

infotech by annette lamb and larry johnson

Caldecott connections part 2: visual storytelling across the curriculum

Caldecott Award winning picture books and other highly illustrated books provide wonderful examples of visual storytelling. Get your students involved with using photographs, line drawings, paintings, and other images in storytelling across the curriculum.

PROMOTE CALDECOTT BOOKS

Begin by showing videos as a way to promote reading. For instance, watch the winner of the Picture Book Video award from Houghton Mifflin at www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/booksellers/press_release/wiesner/#video.

Encourage students to create their own video productions based on their favorite Caldecott books. Keep in mind that the copyright law does not allow young people to reproduce and share the images from books outside the classroom. However it's okay to create your own adapted version or rewrite the story from a different perspective. It's also fine to share book covers and any other individual images that the publisher has made available for book publicity.

INSPIRATION FOR ILLUSTRATION

Photos, interviews, and experiences as well as a lively imagination can all be used as inspiration for illustrations.

Visualize People, Places, and Events. Read *John Henry*, by Julius Lester. There are many paintings and sculptures of this legendary character. Do a Google Images search for examples. Which do you think best represent John Henry? Be sure to examine artwork such as the John Henry Painting dandutton.com/full_index/John_Henry_oc.html.

Each illustrator imagines something different when he or she thinks of Noah's Ark. Compare the images at Wiki Commons commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Noah%27s_Ark with those found in picture books such as Jerry Pinkney's *Noah's Ark*.

Events. Many historical events have been retold through picture books. Compare photos of actual events with the picture book illustrations. Compare images of Philippe Petit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippe_Petit with the book *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* by Mordicai Gerstein.

Do Christopher Bing's illustrations in *Casey at the Bat* actually reflect early baseball in America? Do the images of Martin Luther King, Jr. in *Martin's Big Words* accurately show the life and times of this civil rights leader?

Rather than asking students to write a report on a historical event, use a picture book to start a conversation about how we view history. This inquiry may lead to the creation of a blog posting, wiki page, or other non-traditional way for young people to share their understandings.

Places. Read *Tibet* by Peter Sis. Explore photos at Wikimedia Commons: Tibet commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Tibet and compare them with the images in the book. Create your own photo journal of another country using photos from Wikimedia Commons. Use Microsoft PowerPoint as a tool for your photo journal. The slide can be used for images and

fictional log entries. The speaker notes can be used for background information and citations.

People. Picture books can bring scientists and other historical figures alive. Compare photos of the real Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley www.snowflakebentley.com/ and his snowflake science, the picture book titled *Snowflake Bentley*.

Learn about portraits at the George Washington Interactive Portrait www.georgewashington.si.edu/portrait/ and the Portrait Detectives www.liverpool-museums.org.uk/nof/portraits/. Create your own illustration inspired by a famous person. Try PixelFace www.nga.gov/kids/zone/pixelface.htm from the National Gallery of Art.

Read *Bill Peet: An Autobiography*. What images would you use in your own life story? Use the digital camera to record a day in your life.

Documents. Explore primary source documents and visuals related to books. Read *Castle* and *Cathedral* by David Macaulay. Then, examine architectural drawings of buildings.

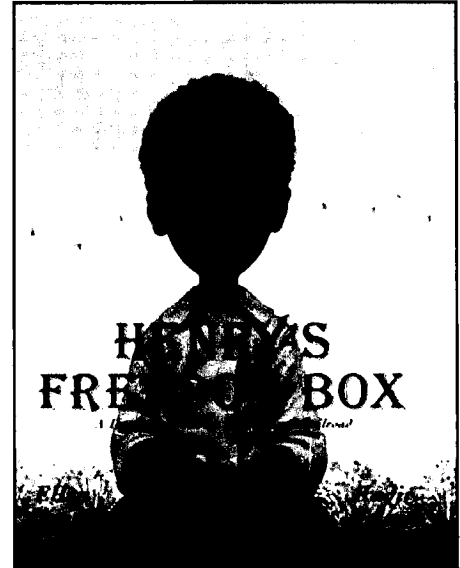
Explore the materials at Galileo from Wikimedia Commons commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Galileo_Galilei. Compare them to *Starry Messenger: Galileo Galilei* by Peter Sis. Can you find the documents that may have been inspiration for the book?

