st and 2nd Graders - Michelle Buckner and Julie MacGuidwin, 3rd Graders - Rose Burton, Jonathan Fok, Samantha Frank, Susan Schneider, Leonel Moreno and Daniel Fuentes, 4th Graders - Kristen Pauls, Lizzy Abbs, Lauren Kirk and David Blanchard, Teachers - Mrs. Werth, Mrs. Lee, Mrs. Bostrom, our student teacher, Mr. Hind, and our librarian, Mrs. Beck. If you would like to watch our video, please e-mail our teacher at mbostrom@madi-son.k12.wi.us.

Reading Diaries

by Margaret Fraser, Lincoln Elementary

Introduction

I got my question from when I visited Anne Frank's house in the summer of 1996. I really wanted to do this project because I like to read diaries and see what different lives are about. I

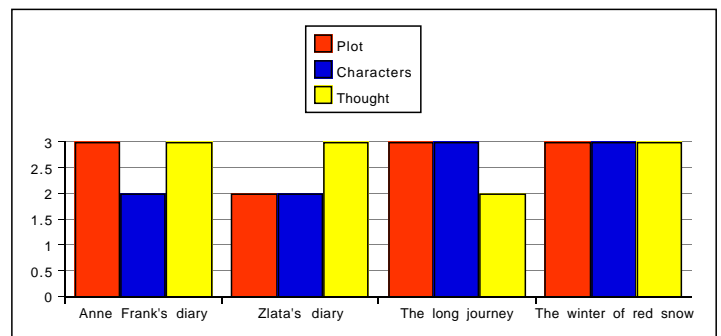
think I really like this project because I saw where Anne Frank's diary took place. I thought I would learn about different feelings from each diary.

Procedure

To answer "How are these girl's diaries different and the same?" I read The Diary of Anne Frank, Zalta's Diary, The Long Journey and The Winter of Red Snow. The Diary of Anne Frank was about a girl who had to hide from the Nazis because she was Jewish. She had to live her life behind a bookcase but there were many rooms. Zalta's Diary was about a girl that lived during a war. The war was so bad she didn't even have school. The Long Journey was about a girl who was a Pilgrim and had to wear three petticoats. She had a hard winter. The Winter of Red Snow was about a girl who lived during the Revolutionary War. She got to meet George Washington.

How I got these books is my librarian helped me find the books. After I read the books I reviewed the books. The materials I used were books, graph paper and a notebook to get information and write it down. I thought I could read better in the classroom rather than my house.

Results



After I read the diaries, I graphed all the books down by how much action and details the characters expressed. I took graph paper and rated each book by ones, twos and threes. One meant

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it had little action and detail, two meant it had just plain detail and action and three meant it had lots of action and detail.

The Winter of Red Snow had the most story and details (expressed by the characters) and thoughts put into the diary. The Diary of Anne Frank, Zalta's Diary and The Long Journey I did not like a lot because they did not have a good story and details. I did not think that would happen. If I did this project again I would read more diaries and write down more data. I would also like to ask more people about the diaries they read and if they liked them.

Interpreting Results

I learned that I could see what other girls lives are about. I think I learned that you can do any kind of inquiry project and read any kind of book.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my mom and for helping me think of this project and think of the things I needed for this project. I also would like to thank Ms. Schultz for helping me find diaries to read and Mr. Jeff for helping me write this article.

Comparing Newberry Award Winner Books

by Meredith Bourne, Lincoln Elementary

Introduction

My "Critics and Fanatics" question is, "How are Newberry Award Winner books, written in different decades, the same and different from one another?" My question came from when I was brainstorming on what literature project I wanted to do. It was an important project for me, because I have always been interested in Newberry books and wondered why some books get medals and some don't. By doing this project, I hoped to become more interested in reading, see differences between the books, and try to fig-

ure out what criteria people use to give some books Newberry medals.

