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## Children's literature: What's on the horizons

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## **Children's literature: What's on the horizons**

**Lauren Freedman**  
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Lipinski, Tara. 1997. *Tara Lipinski: Triumph on ice an autobiography* as told to Emily Costello. NY: Bantam Books. ISBN: 0-553-09775-X. 116 pp.

This is a wonderful book written by a teenager particularly for teens. The collection of color photographs from infancy to world championship gold is not only fascinating but has the potential to connect with the reader in ways that the text alone cannot do. The story traces Tara's figure skating career through a number of personal anecdotes. It also includes an introduction by Todd Eldredge, a list of important dates, a list of "my favorite things," a guide to scoring in figure skating, and a glossary of skating terms.

Dingle, Derek T. 1998. *First in the field: Baseball hero Jackie Robinson*. NY: Hyperion. ISBN: 0-7868-0348-7. 48 pp.

This book, written in chronological order, places Jackie Robinson squarely within an historical context which includes both the discrimination all African Americans faced during this time and World War II. The book is organized into chapters each describing a time in Jackie Robinson's life that coincides with an historical event(s). The story shares not only Jackie's life, but also describes those people he held as role models. The book gives a listing of Milestones in Black Sports, and a selected bibliography of books, films, newsreels, and articles for further investigation. This is an excellent book for reluctant older readers as it has enough text to give interesting information and sufficient support material.

Krull, Kathleen. 1996. *Wilma unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph became the world's fastest woman*. Illustrated by David Diaz. San Diego: Harcourt Brace. ISBN: 0-15-201267-2. 32 pp.

The beautiful acrylic, watercolor and gouache illustrations painted by Caldecott winner, David Diaz, enhance the power already inherent in this life story of Wilma Rudolph. This is a book which will be grabbed up and read by younger children as well as older children and adults. Wilma Rudolph's story is indeed inspirational and will connect with the lives of many of our students who have major issues in their lives they are working to overcome.

Horenstein, Henry. 1997. *Baseball in the Barrios*. San Diego: Gulliver Books. ISBN: 0-15-200499-8 (hb); 0-15-200504-8 (pb). 36 pp.

This book is a photo essay narrated by a fifth grade Venezuelan boy who loves to play baseball. He talks about his team and how the game is played in the barrio. He also tells us what a barrio is and talks about his daily life. The reader also meets the members of his family. The text makes use of Spanish words and names. It should be of interest to young baseball fans; it will be especially welcomed by hispanic students. The color photographs are abundant and sharp. At the end of the book is a world map that shows the location of Venezuela. There is also a double page spread of four categories of baseball terms in English and Spanish pronunciation in parentheses.

Blackstone, Margaret. 1998. *This is figure skating*. Illustrated by John O'Brien. NY: Henry Holt. ISBN: 0-8050-3706-3. 32 pp.

The cartoon-like illustrations demonstrate the simple, straightforward text descriptions. The book follows two girls as they walk to the ice rink in the park where they see "experts" doing the moves which are talked about in the text. For several of the moves, the readers also see one or both of the girls trying the technique. While the text is limited, it might be an excellent book for developing a beginning interest in ice skating.

Erlbach, Arlene. 1997. *Sidewalk games around the world*. Illustrated by Sharon Lane Holm. Brookfield CT: Millbrook Press. ISBN: 0-7613-0008-2. 64 pp.

Using an attractive, inviting and easy to use format, this book introduces a popular children's game from 26 different countries described on a double page spread with a brief paragraph about the country. A world map on each double page spread shows the location of the country. Occasionally there is a language box with a pronunciation key of the terms (usually numbers) used by the children as they play the game. Each set of directions begins with the number of players, what they'll need, and how to play. Directions for play are clear and easy to understand and include useful illustrations. There is a broad representation of countries. Games are indexed by continent, age, indoors/outdoors, and number of players required. An extensive bibliography is included at the end. This would be an excellent book to use in a study of diversity.

Lankford, Mary D. 1996. *Jacks around the world*. Illustrated by Karen Dugan. NY: Morrow Junior Books. ISBN: 0-688-13708-3. 40 pp.

This book includes "jack" games from fourteen countries. The name of each game is given as it is used in that country. For example, in South Korea the game is called Kong-Keui and in Israel it is called Hamesh Avanim. The book is organized in two page spreads. The opening spread contains a map of the world with the continents in green and the water in blue. The countries with "jack" games that are represented in the text are numbered and shown in yellow. A corresponding list of the countries is given on the left hand side of the two page spread. The rest of the book has the text on the left hand page and a painting of children playing the game on the right. There are details in each illustration which are pertinent to the country being shown. The text gives a bit of history and background and then a numbered list of rules for play.

Egan, Terry, Friedman, Stan, & Levine, Mike. 1997. *The good guys of baseball: Sixteen true sports stories*. NY: Simon & Schuster. ISBN: 0-689-80212-9. 111 pp.

Though slim on illustrations and photos, this book presents biographies of baseball players who exemplify virtuosity and strong work ethics. A wide range of ethnicities are represented in the biographies

which run approximately ten pages. There are references for further reading given at the end. The stories have a great deal of substance. Some of the players depicted are not among the most famous or those with the most name recognition which makes this book unique. The players were chosen for their contributions as role models.

Cooper, Elisha. 1998. *Ballpark*. NY: Greenwillow. ISBN: 0-688-15755-6. 40 pp.

This story describes, in few words and a series of cartoon-like watercolors and pencil illustrations, the activities that occur in a baseball stadium in preparation for the game and during the game. The text is printed on the pages in ways that enhance the illustration and almost become part of the illustrations. This picture-based book details the behind-the-scenes happenings of a major league baseball stadium, from the laundry room to the grounds-keeping crew.

Ross, Kathy. 1997. *Crafts for kids who are wild about... series*. Illustrated by Sharon Lane Holm. Brookfield CT: Millbrook Press. 48 pp.

The attractive books in this series may be used as much by teachers as by students. The format is inviting and well organized, but the directions for most of the projects are lengthy and detailed. Kids will enjoy making most of the items, but they will need adult/teacher guidance. The topics all have child appeal. They can easily be incorporated into units on the topic. Twenty projects are included in ...*dinosaurs* and ...*outer space*. Thirteen projects are included in ...*rainforests*.