Stories. Read *Henry's Freedom Box* illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Compare the images in the book with historical artwork and the original story found at Documenting the American South docsouth.unc.edu/neh/brownbox/. How do they compare? Create your own interpretation. Then, select a true story that you will turn into a picture book. Incorporate historical documents, images, and elements of the story into your work.

Photos. Photos are often inspiration for picture book illustrations. Compare the illustrations in the book to photographs of the actual event. How are they alike and different?

Read *The Glorious Flight: Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot* by Alice & Martin Provensen. How do the images provide clues about the time period of the book?

FIGURE 1



The Resurrection of Henry Box Brown and Henry's Freedom Box cover

Examine photographs of the transportation, clothing, and street scenes of France in the early 1900s.

What Do You Do with a Tail Like This? by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page and *In the Small, Small Pond* by Denise Fleming both have life science themes. Compare the illustrations to photographs of animals and habitat. How are they alike and different? Combine photographs and original illustrations to create a collage showing the similarities. Use photos as inspiration for your own science picture book on another theme such as animal noses or desert habitats.

CHARACTERS

Madeline, Frederick, and Olivia are just a few memorable characters from Caldecott award books.

Design a Stamp. Examine the "Favorite Children's Book Animals" characters on the US Postal Service stamps at I'm a Stamp www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/2006/sr06_002.htm. *Olivia* is on the stamp as well as other characters you'll recognize. Ask young people to design their own stamp based on a favorite character or one they invent. Use open source software such as TuxPaint www.tuxpaint.org/ to create your stamp.

Public Domain Characters. Let's say your students want to share their stories that include a Disney character or a character from their favorite television show. Unfortunately, the copyright law prevents people from using the illustrated characters created by others. However some characters are in the public domain. For instance, Pinocchio was used in a Disney film, but the character itself is in the public domain so students could invent their own images. Check out the public domain characters page en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Public_domain_characters at Wikipedia. Use one of these characters in your own story. For instance, Frankenstein's

FIGURE 2



Students select a dog and write about the character on a PowerPoint slide

monster, Thumbelina, and Sinbad the Sailor are in public domain. You can decide how you'd like to represent them visually.

Animals as Characters. From bears and mice to dogs and cats, animals have always been a favorite source of characters for children's books. For instance, *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type* is filled with memorable animal characters. *Hondo & Fabian* by Peter McCarty, *The Stray Dog* by Marc Simont, and *Officer Buckle and Gloria* by Peggy Rathmann all feature cats and/or dogs. Provide photos of dogs and cats that could be used as inspiration of characters.

Fictional Animals. Many of the Caldecott books contain stories about fictional animals such as *Tops & Bottoms* featuring hares and a bear, *My Friend Rabbit* with a rabbit and a mouse, *Tuesday* with frogs, and *Jumanji* with many wild animals. Use the lists of fictional animals from Wikipedia en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Lists_of_fictional_animals to locate fictional animal characters such as mice and rats, cats, dogs, pigs, bears, and rabbits and hare. Ask yourself:

- How are animals portrayed in fictional stories?
- Do the animals in the story reflect the characteristics of the real animals? If so, which ones?
- How are the fictional animals like and unlike real animals?
- How are the fictional animals like and unlike real people?
- How do the fictional characters in one book compare to other fictional animals?
- What animal would you select for a book character? What is it like in real life? Which characteristics will you use for the fictional character?

REVISITING THE PAST

MANY STORIES ARE SET IN THE PAST.

Cultural Experience. Read *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say. Examine how the Japanese culture is shown in the book. How is the culture alike and different from your own cultural experience? Compare the homes, clothing, landscapes, and daily experiences. Also compare "now" and "then". How have both cultures changed in the past 60 years? Create an e-scrap-

book sharing your comparisons. Split a PowerPoint slide into two sides with visuals illustrating the differences. Use the speaker notes to write more information.

Family Memories. Collect family memories through interviews, drawings, and photographs. Write a story about your family history. In *A Chair for My Mother*, Vera B. Williams tells the story of a family who saves their money to buy a new chair after a house fire. In *Owl Moon* illustrated by John Schoenherr, a father and daughter take a winter hike under the full moon in search of the Great Horned Owl. Write your own picture book about a family story mixing personal photographs with other visuals you find or create.

