



Lighting the Way to Early Fiction!

Candlewick Sparks Activities

Candlewick Sparks offer newly independent readers the chance to experience early fiction from some of today's most talented authors and illustrators. Endearing and enduring, these extraordinary books are guaranteed to ignite the imagination.

These beginning-reader chapter books run the gamut from humorous to heartwarming as they explore such themes as friendship, sibling relationships, children's emotions, and compassion for others. Exploring subjects of universal interest to young readers, they are high-interest books that allow children to gain the confidence needed for early reading success.



The Zelda and Ivy Series

by Laura McGee Kvasnosky



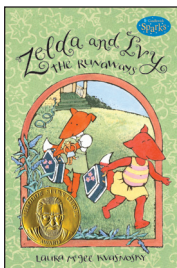
Zelda and Ivy are two fabulous fox sisters who have a flair for the dramatic. Their humorous exploits reveal the warmth — and occasional wrath — of sibling dynamics.

◆ *Zelda and Ivy*



In chapter three of *Zelda and Ivy*, "Fairy Dust," Zelda is not willing to share her baton with Ivy. That night, Ivy wishes for a baton of her own and slips some magic fairy dust (crayon bits) under her pillow. Unable to sleep, Zelda has a change of heart and places her baton next to Ivy. Ask the class: Have you ever done something selfless for someone, or vice versa? If so, what was it? Invite students to volunteer their answers. Then allow them to make their own fairy dust by using any materials they choose (such as pencil shavings, sand, or glitter). As a writing extension, ask them to think about what they would wish for if they could. Have them glue their fairy dust to the top of a piece of paper, then write about their special wish.

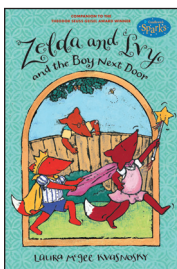
◆ *Zelda and Ivy: The Runaways*



Start off the school year by reading this book aloud. Then invite the class to create a time capsule, as Zelda and Ivy do in chapter two. Because it might be too hard for students to part with personal mementos (as Zelda and Ivy discover), create a current-events capsule instead. Have children bring one item to class for the time capsule, related to the news, a school function, or a community event, such as a fair. On the last week of school, open the capsule and reminisce as a class about the previous ten months. Challenge students to write about their favorite memory from the school year.

In chapter three, “The Secret Concoction,” Zelda tries to write and illustrate a haiku for her grandmother. Explain that a haiku is a poem made up of three lines, the first line containing five syllables, the second line seven syllables, and the last line five. Challenge students to create their own haiku on any topic they choose. Suggest that they give their haiku to a family member as Zelda wished to do.

◆ *Zelda and Ivy and the Boy Next Door*



In chapter three of this book, “Camping Out,” Zelda and Ivy camp out in their backyard and enjoy a night of singing songs and looking for shooting stars. Ask the class to think about why they can see stars only at night. Are stars out during the day?

Explain to students that they will be starting a science journal. Under the first entry, “Why We See Stars Only at Night,” have them write down their own hypothesis.

Then conduct an experiment. Turn on all the lights in the room and have a few children stand. Give each of them a flashlight. Have them turn it on and shine it on the ceiling. Gradually darken the room. Ask: What happens to the light coming from the flashlights? Is it easier or harder to see this light now that it is darker? Have children write down their observations in their science journal.

Finally, ask students to compare the result of the experiment with their initial hypothesis. Discuss their findings as a class.

◆ *Zelda and Ivy: Keeping Secrets*



In chapter two of this book, “April Fool,” Zelda is having a difficult time pulling off an April Fool’s Day prank on her sister. As an April Fool’s Day class project, create some “foolish sentences,” write them on the board, and challenge children to turn them into correct grammar. As a variation on the theme, explore the concept of fact versus fiction by writing a sentence on the board and asking children if they think it is fact or “foolish.”



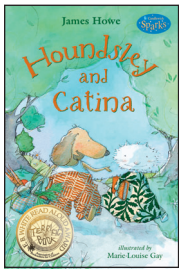
The Houndsley and Catina Series

by James Howe, illustrated by Marie-Louise Gay



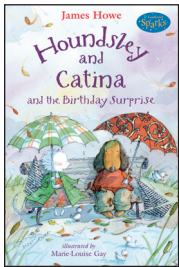
The subtle dance of friendship plays out in these sweetly humorous tales about an unlikely, most likeable pair. Kicking off with *Houndsley and Catina*, winner of the E. B. White Read Aloud Award, these delightful adventures show that friendship comes in all shapes and sizes — and that opposites definitely attract.