Procedure

To answer my question, I went to our library and looked at the poster that lists all of the Newberry Award Winner books. I then selected 14 books (two from each decade) from the list that I wanted to read. I later discovered that it might be a little too hard to read 14 books, so I narrowed my list to five. They were: Caddie Woodlawn, by Carol Ryrie Brink, Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry, Rabbit Hill, by Robert Lawson, Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, by Mildred D. Taylor, and Secret of the Andes, by Ann Nolan Clark. I then got all of the books and read them. This took about two-three months. I collected data on the books and kept it in my inquiry notebook. When I finished reading all of the books, I made a list of criteria to rate the books. The criteria were:

1. has a unique writing style
2. has details
3. has a purpose
4. has many different episodes
5. has clear, distinctive characters
6. is understandable
7. has an expressive vocabulary
8. has an unpredictable plot.

I gave one star (*) to a book, each time it fit with one of the criteria that I listed. The most stars a book could get would be eight. The least amount of stars a book could get would be zero.

Results

This is what I rated each book:

Caddie Woodlawn (1936): ***** (6)

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Caddie Woodlawn had a ton of episodes, but not a very expressive vocabulary. It was about a girl named Caddie who loved to play with her brothers and got in trouble a lot. She hated sewing and cooking and things that were considered for girls and women at that time. It was fun to read and had a lot of excitement, but also everyday things, like school.

Number the Stars (1990): ***** (7)

I rated Number the Stars a seven, mostly because I thought it had a good purpose. It is about a Jewish girl named Ellen, and her friend during the Holocaust. It's about how Ellen and her family escape Denmark, with the help of their close family friends. I thought it explained part of the Holocaust well and what it was like to be a Jew during that time.

Rabbit Hill (1945): ***** (5)

Rabbit Hill was a fun book to read, but I thought it was directed to a younger audience. It had a lot of episodes, but not very many details. It's about a little rabbit named Georgie and all of the animals living on the hill. All of the animals are talking about, "New folks coming!" They are all hoping that they don't have snares or traps, and that they are "planting folks." In the end, they turn out to be very nice people.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (1977): ***** (8)

I really liked Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. The author definitely had a unique writing style that you don't see very often. The book had a good plot and you really got to know the characters by reading it. It's about a African-American family in Mississippi during the 1930's, when Blacks didn't have very many rights. It's about the challenges of everyday, growing up as an African-American child, in a time when Whites controlled mostly everything. It was enjoyable to read, but also very intense.

Secret of the Andes (1953): ***** (7)

Secret of the Andes is different from a lot of other books. It also has a very unique style to it. It is about an Indian sheppard boy named Cusi, who lives in the mountains with a group of llamas and an older Indian, named Chuto. Secret of the Andes has a lot of history about the Inca and Spaniards in the story. It was interesting to read, because you get to take the point of view of somebody that has a very different culture than ours. In the story, Cusi leaves to find a family, but returns to the mountains, and realizes that he belongs with Chuto and the llamas.

Some of things that I hadn't planned on were: I hadn't planned on rating the books this way and I hadn't planned on only reading five books. The only problems I had were rating the books and finishing reading the books on time. I liked that I got to read a variety of books that were very different from one another.

Interpreting Results

By doing my inquiry project, I learned that I liked the books that were written more recently better. I found that the language is different in the older books and that books that were written more recently tell about more people issues and the older books tell more about animals and other things. I also learned about what kinds of books I like and what I look for in one, how to rate books, and how to manage my time. If I had to do my project over I would start earlier, read more books, and takes notes as I read.

New Directions

Some other inquiry projects that could be done are to compare other Newberry Award Winner books, compare Newberry Award Winner books to other books, or trying to ask the people that decide what books get medals the criteria that they use to select the books.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my teacher, Jeff Maas, and the Lincoln school library for helping me with my project.