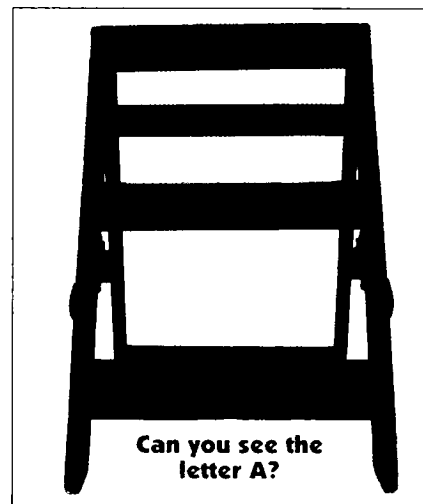
True to Life. Read books that visit the past including *Duke Ellington*, *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*, and *Snowflake Bentley*. Explore primary source documents and visuals related to the places, and events presented in a picture book. Does the book do a good job reflecting real life? Use primary sources as inspiration for your own book.

THEMATIC APPROACHES

As you explore the Caldecott books in your collection, look for themes such as poetry, famous figures, or animals. Use these as the basis for small group activities and literature circles focusing on specific standards.

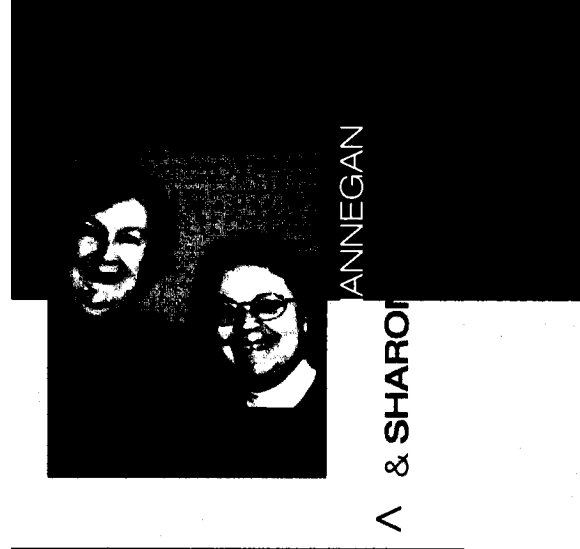
Alphabet Books. *Gone Wild: An Endangered Animal Alphabet*, *The Graphic*

FIGURE 3



Can you see the letter A?

A student-produced alphabet book using digital photos.



SECONDARY

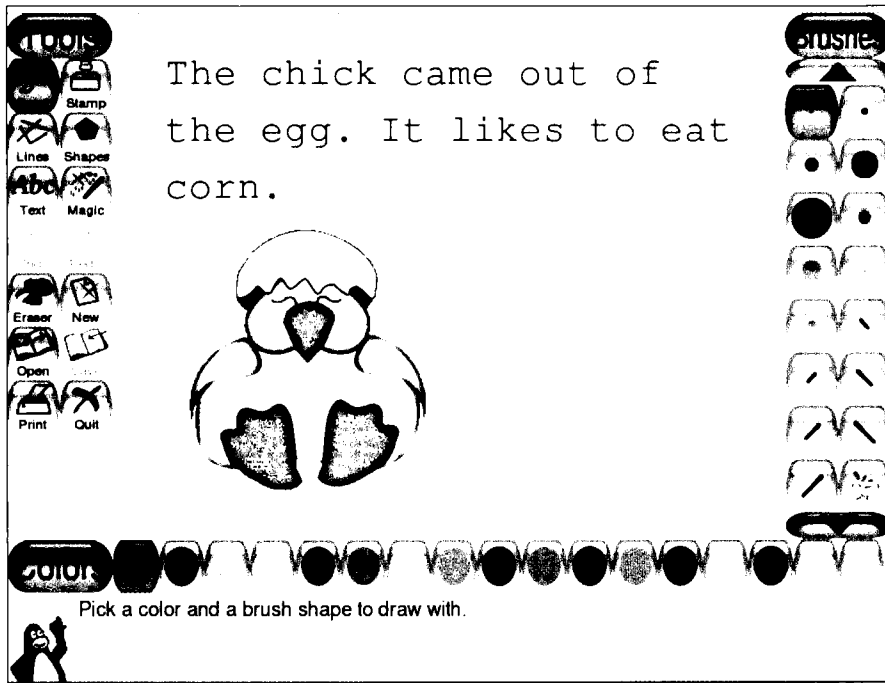
High school is a time of transitions, particularly if you're the odd kid out. Here are some audiobooks that highlight the high school experience from a diversity of viewpoints.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian. Sherman Alexie. Read by the Sherman Alexie. Recorded Books, 2008. \$46.75. C: 978-1-4281-8297-4. Grades 8-12. Arnold Spirit, known by everyone as Junior, is the first person to leave his Indian reservation to attend an all-white high school. The author, who gives a tour de force performance, conveys the harshness of reservation life with quirky humor and intelligence. It's no surprise this novel won the National Book Award for Young People's Literature in 2007.

