

# Fiction | Nonfiction

by Pat Miller

Grades  
K-2, 3-5

## Read Around the Country

**M**ake geography a part of your reading extension activities. Use your atlases, state books, and correlated fiction to motivate students to read from coast to coast. Keep globes and maps handy to locate the states that students read about in both their fiction and nonfiction.

### FICTIONAL STATE SETTINGS

Many fictional books are set in actual settings, including the cities and states of the United States. Enhance state-per-child reports by encouraging students to read a book that is set in the state the child is researching. As they read the fiction, students can note any details that are specific to the state like historical landmarks, cities, bodies of water, etc.

You can challenge your students to read around the country by reading a book from a pre-announced number of states. Give them a blank map of the United States to use as a record page, listing the books they've read on the states where the books take place. You'll find a map at [www.librarysparks.com](http://www.librarysparks.com) under Author Extensions.

Here is a basic list showing a couple of fiction titles set in each state. Your online catalog will show any additional titles that you may have in your school library. In addition, teach students how to search the public library's online catalog. Use the state list that follows and encourage children to add to the list when they find other books located in that state. Decide if you want to include nonfiction, perhaps written in a different color, to encourage additional reading for each state.

Key: (P)=Primary Grades  
(I)=Intermediate Grades

### Alabama

- (PI) *When Birds Could Talk and Bats Could Sing: The Adventures of Bruh Sparrow, Sis Wren and Their Friends* by Virginia Hamilton. Blue Sky Press /Scholastic, 1996.

- (I) *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis. Delacorte Press, 1995.

### Alaska

- (P) *Wind-Wild Dog* by Barbara M. Joosse. Henry Holt & Company, 2006.
- (I) *The Year of Miss Agnes* by Kirkpatrick Hill. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2000.

### Arizona

- (P) *Big Moon Tortilla* by Joy Cowley. Boyds Mills Press, 1998.
- (I) *Crossing the Wire* by Will Hobbs. HarperCollins, 2006.

### Arkansas

- (P) *Kenny Kangaroo* by Dave and Pat Sargent. Ozark Publishing, 2000.
- (I) *Under One Flag: A Year at Rohwer* by Liz Parkhurst. August House LittleFolk, 2005.

### California

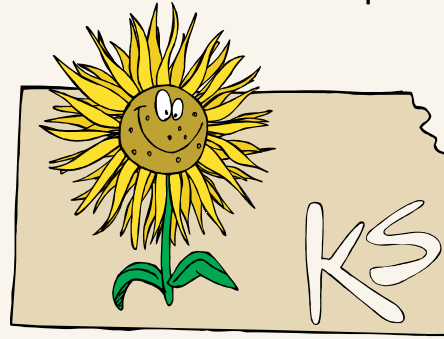
- (P) *Angel City* by Tony Johnston, Philomel Books, 2006.
- (I) *The Earth Dragon Awaits* by Laurence Yep. HarperCollins, 2006.

### Colorado

- (P) *High as a Hawk: A Brave Girl's Historic Climb* by T. A. Barron. Philomel Books, 2004.
- (I) *Much Ado About Grubstake* by Jean Ferris. Harcourt, 2006.

### Connecticut

- (P) *Horrible Harry Goes to Sea* by Suzy Kline. Viking, 2001.
- (I) *Hearts of Iron* by Kathleen B. Duble. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2006.



### Delaware

- (P) *The Legend of the Cape May Diamond* by Trinka Hakes Noble. Sleeping Bear Press, 2007.
- (I) *Revolutionary War on Wednesday* by Mary Pope Osborne. Random House, 2000.

### Florida

- (P) *The Great Pig Search* by Eileen Christelow. Clarion Books, 2001.
- (I) *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo. Candlewick Press, 2001.
- (I) *Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen. Knopf, 2002.

### Georgia

- (P) *The Waving Girl* by J. B. Nicholas. Pelican Publishing, 2004.
- (I) *Fame and Glory in Freedom, Georgia* by Barbara O'Connor. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.

### Hawaii

- (P) *Punia and the King of Sharks: A Hawaiian Folktale* by Lee Wardlaw. Dial, 1997.
- (I) *Dog-of-the-Sea-Waves* by James Rumford. Houghton Mifflin, 2004.

### Idaho

- (P) *Fire Storm* by Jean Craighead George. HarperCollins, 2003.
- (I) *Colder Than Ice* by David Patneau. Albert Whitman, 2003.

### Illinois

- (I) *A Long Way from Chicago: A Novel in Stories* by Richard Peck. Dial, 1998.
- (I) *The Wright 3* by Blue Balliett. Scholastic, 2006.

### Indiana

- (I) *Here Lies the Librarian* by Richard Peck. Dial, 2006.
- (I) *Running Out of Time* by Margaret Peterson Haddix. Simon & Schuster, 1995.

### Iowa

- (P) *Cora Frear: A True Story* by Susan E. Goodman. Aladdin Paperbacks, 2002.
- (I) *Book of Story Beginnings* by Kristin Kladstrup. Candlewick Press, 2006.

### Kansas

- (P) *Aunt Minnie McGranahan* by Mary Skillings Prigger. Clarion Books, 1999.
- (I) *Out of Patience* by Brian Meehl. Delacorte, 2006.

### Kentucky

- (P) *Night Boat to Freedom* by Margot Theis Raven. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.
- (I) *Keeper of the Doves* by Betsy Byars. Puffin, 2002.

### Louisiana

- (P) *Epossumondas Saves the Day* by Coleen Salley. Harcourt, 2006.
- (I) *My Louisiana Sky* by Kimberly Willis Holt. Henry Holt & Company, 1998.