Reading and Rating Sad Books

by Molly Sinderbrand, Lincoln Elementary

Introduction

My Inquiry project mainly came from my interest in sad books. I like reading sad books because the book (or at least the end of the book) is exciting, suspenseful or both. They also make me glad that I'm not the person (or people) in the book that the sad things are happening to.

Procedure

First, I went to the library to get some books. The librarian, Ms. Schultz, gave me about 10 books to sort through and find the ones I wanted. I read the backs of all the books to find the ones that sounded saddest. I picked out five: Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Flip-flop Girl, Where the Red Fern Grows, Souder, and Bridge to Terebithia. Then I read the books.

I did not have much of a system for reading. I just read the books one after another. I read the books at school during D.E.A.R. or inquiry workshop. I did not document at all while I was reading.

It took me about five months to finish four of the books. Then I decided not to read Souder because five books was too much to read, as I had so many other things to do.

Results

Here are 3 number scales showing which books were saddest and best:

	Flip-flop	Red Fern	Bridge	Thunder
Intensity	2	3	3	3
Details	2	3	3	3
Real Charact	2	3	3	3
Real Settings	3	3	3	3
Real Sadness	2	3	3	3
Intensity		5	5	5
Details		5	5	5
Real Sadness		5	5	5
Real Settings		5	5	5
Real Charact		5	4	5
Intensity		10		10
Details		10		10
Real Charact		10		10
Real Settings		10		10
Real Sadness		10		10

I got the idea of using number scales from my teacher and other students in my class who are also rating books. First, I tried a 1-3 scale and all were tied except Flip-flop Girl. Then, I tried a 1-5 scale to narrow it down. All were tied except Bridge to Terebithia. Then I tried a 1-10 scale to narrow it down even more. Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry and Where the Red Fern Grows were still tied.

New Directions

If I were to repeat my project, I would do two things differently: #1, I would document more, because I hardly documented at all. #2, I would rate each book right after I read it, so it would be fresh in my mind. If I were to start any new inquiries from it, I would read Katherine Paterson books because her books are very good, but neither came in first when I rated them and I want to see if any others do.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my teacher, Mr. Jeff, for helping think up my project and helping me all the way through it also.

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Which Type of Books Do I Like Better, Scary or Mystery?

by Roslynn Lee Pedracine, Lincoln Elementary

I first got my idea during D.E.A.R. I was reading a "Clue" book, when I started thinking about my inquiry project, a project for "Critics and Fanatics". I knew that I really liked "Clue" books, so I had an idea to do a project on "Clue" books. I thought about reading all of the "Clue" books and picking to see which I liked better. I talked it over with my teacher and he said it would not be very interesting to just read all "Clue" books. He said I could do that project if I wanted to, or do a different one. So it was up to me. I thought about it and decided not to do that one because it would be really boring. I conferenced with him again and told him I didn't want to do that one. So he asked me what other type of books I liked to read. I told him scary, so he said why not also read some scary books and rate them by the plot and the characters. I liked that idea, so I did that one because that would be a fun project.

I decided to read in the mystery category: Clue #15 and The Doll House Murders. In the scary category: Scary Stories for Stormy Nights and Silent Night 2.

During the time that I was reading in February and March, a Black history contest came and I entered. I read a lot on Black Americans and their history. I started to change my mind if I still wanted to do my scary & mystery project or a project on Black Americans and their history. I first decided "yes" to do the one with the Black Americans because that would also be a cool project. Then a few days later, I decided to change back to my original project because I was so far along on that project. My hypothesis was that I'll like mystery better because I read it more often.

I read all the books, marked down when I fin-

ished the books, what I would rate them, the authors, how I liked the plot, and how I liked the characters.

I started Clue #15 on March 15th and finished on March 23rd. I started The Doll House Murders on March 20th and finished on April 1st. I started Scary Stories for Stormy Nights on March 12th and finished on March 18th. I started Silent Night 2 on February 15th and finished on February 30th. The Clue #15 and Scary Stories for Stormy Nights were just the same, except they were on different topics. The same thing with The Doll House Murders and Silent Night 2. They were the same. They focused on one set of episodes/stories, but were two different topics.

