

Barefoot Skateboarders

Written by Rina Singh, Illustrated by Sophie Casson

Published by Orca

The remote village of Janwaar in Northern India has been the same for a long time, with the community strictly divided into castes. It's a quiet village... until the construction project begins. Ramkesh can't tell what it will be—it's all ramps and hills. When it's done, he sees kids playing on it, on strange boards with wheels... Soon, he's invited to try, and he's hooked—practicing tricks and soaring on his skateboard. At first, it's all boys, but Ramkesh invites his sister, and other girls join too. Word gets out that the tiny village is a hotbed of skateboarding talent, and people flock from all over to see it and to teach the kids new tricks. Ramkesh and his friends even get invited to travel, gaining the first-ever passports for their village. But most importantly, they come back home to tell of their journeys...and to lead the way for Janwaar into the future, with a newfound sense of joy and unity.

Content / Discussion Themes:

skateboarding, discrimination, social caste systems, perseverance

The Big Splash

Written by Angela Ahn, Illustrated by Julie Kim

Published by Tundra Books

Julia is dismayed to learn that Coach Marissa has to leave the Vipers swim team for an urgent family matter. Coach Nathan, their new temporary coach, is strict and humorless. He doesn't even let them have Splash Time! And it's not just Julia who's upset — two of her teammates have even quit the team. So it's no surprise that the team is not enthusiastic when Coach Nathan asks them to put together a car wash fundraiser for the team. But then they learn that there's going to be a big increase in pool rental fees, which means the Vipers may lose practice days, or worse, not be able to swim at all. Julia takes the lead and gets the Vipers organized. Along the way, she learns more about her nemesis, teammate Olivia, and even Coach Nathan. Maybe first impressions aren't always the most accurate.

Content / Discussion Themes:

Coming of age lessons, Swim team, Sports, illustrated chapter book.

Chomp-O-Rama: The Strange Ways That Animals Eat

Written by Maria Birmingham, Illustrated by Kyle Reed

Published by OwlKids Books

Crunch... munch... slurp... CHOMP! The animals of *Chomp-O-Rama* are hungry, and each creature has its own way of eating. Some dine in ways similar to humans. And others definitely *do not*. This playful nonfiction book offers creative comparisons between the way humans eat and the mealtime habits of a dozen other creatures.

While humans slurp up soup, butterflies use the straw-like part on the front of their head to sip sweet liquids. While we use a knife to cut food, a sea otter cracks open its meal with a stone. While we take bites of our food, a snake swallows its meal whole!

Content / Discussion Themes:

animals, biology, animal feeding behaviours, omnivores/herbivores/carnivores

Dogs vs. Humans: A Showdown of the Senses

Written by Stephanie Gibeault, Illustrated by Bambi Edlund

Published by Owlkids Books

In a showdown of the senses, who would come out as top dog: canines or humans? This junior nonfiction book for ages 6 to 9 creates a fierce but fun competition, comparing the ways dogs and humans perceive the world through each of the five senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing.

As dogs and humans are playfully pitted against each other, with one round for each sense, young readers will discover the scientific and evolutionary explanations behind our differences. It's a close race! Humans win for sight, with better depth perception, distance, and color vision. But dogs are stronger sniffers—with their noses, some can even locate people buried in an avalanche or detect an illness before a doctor has diagnosed it. And the winner is ... Well, in the end, it's a tie!

Content / Discussion Themes:

dogs, humans, five senses (sight, sound, hearing, taste, touch)

Every Little Bit Olive Tran

Written by Phuong Truong

Published by Second Story

Olive Tran is turning ten! Now she can walk to school by herself and go to Kandy Korner whenever she wants. Finally!

But when Olive finds out Mrs. Ly was pushed on the street and her brother's school friends had gross things thrown at them because they're Asian, she starts to feel less safe. And why doesn't her best friend Josh want to come to her birthday party at the trampoline park anymore?

Olive knows something is wrong, but she is determined to have fun at her party. If she shows kindness, maybe others will too. Every little bit counts!

Content/Discussion Themes:

Friendship, growing up, family, racial discrimination and kindness, Anti-Asian racism, community care, multiculturalism

The Great Puptective: Purranormal Activity

Written by Alina Tysoe

Published by Simon and Schuster

Poppy the puppective goes paw to paw with a poltergeist in this second silly book in a graphic chapter book series perfect for fans of InvestiGators and Narwhal and Jelly.