Does My Head Look Big In This? Randa Abdel-Fattah. Read by Rebecca Macaulay. Bolinda Audio, 2007. \$64.00. C: 978-1-74093-907-2. Grades 8-12. Amal, an ordinary Australian Palestinian teen, decides she's ready to wear the hijab, the traditional head covering for Muslim women, full-time. This decision results in a reexamination of her relationships with everyone: her family, her friends, her neighbor, and especially Adam, the non-Muslim boy on whom she has a crush. Macaulay's fluid reading allows listeners to feel that Amal is telling her story especially to them.

Looking for Alaska. John Green. Read by Jeff Woodman. Brilliance Audio, 2006. \$82.25. C: 978-1-4233-2445-4. Grades 8-12. High school students will appreciate exploring the world of boarding school through Miles Halter's first year as he stretches to master new disciplines, establishes new friendships, deals with and invents fiendish pranks, and endures a shocking tragedy. Woodman's stunning narration gives voice to this heart-breaking, Printz Award-winning novel.

FIGURE 4



Student drawing and story of chick using TuxPaint software.

Alphabet, Alphabatics, Alphabet City, Hosie's Alphabet, Ape in a Cape, and Jambo Means Hello: A Swahili Alphabet Book are all Caldecott winning alphabet books. Get students involved with creating a class alphabet book. Use software such as the open source TuxPaint www.tuxpaint.org/ to draw your images. Or, use a digital camera and create images of letters in the "real world" that can be placed in PowerPoint. Consider a project focusing on science or social studies topics such as the ABCs of electricity or the Colonial Days Alphabet.

Eggs Theme. Eggs are the focus of fables, folk tales, and stories from around the world, such as *The Talking Eggs: A Folktale from the American South*. Because eggs are easy to draw and duplicate on the computer, they're great for illustration projects for young children. Read *The First Egg* by Laura Seeger. Then, have some fun with TuxPaint. For other ideas, go to 42explore: Eggs 42explore.com/eggs.htm.

Journeys Theme. From a camera's journey across the ocean in *Flotsam* to an immigrant's experience in *Grandfather's Journey*, many Caldecott books have journey themes. Use Google Earth earth.google.com to visualize a journey. Create your own map drawing with specific distances.

Try the Global Trek teacher.scholastic.com/activities/globaltrek/ activity from Scholastic to take virtual journeys around the world. Write a story about this experience.

Urban Life. Read books about urban life including *Make Way for Ducklings, Tar Beach, Harlem, and Smoky Nights*. If you live in the city, compare your urban life with that in the books. If not, write your own book about living in a small town or rural

area. Compare city and country life using a Venn Diagram www.readwritethink.org/materials/venn/ from ReadWriteThink.

WORDLESS WORKS

Stories without words allow children to tell their own story. These books are a great opportunity for children to write scripts for their own audio books. Use the open source Audacity software to record the audio and share them on the web or record them in PowerPoint. Set up a learning center with these student-produced audio books. Ask students to identify a sound that can be used to direct readers to turn the page.

