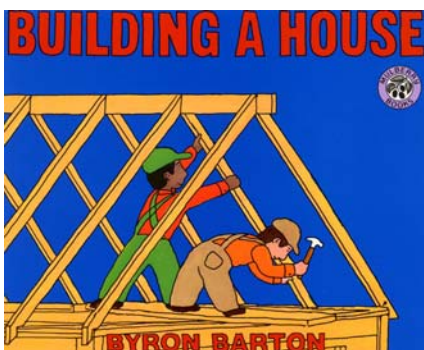
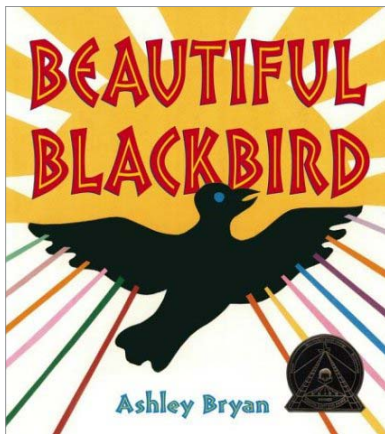


Exploring Social Studies through Children's Books

Children's books offer an excellent way for teachers and children to explore the many themes of social studies. Through books children can learn about their own culture and family, cultures around the world, geography, history, community, and more. The following titles represent just a small selection of books touching on these themes.

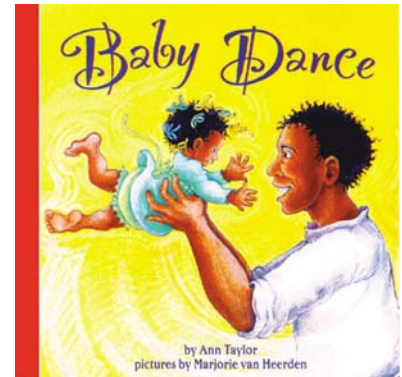


Adelita: A Mexican Cinderella Story by Tomie dePaola. 2002. New York: Grosset & Dunlap. Ages 5–8.

This version of the Cinderella story is set in Mexico. (Folktales)

Baby Dance by Ann Taylor, illus. by Marjorie van Heerden. 1999. New York: HarperFestival. Ages 2–5.

In this shortened version of Taylor's poem "The Baby Dance," the text is accompanied by pictures of a father dancing lovingly with his baby girl while Mom rests on the couch. (Families)



Beautiful Blackbird by Ashley Bryan. 2003. New York: Atheneum. Ages 4–8.

An adaptation of a Zambian tale, this is a good starting point for discussions about difference, individuality, and community. (Folktales, Community)

Bluebonnet Girl by Michael Lind, illus. by Kate Kiesler. 2003. New York: Henry Holt. Ages 4–8.

The retelling of a Comanche legend has beautiful illustrations that bring the story to life. (Folktales)

Building a House by Byron Barton. 1990 (Reissue ed.) New York: Harper Trophy. Ages 3–6.

The simple story of how a house is built might encourage some interesting block building. (Shelter, How the world works)

Castles, Caves, and Honeycombs by Linda Ashman, illus. by Lauren Stringer. 2001. New York: Harcourt. Ages 3–8.

The many homes and habitats of creatures big and small are featured in this beautifully illustrated book. (Shelter, Community)

Cleversticks by Bernard Ashley, illus. by Derek Brazell. 1992. New York: Crown. Ages 4–8.

Ling Sung discovers that others at his new school admire his prowess with chopsticks. (Understanding self and others)

Coming to America: A Muslim Family's Story by Bernard Wolf. 2003. New York: Lee & Low. Ages 5–8.

This modern immigrant story is illustrated with photos of an Egyptian family now living in Queens, New York. (Immigration)

A Cool Drink of Water by Barbra Kerley. 2002. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society. Ages 2–5.

Through photos and text, children are introduced to water gathering and use around the world. (Ecology, How the world works)

The Country Noisy Book by Margaret Wise Brown, illus. by Leonard Weisgard. [1940] 1994. New York: Harper Trophy. Ages 1–5.

