



Reading Nonfiction Aloud: Locating Appropriate Books

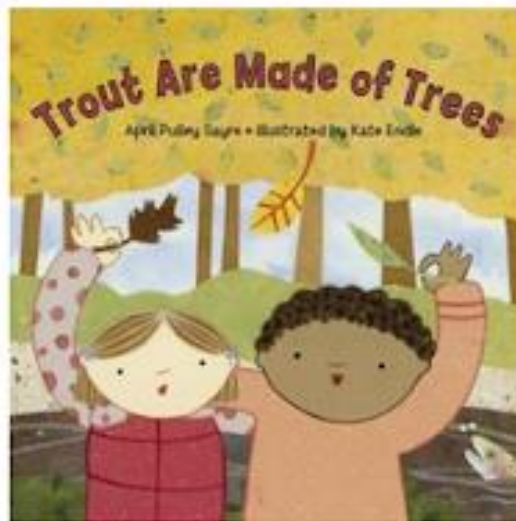
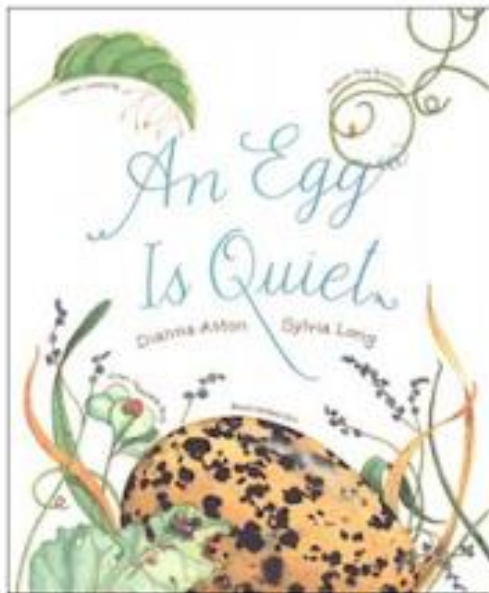
As teachers and librarians become increasingly aware of research showing that many students prefer nonfiction, they are searching for ways to integrate it into their lesson plans. One great option is read alouds.

Since studies reveal that 42 percent of students prefer expository nonfiction and students choose nonfiction for pleasure reading about 40 percent of the time, I'd suggest choosing a nonfiction book as a read aloud about 40 percent of the time.

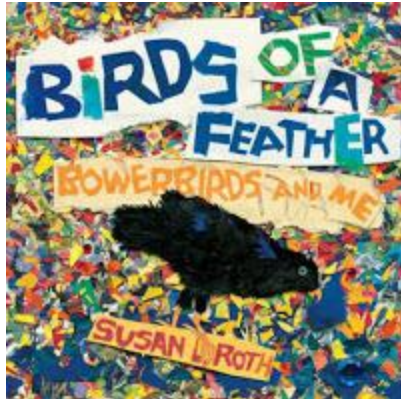
This goal may sound good in theory, but is it realistic? Is it sustainable?

You bet!

I've provided two lists—one includes expository nonfiction books, and the other features narrative nonfiction titles. As you search for more books on your own in the future, it's important to think about how students will respond. Look for books that will engage young listeners right away.



For example, *An Egg Is Quiet* by Dianna Hutts Aston and *Trout Are Made of Trees* by April Pulley Sayre have provocative titles that will immediately spark curiosity.



Read the beginnings of books to see if they will hook your audience and make them want to hear more. For example, here's the first line of *Birds of a Feather: Bowerbirds and Me* by Susan L. Roth:

“The differences between a bowerbird and me are fewer than you might expect.”

Does that surprising statement make you curious? Kids will definitely want you to keep reading.

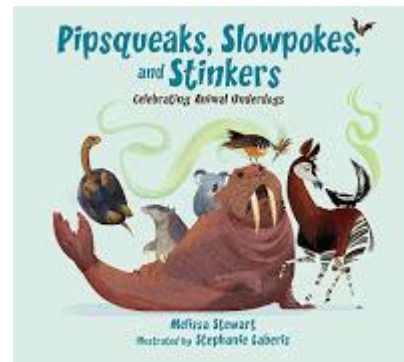
And here's how *Pipsqueaks, Slowpokes, and Stinkers: Celebrating Animal Underdogs* by Melissa Stewart begins:

“Everyone loves elephants. They're so big and strong.

Everyone respects cheetahs. They're so fast and fierce.

But this book isn't about them. It's about the unsung underdogs of the animal world. Don't you think it's time someone paid attention to them?”

Who could possibly resist openings like these?



As you preview potential titles, you should also be on the lookout for books that aren't loaded with academic vocabulary because explaining all those new terms can really slow things down. If more than 10 percent of the words are unfamiliar to you students, it's probably not a good choice for reading aloud.

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