When a new neighbor moves into the house next door, Poppy the puppective couldn't be more uninterested. She's too busy solving the mystery of the unseen culprit chewing up all the furniture in her house.

But when Poppy catches a possible ghost playing with Truffles's toys in the middle of the night, whatever's going on next door becomes urgent! Good thing Poppy and Truffles the cat are on the case!

Content/Discussion Themes:

Problem solving, friends, giving people another chance, new neighbours, ghosts, pets

The League of Littles

Written by Casey Lyall and Illustrated by Sara Faber

Published by Greenwillow Books

From an ordinary school, in an ordinary town, a distress signal is sent. Help me, League of Littles, you're my only hope!

The League of Littles is an international organization that protects and supports the needs of youngest siblings—and trainees Lexi, Mo, and Eli are finally ready for their first mission. Another student at their elementary school has lost her big sister's hamster, Chester, after she borrowed him for show and tell without permission. Gabi needs the L.O.L.'s help to find Chester before the Band of Bigs (protecting and supporting the needs of—you guessed it—oldest siblings) find out that Chester is missing.

This hilarious young middle grade graphic novel combines humor, action, friendship, school, pets—and of course, sibling relationships. It is perfect for newly independent readers and fans of Babymouse, Lunch Lady, and the Bad Guys.

Content/Discussion Themes:

Sibling order, mystery, placing the blame, scheming, secret organizations, villainous siblings, hamsters

Plant Attack! The Fascinating Ways Flora Defends Itself

Written by Erin Silver, Illustrated by Julie McLaughlin

Published by Orca Book Publishers

Just like people and animals, plants need to defend themselves.

They can't scream or run away from danger, but many have developed surprisingly cool and courageous ways to keep themselves safe from pesky bugs, hungry animals and even large-clawed crabs. Plants can stab, poison, drown and even suffocate their predators. Discover the corpse flower, which smells like a combination of rotting wounds, garlic, cheese and sour sweat. Then there is the touch-me-not balsam that explodes, flinging anything that touches it through the air. *Plant Attack! The Fascinating Ways Flora Defend Themselves* explores 15 different plants and the unique, and sometimes bizarre, ways they defend themselves from predators, including us.

Content / Discussion Themes:

plant defences, plant adaptations, unique plants/flora

Salma Speaks Up

Written Danny Ramadan, Illustrated by Anna Bron

Published Annick Press

Salma's best friend Riya has had a secret: she dreams of becoming a poet! So when their school's Speech Club announces an assembly where the winner will get a spot in a city-wide writing workshop, Riya convinces Salma to join the club with her. But Nathan, another member of the club, keeps criticizing the girls for not speaking English "correctly."

Salma grows increasingly frustrated: why does Nathan get to decide which accents are good or bad? Also, Salma is worried about her beloved Khalou Dawood, who keeps canceling their dinner plans, although he claims he's not sick. Through research and discussions with her family, Salma discovers what might be impacting Khalou and also gains the courage and confidence to embrace her voice and speak up for herself and others.

Content/Discussion Themes:

Bullying based on accent, language rules, friendship, speaking up when something isn't right following your passion, forgiveness, feeling proud of your culture, mental health, prejudice, racism

This Is How A Ball Rolls: The Science of Wobbling, Bouncing, Spinning Balls

Written by Heather Tekavec, Illustrated by Suharu Ogawa

Published by Kids Can Press

An innovative and fun guessing game book about sports balls and the physics behind how they move!

In this one-of-a-kind informational picture book, cleverly tongue-twisting descriptions introduce twelve different types of sports balls, and readers are encouraged to guess what they are. An accompanying block of text provides the answer and explains the science behind how the balls do what they do (hint: the fuzz on tennis balls is there for a reason!) and what makes them so much fun! The balls are listed in ascending order by size, from a tiny marble, a “clinking, plinking, bumping ball,” to a person-sized Zorb ball, a “slip-and-slide-inside ball.” Entertaining, playful and loads of fun to read aloud, this is a perfect STEAM pick for classrooms, and a great mashup of sports and science.

Context / Discussion Themes:

force and energy, motion, physics, balls, sports & games, STEAM