Readers listen to the sounds of the country through the ears of Muffin the dog. (Also recommended, *The Noisy Book* and *The City Noisy Book*) (The world around us)

Daddy Makes the Best Spaghetti by Anna Grossnickle Hines. 1999. New York: Clarion. Ages 2–6.

This story is a warm celebration of family life with two working parents. (Family)

Everybody Bakes Bread by Norah Dooley, illus. by Peter J. Thornton. 1995. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda. Ages 4–8.

Readers join Carrie on her visits to her diverse neighbors, sampling breads from around the world (recipes included). (Cultures, Community)

Everybody Works by Shelly Rotner & Ken Kreisler. 2003. Brookfield, CT: Millbrook. Ages 2–5.

Children can experience a close-up look at different kinds of work, including professions that fascinate children, like firefighter, and some behind-the-scenes jobs. (Community, Jobs)

The Flyers by Allan Drummond. 2003. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. Ages 4–8.

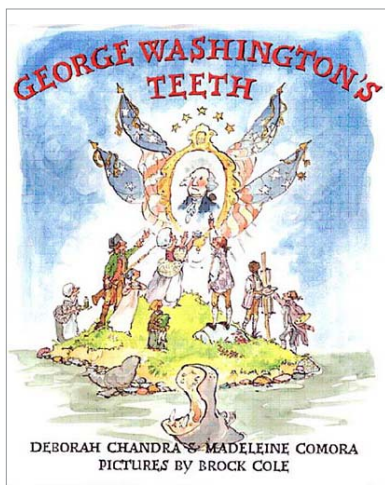
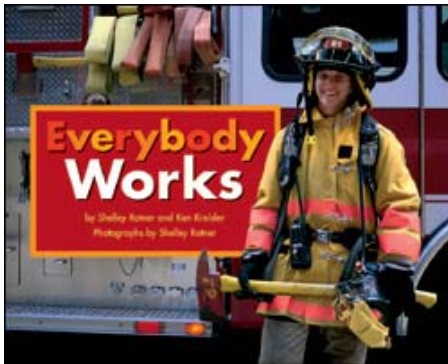
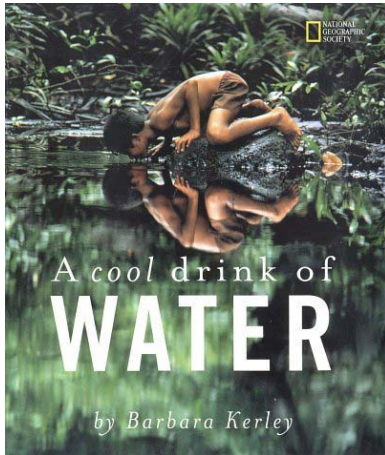
The Wright brother's flight at Kitty Hawk in 1903 is seen through the eyes of a child. (History, Aviation)

George Washington's Teeth by Deborah Chandra & Madeleine Comora, illus. by Brock Cole. 2005. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. Ages 5–8.

History comes alive through a focus on the first president's teeth, presented in rhyming verse. (History)

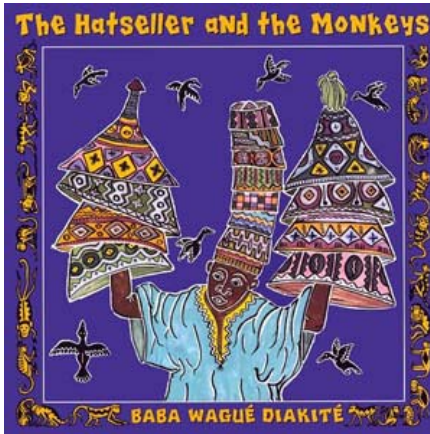
The Great Expedition of Lewis and Clark by Private Reubin Field, Member of the Corps of Discovery by Judith Edwards, illus. by Sally Wern Comport. 2003. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. Ages 7–9.

This account introduces young readers to the difficulties and wonders that were part of the Lewis and Clark expedition. (History, Geography)



Harbor by Donald Crews. 1987. New York: HarperTrophy. Ages 3–7.

This simple picture book depicts the many different kinds of boats found in a busy working harbor. (How the world works)



The Hatseller and the Monkeys by Baba Wagué Diakité. 1999. New York: Scholastic. Ages 3–8.