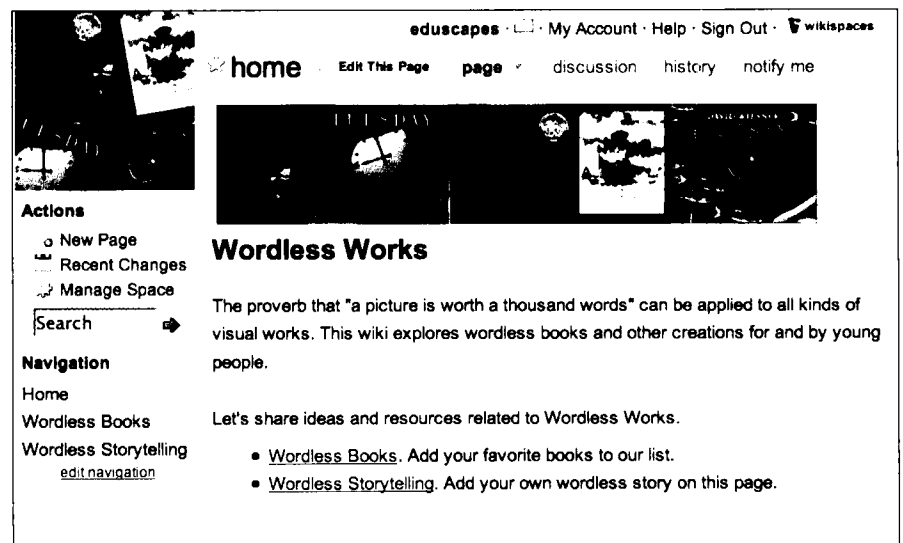
Wiesner is known for his wordless books. Explore the website David Wiesner: The Art of Visual Storytelling from Houghton Mifflin, www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/authors/wiesner/home.html, to learn more about the art of visual storytelling.

Incorporate the following Caldecott books into a wordless book activity: *Flotsam, No! David, The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher, The Red Book, Sector 7, Time Flies, Truck, and Tuesday*. Share your wordless projects at the Wordless Works Wiki at wordless.wikispaces.com/.

FABLES, FAIRYTALES, AND FOLKTALES

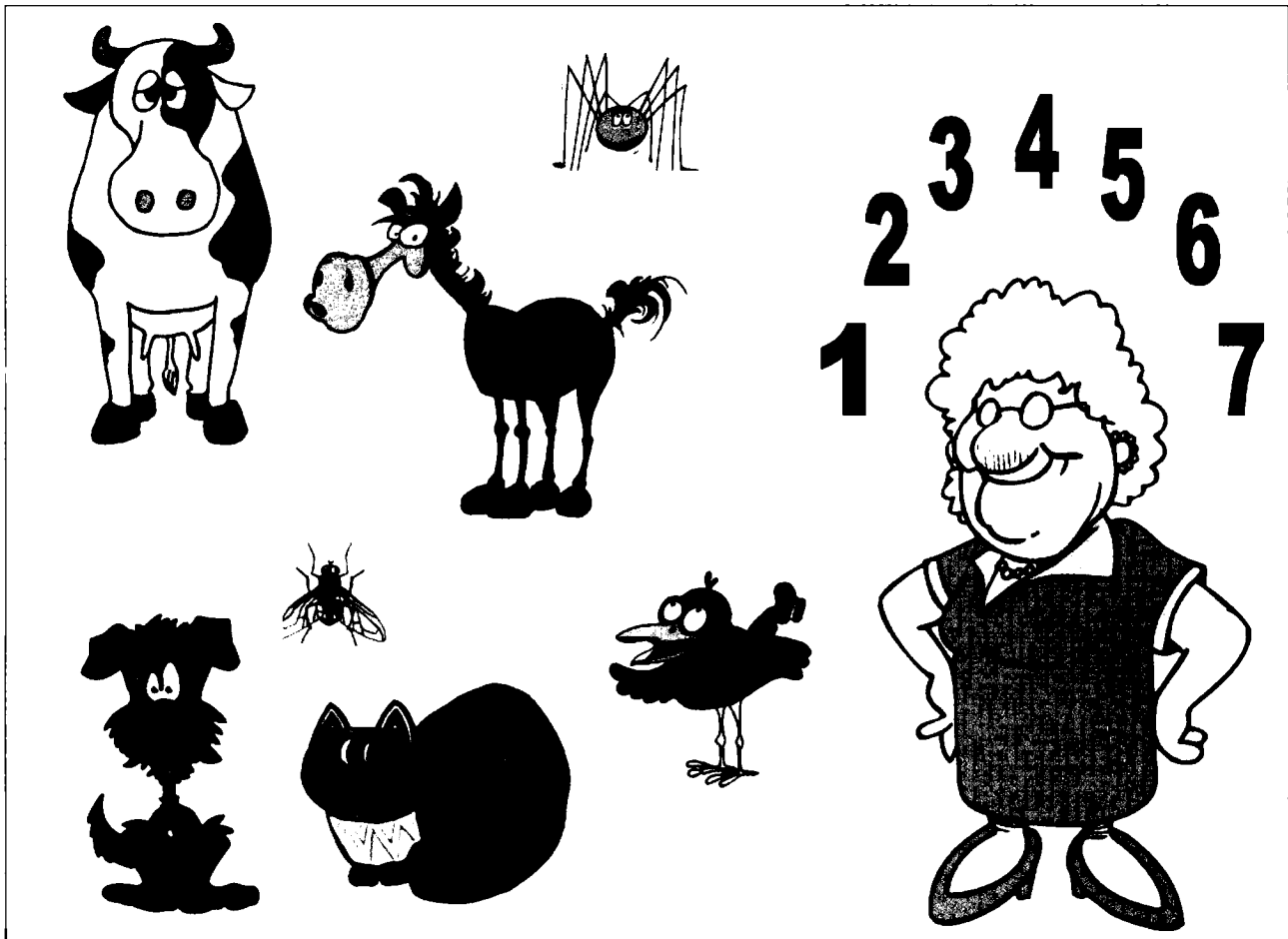
From tall tales to family stories, many Caldecott award-winning books have