I rated "Clue" a 6 because the people were doing different crimes and it was always very humorous and funny. I rated Scary Stories for Stormy Nights a 6 because there were a lot of different kinds of endings and all the stories were different. They may have not been scary, but they had very mysterious endings to them. I rated Silent Night 2 a 2. This book was very lame and all they did was try to kidnap a lady. I rated The Doll House Murders a 3 because you could tell that the dolls were alive and trying to tell her something. It was too obvious.

I noticed that when I read the books I couldn't decide! So I read some more "Clue" books (14, 13 and 12) and books by the author of The Doll House Murder, Silent Night 2 and Scary Stories for Stormy Nights.

I finally decided that I couldn't decide on scary or mystery, but I liked the "Clue" series and The Scary Stories for Stormy Nights and the other 2 books much better than Silent Night 2 and The Doll House Murders. I really didn't like those 2 books.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my teacher Mr. Jeff

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for helping me decide and pick out the books to read for my project. I would also like to thank all the other people who helped me pick out the books and decide on which books to read also.

How Was the Movie “The Creature From the Black Lagoon” Made?

by Saul Korzenecki , Lapham School

Introduction

I chose this topic because it's something that I really like. Mostly it's because I like monsters and especially monsters that can go on land and in water. At first I didn't know how he was made. I thought I'd find out how he was made.



Procedure

I first got a book called “Creature From the Black Lagoon” from Monona Library. Then my mom got a bigger book called “Creature from the Black Lagoon” and it had more pictures and more information. I watched videos, especially “Creature From the Black Lagoon.” Now I have all three “Creature From the Black the Lagoon” movies to keep. My mom ordered them.

Results

In the “Creature from the Black Lagoon” book from Monona Public Library it said that his suit was made out of molds. When I watched the movie, I didn't really know there was one person in a Creature suit who played Creature in the water and another person in a Creature suit who played Creature on land.

New Directions

Well, I used to only like the Creature but now I also like dinosaurs as well as the Creature.

Acknowledgments

I thank my mom, Carmen Cruz, who helped me by ordering all the movies, taking me to the library, and buying me the books. Kim Dacas and Ken Swift helped me too.

The House of Dies Drear

by Adam Kent, Lincoln Elementary

The book House of Dies Drear by Virginia Hamilton is a very good book. It has a mysterious setting. Thomas Small and his family are going to move from South Carolina to Ohio. Their house is huge and supposedly haunted. That house was part of the Underground Railroad and his dad is a history teacher. For Thomas's birthday his dad gave him a leather book about history.

When they got to their new house, Thomas found a secret passage. He went in it. He heard a

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moaning sound. Thomas was really scared but finally found his way out. At night he went outside to explore. Outside someone chased him.

Thomas ran inside and slipped and crashed into the dishes. Then Mr. Pluto (the person who sold them the house) came in and started talking, but Thomas's dad told him to get out and he did.

When Thomas went to his room he couldn't go to sleep because he was scared, so he went to the living room and slept. Later in the night something went upstairs and put a triangle in Thomas's mother and father's room, the twins room and his. In the morning his father figured out that if you put the triangles together and add another triangle it makes the Greek Cross.

That night they met Mr. Pluto and his son. They told them that the Darrows, a family next door, were trying to take over the treasure the house had. Thomas, Mr. Small, Pluto and his son planned to scare the Darrows. They bought costumes. Thomas and his father played two slaves.

This book is well written because of all the suspense. If you are thinking this is a 'Who done it?' book, you're wrong. It is a mystery more like 'What is it?' and 'Where is it?' You also learn some history about slavery.

This is a very good book for people who like mysteries. I rate this book, on a scale from one to ten, a 9.9.