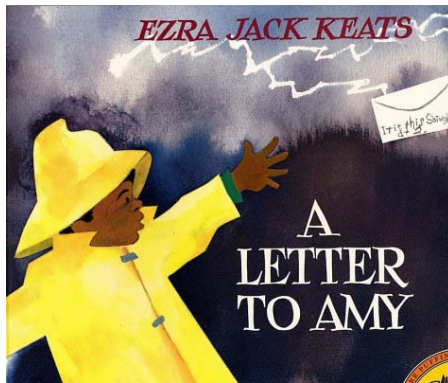
Here is a retelling of the African folktale made familiar to children around the world by the classic children's book *Caps for Sale*. (Folktale, Cultures)

Hide and Sneak by Michael Arvaarluk Kusugak, illus. by Vldyana Krykorka. 1992. Toronto, ON, Canada: Annick. Ages 4–8.

A young girl plays hide-and-seek on the Arctic tundra with a mythic creature called an ijirac in this wonderful introduction to the landscape and folktales of the Arctic cultures. (Folktales, Cultures)

I Read Signs by Tana Hoban. [1983] 1987. (Reprint ed.) New York: Harper Trophy. Ages 4–8.

Hoban introduces familiar signs found in all communities. (How the world works, Community)



It's Back to School We Go! First Day Stories from around the World by Ellen Jackson, illus. by Jan Davey Ellis. 2003. Brookfield, CT: Millbrook. Ages 4–7.

Jackson presents the first day of school from a child's point of view in 11 countries and includes a world map and fact pages. (Geography, Cultures)

A Letter to Amy by Ezra Jack Keats. 1998. (Reprint ed.) New York: Puffin. Ages 4–8.

In this charming story Peter wants to invite Amy to his birthday party, but he wants it to be a surprise. (Understanding self and others)

The Little House by Virginia Lee Burton. [1942] 1988. (Reprint ed.) Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Ages 3–7.

Burton's classic story about a little house in a country setting that changes from rural to urban continues to be a favorite. (The world around us)

Lots of Grandparents by Shelley Rotner & Sheila Kelly. 2003. Brookfield, CT: Millbrook. Ages 3–7.

Illustrated with photographs, this simple book looks at many different kinds of grandparents. (Family, Community)

Louie's Search by Ezra Jack Keats. [1980] 2001. (Reprint ed.) New York: Puffin. Ages 4–8.

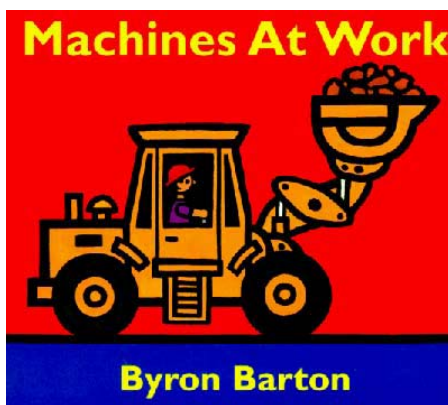
A young boy looking for a father finds a special companion in his neighborhood. (Understanding self and others)

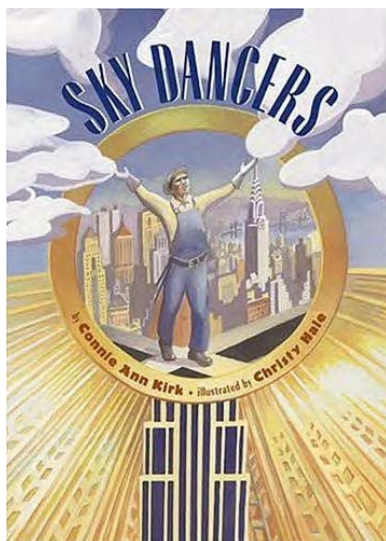
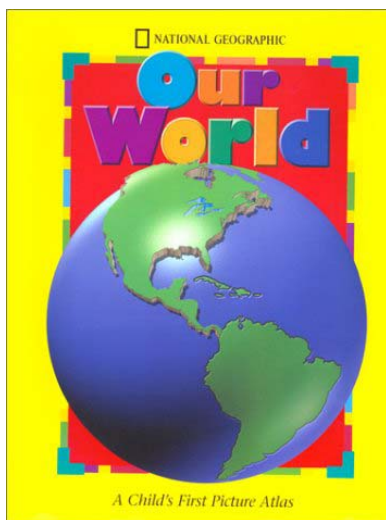
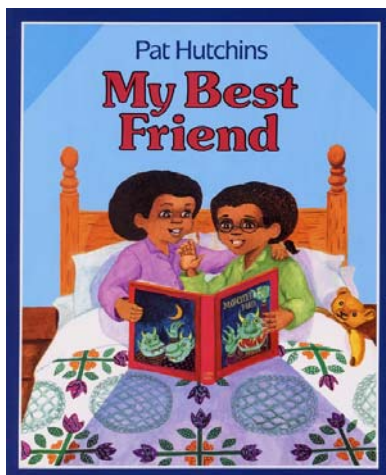
Machines at Work by Byron Barton. 1997. (Board ed.) New York: Harper Festival. Ages 3–6.