FIGURE 5



Wordless works wikispaces

FIGURE 6



PowerPoint slides are used to retell and invent new stories

focused on retelling traditional stories. *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* by John Steptoe and *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon are African tales. *Arrow to the Sun* by Gerald McDermott is a Pueblo Indian tale. *Swamp Angel* illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky is a tall tale, *Rapunzel* and *Rumpelstiltskin* illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky are fairy tales, and *Tops & Bottoms* by Janet Stevens is a fable. *Three Jovial Huntsmen* is a Mother Goose rhyme illustrated by Susan Jeffers. Use the interactive Spinning Stories, Telling Tales artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3448/story.swf to learn more about storytelling.

Involve young people in making comparisons among different versions of the same story. For instance, *Lon Po Po* is a red riding hood story from China. Compare this to Trina Schart Hyman's version of *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Some stories like *There Was An Old*

Lady Who Swallowed a Fly retold by Simms Taback are told over and over again. Each time the illustrator takes a different view of the content. Recreate the story in PowerPoint. Ask students to retell the story using an interactive whiteboard. Then, invent a new story in PowerPoint.

Read *The Spider and the Fly* illustrated by Tony DiTerlizzi and think about all the ways the spider and fly could be visualized. Retell your own story with new illustrators.

The movie *Shrek* brought satirized fairy tales to the big screen, but before the movie many great picture books took this approach to storytelling. *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* illustrated by Lane Smith and *The Three Pigs* by David Wiesner are both alternative retellings of classic stories. Learn more about Fractured Fairy Tales & Fables with John Scieszka teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/fractured_fairy.htm from Scholastic. Listen to some examples of student retell-

ings at The Clem 113 blog at visitmyclass.com/blogs/burnett/archive/category/286.aspx. Now, write your own.

SHARE YOUR FAVORITES

It is important that young people see adults reading and sharing their experiences with reading. Everyone grew up reading classics in children's literature such as *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey, *Stone Soup* by Marcia Brown, and *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton. Bring out these classics to share with a new generation of readers.

Start a school library blog and post interviews with teachers about their favorite Caldecott award-winning book. Be sure to invite the principal and parents to share their ideas too. Tools such as edublogs.org make educational blogs easy to set up and use.

To learn more at Caldecott Connections, visit <http://eduscapes.com/caldecott>.