◆ *Houndsley and Catina*



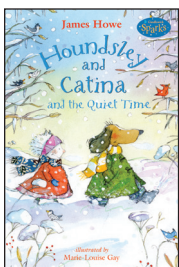
As this adventure shows, being a good friend (and not hurting someone's feelings) sometimes means knowing when to hold one's tongue and when to offer words of encouragement. Ask the class to volunteer what they think are the qualities of a good friend. Write the characteristics they suggest on the board. Discuss as a class the ways good friends may be alike and how they may be different. Ask students to write down the names of some friends and think about the ways they've shown friendship to each other. Then have students complete the Friendship Chart (page 7).

◆ *Houndsley and Catina and the Birthday Surprise*



Great minds think alike in this charming book about friendship. Neither Houndsley nor Catina know when their birthday is, so each one surprises the other with a party. Have the children throw a no-special-occasion celebratory or thank-you party for someone such as for the class pet, the whole school, the librarian, the custodian, or a favorite author. Decide on the day, time, and theme of the party. Show students all the elements of a proper invitation, then have them create invitations for the event. If you wish, invite the class to make decorations and write poems or personal anecdotes for the honoree. Then let the festivities begin!

◆ *Houndsley and Catina and the Quiet Time*

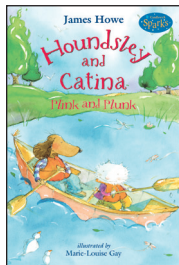


In this charming adventure, the first snow of winter has fallen, and Houndsley and Catina are snowed in. Even though their evening concert gets canceled, they and their friends create an impromptu musical event.

As a tie-in to this story, conduct a classroom “sound discrimination” experiment to see if children can decipher the sounds of different instruments. You may wish to elicit the assistance of the school music teacher for this activity.

Obtain a range of musical sounds on recordings or actual instruments. Ask children to close their eyes while you play each sound and see if they can match it to an instrument. If this is too hard, try sounding a variety of bells (cowbells, sleigh bells, birdcage bells, dinner bells, and so on) to see if children can distinguish between them. If you wish, turn the activity into a game in which those who select incorrectly get eliminated and the last one remaining is the winner.

◆ *Houndsley and Catina: Plink and Plunk*



Here is an engaging tale about two friends who overcome their fears and learn to enjoy what once worried them. Houndsley learns to ride a bike with Catina's help, and Catina learns to swim with Houndsley's help.

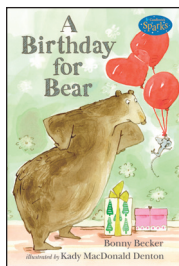
Note to students that this story shows how good friends help each other. Invite them to complete a Helping Wheel. To create a template, draw a circle on a piece of 8½ x 11 inch paper. Draw a smaller circle in the middle. Draw four straight lines from the inner circle to the outer circle to create four equal segments surrounding the inner circle.

Have each child think of two friends he or she has helped, as well as two other people who have helped the student. (As an example, you might suggest: "I helped Jamie with her homework; Ben helped me clean my room.") Ask children to draw a picture of themselves and/or write their name in the inner circle. Then have them use the other four spaces to write about and illustrate their four examples of friends helping friends. Display the finished products on a bulletin board.

Single Titles

◆ *A Birthday for Bear*

by Bonny Becker, illustrated by Kady MacDonald Denton

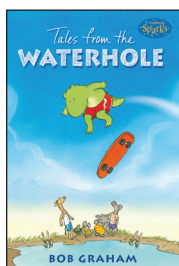


In this comical tale, Bear doesn't like parties, balloons, cards or candles. In fact, Bear doesn't like anything to do with birthdays, but his friend Mouse has other ideas. Mouse's final attempt to entice Bear to celebrate his birthday is to leave a pretty pink box at his door. What could be in the box?

Instruct children to bring to school an empty shoe box with a lid, as well as a surprise object to put inside it. Ask them to decorate their box any way they wish, put their object inside, and write down clues about what the object is. Arrange the boxes around the room with the lists of clues beside them. Have children go around to each box, read the clues, and try to guess its contents. Supply "guessing" slips of paper for each box and jars to put the written guesses into. Once everyone has visited each box, have children take turns reading aloud their own clues and revealing their objects. See how many students guessed correctly.

◆ *Tales from the Waterhole*

by Bob Graham

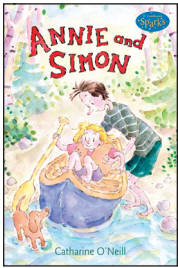


Summer on the African savanna has never been more fun for the animal friends in this story. Many of the animals' names offer wonderful examples of alliteration (Waldo Wildebeest, Zoe Zebra, Gerald Giraffe). Have children think of a second name to add to their own using alliteration, then share their new moniker with the class.