Young builders and diggers will like seeing the many trucks and workers in a construction crew at a building sight. (Machines/tools)

Matthew and Tilly by Rebecca C. Jones, illus. by Beth Peck. [1991] 1995. (Reprint ed.) New York: Puffin. Ages 4–6.

Two best friends have a fight and then make up in this familiar story. (Understanding self and others)





Mrs. Chicken and the Hungry Crocodile by Won-Ldy Paye & Margaret H. Lippert, illus. by Julie Paschkis. 2003. New York: Henry Holt. Ages 4–7.

In this Liberian folktale a crocodile captures Mrs. Chicken, who concocts a clever plan so that the crocodile won't eat her. (Folktales)

My Best Friend by Pat Hutchins. 1993. New York: Greenwillow. Ages 2–6.

Two best friends with quite different skill levels discover how their strengths complement one another. (Understanding self and others)

Mystic Horse by Paul Goble. 2003. New York: HarperCollins. Ages 5–8.

After caring for an abandoned horse, a young Pawnee boy is rewarded through the horse's mystic powers. (Folktale, Cultures)

Our World: A Child's First Picture Atlas. 2003. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society. Ages 4–7.

This picture atlas, designed especially for preschoolers to first-graders, introduces maps and more. (Geography)

Panda Bear, Panda Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin, illus. by Eric Carle. Ages 2–8.

Martin's simple rhyming book (one of a series) has colorful illustrations that tell the story of endangered animals. (Environment)

Rainy Day by Emma Haughton, illus. by Angelo Rinaldi. 2004. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner. Ages 5–8.

The topic of divorce is explored as a young boy visits his father at his new home after his parents' separation and they spend a rainy day together. (Family, Community)

Recycle! A Handbook for Kids by Gail Gibbons. 1992. Boston: Little, Brown. Ages 4–8.

Gibbons explains the recycling process from start to finish and hopefully inspires children to recycle too. (Recycling, Environment)

Recycle Every Day! by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace. 2003. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish. Ages 4–8.

A bunny and her family recycle many household items throughout the week. (Recycling, Community)

Send It! by Don Carter. 2003. Millbrook, CT: Roaring Brook. Ages 2–4.

With simple text and colorful pictures, readers follow a package through the postal system from sender to recipient. (Community, How the world works)

Sky Dancers by Connie Ann Kirk, illus. by Christy Hale. 2004. New York: Lee & Low. Ages 5–8.

Kirk tells the story of the Mohawk steelworkers who built the frames of the new skyscrapers in the early 1930s. (History, Cities, Cultures)

Smokejumpers One to Ten by Chris L. Demarest. 2002. New York: Margaret K. McElderry (Simon & Schuster). Ages 4–7.

This simple counting book begins when lightning strikes a tree, and then it follows the smokejumpers on their forest firefighting routine. (Community helpers, How the world works)

Stars and Stripes: The Story of the American Flag by Sarah L. Thomson, illus. by Bob Dacey & Debra Bandelin. 2003. New York: HarperCollins. Ages 4–8.

Children will learn the history of the American flag, from the revolutionary period to current times. (History)

Summer Sun Risin' by W. Nikola-Lisa, illus. by Don Tate. 2005. New York: Lee & Low. Ages 5–8.

