Grades K-2


**Summary:** Otis Barton and Will Beebe share a fascination with the ocean. Will, a famous explorer, and Otis, an engineer twenty years his junior, pair together to take the first human deep sea dive in the diving tank Bathysphere, designed by Otis. Otis and Will dove together nineteen times between 1930-1934. This story chronicles their first descent. It is filled with near misses and hazards, but Will and Otis are rewarded with a view of the deep sea. This view is depicted in a two page spread in the book. The book closes with an author’s note, an illustrator’s note, historical notes, and sources.

**Curricular use:** This is a real life scientific adventure, filled with teamwork, suspense, and imagination. It could be used when studying scientists, discovery, growth mindset, or during the study of oceans or water.

**Audience:** K-2nd Grade


**Summary:** Otsalingeliga is a Cherokee word used to express gratitude. Sorrell, who is a Cherokee native, follows a family and community through the seasons of the year with both celebrations and hardships, followed by the repeating phase “Otsalingeliga.” This book integrates traditional values of the Cherokee nation with modern life. This contemporary view of Cherokee culture is a welcome change from the historical perspective of many books about indigenous people. The book is sprinkled with Cherokee words, that are spelled both phonetically and with the Cherokee syllabary. A glossary, an author’s note, and the Cherokee syllabary are included in the back of the book.

**Curricular use:** This book would be a great addition when talking about seasons of the year, gratitude, and contemporary Native American life.

**Audience:** K-2nd Grade.
Grades 3-4


**Summary:** Lowell Harrelson’s decision to purchase 350 tons of trash and convert it into methane gas in 1987 was a novel idea. He purchased the garbage from the New York City dump, but soon discovered that no state or country was willing to let him dock his garbage and try out his idea. The garbage subsequently floated on a barge for forty-five days while covering 6000 miles. The trash is finally burned down to 400 pounds of ash. This months long garbage episode was heavily covered by the media, often as a joke. In the end, it did awaken people to the need to reuse and recycle items. The book closes with facts and photos of the barge and facts about recycling, garbage, and ocean garbage, and a few photos of projects made with recycled items.

**Curricular use:** This book would be a great addition to Earth Day studies, recycling, and environmental studies.

**Audience:** 3-4th Grade.


**Summary:** While this book’s characters are fictional, the content of the book is nonfiction. This book invites students to think about and discuss racism, accept it as a real concept, and work to make changes. It challenges readers to think beyond color of skin to the system of racism and how it works to oppress people of color, giving examples of racism in action as well as people in history who have worked for justice. It does reassure children that changes can be made and encourages them to develop a strong sense of internal justice.

**Curricular use:** This book would be useful for leading discussions about race, racism, and justice.

**Audience:** 3rd-4th Grade
Grades 5-6


**Summary:** The focus of this book is how unhealthy food is marketed specifically toward kids and what they can do to fight back. Some of the marketing practices explained include product placement in entertainment, infiltration of unhealthy products into schools through pairing fundraising and promotional educational activities with unhealthy food products, and mascots for junk food. “Do This!” segments educate students on how they can fight back, paired with success stories of students and adults who have successfully exposed fast food marketing. In addition, it informs student what healthy foods are, as well as what the health implications are of eating junk food.

**Curricular use:** Health and wellness, cooking and food, self advocacy. It would also be a great text to use for a persuasive writing inspiration.

**Audience:** 5th-6th Grade


**Summary:** This book tells the story of the NASA’s robotic rover, Curiosity, from its planning, inception, and naming, to its travel to, and landing on Mars. The rover which landed on August 6, 2012 continues its mission of searching for new information about Mars, as well as searching for evidence of life on Mars. The story is told through the perspective of the rover itself. The end of the book contains a timeline of Mars’ missions, a glossary, and brief information about other Mars rovers.

**Curricular use:** This book is engaging to read, but also filled with advanced vocabulary and concepts, making it a good choice for a picture book read aloud for older grades. It could be used in the curricular areas of space, technology, and robotics.

**Audience:** 5-6th Grade