As an introductory research project, have children choose one of the African animals in this book to research. Ask them to write down four or five interesting facts about their chosen animal and share their findings with the class.

◆ *Annie and Simon*

by Catharine O'Neill



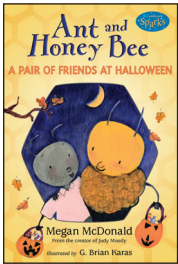
Annie likes to talk — a lot — and Simon is a very good listener and big brother. One of the things Annie likes to talk about is what she wants to be when she grows up, such as a hair dresser or dog trainer.

Begin a class discussion about careers by asking children to volunteer some examples of jobs held by people in their community. Then ask students to think about what they might like to be when they grow up.

Celebrate a career day in class. Invite students to dress up as someone in the profession they've chosen, show and discuss the items needed to do that job, and give a description of the types of duties the job entails. For example, a future hair dresser might come to school dressed in an apron with combs and brushes, then explain that he or she greets people at the front desk, washes and cuts hair, and takes appointments.

◆ *Ant and Honey Bee: A Pair of Friends at Halloween*

by Megan McDonald, illustrated by G. Brian Karas



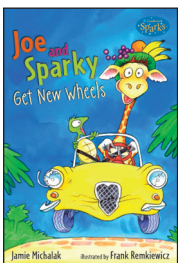
Ant and Honey Bee want to dress up for Halloween as a pair of things that go together. Ant thinks of various items — bacon and eggs, peanut butter and jelly, a brush and a comb — and finally decides on a washer and dryer. Challenge children to come up with more pairs and list them on a chart paper to use for future creative writing activities.

In the story, when Ant tells Honey Bee that she wants to be a pair, Honey Bee thinks she means *pear*, as in the fruit. Explain to students that these two words are homophones — words that sound alike but are spelled differently. Note that there are hundreds of homophones in the English language. Give children a list of homophone pairs (such as *hear/here*, *past/passed*, *wait/weight*, *threw/through*), and have them look up the definition of each word. Challenge students to use each word in a sentence. You may wish to write one pair of homophones on the board daily and designate them as the words of the day.

Ant and Honey Bee not only dress up as a washer and dryer, but they also try to sound like a washer and dryer. Ant walks around saying, “Blub, Blub” and Honey Bee says, “Buzzz!” Explain to students that this is called onomatopoeia — words that *sound* like sounds. Have children think of other sound words (for example, *zoom, zoom*; *quack, quack*; *beep, beep*). Challenge students to write a short paragraph incorporating several examples of onomatopoeia.

◆ *Joe and Sparky Get New Wheels*

by Jamie Michalak, illustrated by Frank Remkiewicz



This is a funny tale of an adventurous giraffe and a turtle who likes to stay inside his shell. The story takes readers on a laugh-out-loud journey to a shopping mall, a car wash, and a take-out burger joint. After Joe and Sparky's exciting escapades, the two decide to return home to the zoo — but not before Joe sees a banner that reads **LEARN TO FLY**. Have children write a sequel to the tale in which Joe and Sparky once again leave the zoo — and this time have an aerial adventure.

◆ *The Monster in the Backpack*

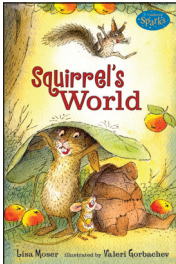
by Lisa Moser, illustrated by Noah Z. Jones



Annie's backpack comes with pretty pink and blue flowers, a cool zipper . . . and a monster inside! Although the monster eats Annie's lunch, puts bubble gum in her boots, and turns her homework into confetti, Annie can't bear to part with her newfound friend. Ask children to fantasize about what kind of monster might be in their own backpack. Have them write three things the monster in their backpack would do. Invite them to make an illustration of their monster and give him a name.

◆ *Squirrel's World*

by Lisa Moser, illustrated by Valeri Gorbachev



Squirrel is a very good helper. In fact, he helps friends even when they do not know that they need help! After reading the story, discuss with students the way Squirrel "helps" Mouse, Turtle, and Rabbit. Ask: Does he *really* help them? Then invite children to volunteer some ways they can truly help in the classroom and make a list of their suggestions on chart paper. Have children create "helper coupons" for the jobs that interest them. Some examples might be: "I will help pass out papers"; "I will help clean the desks"; and "I will help organize the bookshelf." When you are in need of an extra hand, cash in on your helper coupons!



Friendship Chart

Name: _____



My Friends	How I Show Friendship	How My Friend Shows Friendship