An African American boy spends a busy summer day helping his family on their Texas farm in the 1950s. (Culture, History, Social relationships)

Supermarket by Kathleen Krull, illus. by Melanie Hope Greenberg. 2001. New York: Holiday House. Ages 4–7.

The grocery store is the topic of this book—what goes on behind the scenes, interesting facts, how supermarkets work. (How the world works)

Sweet Music in Harlem by Debbie A. Taylor, illus. by Frank Morrison. 2004. New York: Lee & Low. Ages 5–8.

A historic 1958 photograph of jazz musicians inspired this story of a boy's search through his neighborhood for the missing hat of his uncle, a well-known jazz musician. (History, Cultures)

Tell Me a Story, Mama by Angela Johnson. 1989. New York: Scholastic. Ages 3–6.

Mama's told her daughter about her childhood so often that at bedtime the child can relate the stories herself. (Understanding self and others)

Tools by Ann Morris, photos by Ken Heyman. 1992. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard. 1992. Ages 4–8.

Tools from all over the world and the people who use them are presented through photos and text. (How the world works, Cultures)

The Trip by Ezra Jack Keats. 1978. New York: Greenwillow. Ages 4–8.

A shoebox helps Louie to remember the old times before he moves away and then helps him to make friends in his new neighborhood. (Understanding self and others)

Truck by Donald Crews. 1997. New York: Greenwillow. Ages 2–5.

This wordless book follows a red truck on its cross-country journey. (Transportation, How the world works)

The Very Hungry Lion: A Folktale by Gita Wolf, illus. by Indrapramit Roy. 1996. Toronto, ON, Canada: Annick. Ages 4–8.

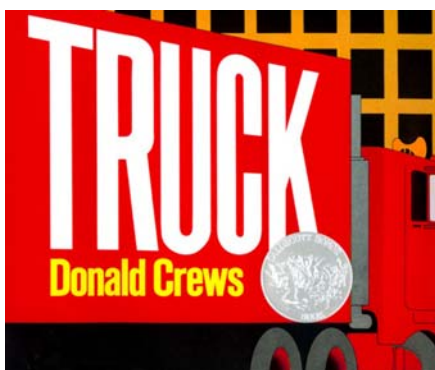
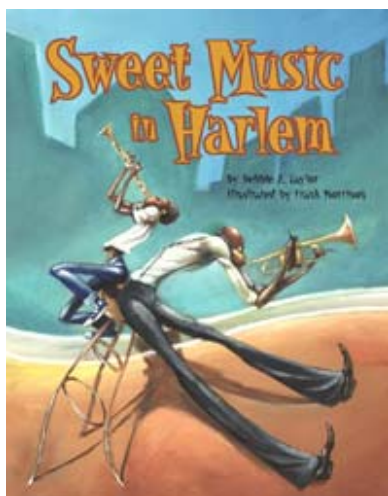
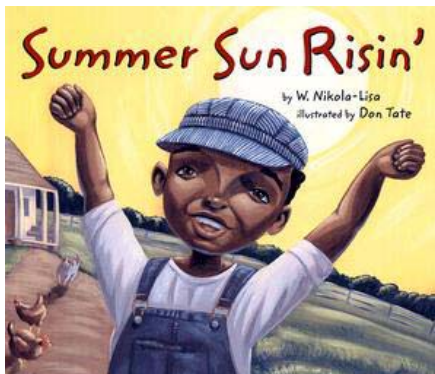
A sparrow, a lamb, and a deer outsmart Sigma the lion in this India folktale, with illustrations reflecting the Warli tradition of painting. (Folktale)

Watch the Stars Come Out by Riki Levinson, illus. by Diane Goode. 1985. New York: Puffin. Ages 4–8.

Grandma tells about her mama's journey to America by boat. (Immigration)

Whistle for Willie by Ezra Jack Keats. 1964. New York: Viking. Ages 4–8.

A young boy wants very much to learn to whistle. (Understanding self and others)



Copyright © 2005 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. See Permissions and Reprints online at [\[click below\]](http://www.journal.naeyc.org/about/permissions.asp)
www.journal.naeyc.org/about/permissions.asp