### Maine

- (P) *The Wicked Big Toddler* by Kevin Hawkes. Knopf, 2007.
- (I) *Rules* by Cynthia Lord. Scholastic, 2006.

### Maryland

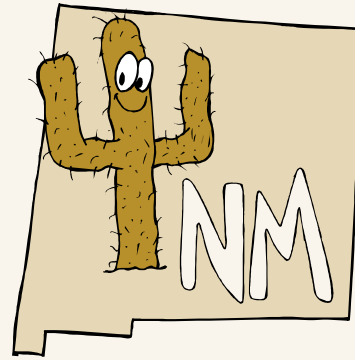
- (I) *The Flag Maker* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti. Houghton Mifflin, 2004.
- (I) *That Fernhill Summer* by Colby Rodowsky. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

### Massachusetts

- (P) *Blueberries for the Queen* by John & Katherine Paterson. HarperCollins, 2004.
- (I) *Morgy Coast to Coast* by Maggie Lewis. Houghton Mifflin, 2005.

### Michigan

- (P) *Rotten Richie and the Ultimate Dare* by Patricia Polacco. Philomel Books, 2006.
- (I) *Summer of the War* by Gloria Whelan. HarperCollins, 2006.



### Minnesota

- (P) *Marven of the Great North Woods* by Kathryn Lasky. Harcourt, 1997.
- (I) *The Quilt* by Gary Paulsen. Random House, 2004.
- Plus the Betsy and Tacy series and the Kirsten (American Girls) series.

### Mississippi

- (P) *Granddaddy's Gift* by Margaree King Mitchell. BridgeWater, 1997.
- (I) *Crossing Bok Chitto* by Tim Tingle. Cinco Puntos Press, 2006.

### Missouri

- (I) *Buck* by Dave and Pat Sargent. Ozark Publishing, 2001.
- (I) *Regarding the Bathrooms* by Kate Klise. Harcourt, 2006.

### Montana

- (P) *Once We Had a Horse* by Glen Rounds. Holiday House, 1996.
- (I) *Blind Mountain* by Jane Resh Thomas. Clarion Books, 2006.

### Nebraska

- (P) *Dandelions* by Eve Bunting. Harcourt, 1995.
- (I) *Room One* by Andrew Clements. Simon & Schuster, 2006.

### Nevada

- (P) *Weird Stories from the Lonesome Café* by Judy Cox. Harcourt, 2000.
- (I) *Lost in Las Vegas* by Dan Greenburg. Random House, 2006.

### New Hampshire

- (P) *Granite Baby* by Lynne Bertrand. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
- (I) *Dillon Dillon* by Kate Banks. Frances Foster Books/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.

### New Jersey

- (P) *Bad Bear Detectives* by Daniel Pinkwater. Houghton Mifflin, 2006.
- (I) *The Book of One Hundred Truths* by Julie Schumacher. Delacorte Press, 2006.

### New Mexico

- (P) *The Dirty Cowboy* by Amy Timberlake. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.
- (I) *Disappearing Act* by Sid Fleischman. HarperTrophy, 2003.
- Also the Josefina (American Girl) series

### New York

- (P) *Chicken and Cat* by Sara Varon. Scholastic, 2006.
- (I) *Water Street* by Patricia Reilly Giff. Random House, 2006.

### North Carolina

- (P) *Rescue on the Outer Banks* by Candice F. Ransom. Carolrhoda Books, 2002.
- (I) *Jack Adrift: Fourth Grade Without a Clue* by Jack Gantos. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.

### North Dakota

- (P) *River Friendly, River Wild* by Jane Kurtz. Simon & Schuster, 2000.
- (I) *Bad River Boys: A Meeting of the Lakota Sioux with Lewis and Clark* by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve. Holiday House, 2005.

### Ohio

- (P) *Night Boat to Freedom* by Margot Theis Raven. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.
- (I) *The Boy Who Saved Cleveland* by James Giblin. Henry Holt & Company, 2006.

### Oklahoma

- (P) *Dust for Dinner Story* by Ann Turner. HarperCollins, 1995.
- (I) *The Legend of Bass Reeves* by Gary Paulsen. Random House, 2006.

**Oregon**

- (P) *Roughing It on the Oregon Trail* by Diane Stanley. HarperCollins, 2000.
- (I) *Ophie Out of Oz* by Kathleen O'Dell. Puffin, 2005.

**Pennsylvania**

- (P) *Homespun Sarah* by Verla Kay. Putnam, 2003.
- (I) *Pieces of Georgia* by Jen Bryant. Knopf, 2006.

**Rhode Island**

- (P) *The Scrimshaw Ring* by William Jaspersohn. Vermont Folklife Center. Distributed by Independent Publishers Group, 2002.
- (I) *The Art of Keeping Cool* by Janet Taylor Lisle. Atheneum, 2000.

**South Carolina**

- (P) *Circle Unbroken: The Story of a Basket and Its People* by Margot Theis Raven. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.
- (I) *The Coastwatcher* by Elise Weston. Peachtree Publishers, 2005.

**South Dakota**

- (P) *The Discontented Gopher* by L. Frank Baum. South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2006.
- (I) *Grasshopper Summer* by Ann Turner. Aladdin Paperbacks, 1989.
- Also a number of the books by Laura Ingalls Wilder.

**Tennessee**

- (P) *John Philip Duck* by Patricia Polacco. Philomel Books, 2004.
- (P) *Smoky Mountain Rose: An Appalachian Cinderella* by Alan Schroeder. Dial, 1997.

**Texas**

- (P) *Zeke and the Longhorn* by David Davis. Pelican Publishing, 2006.
- (I) *Small Steps* by Louis Sachar. Delacorte Press, 2006.

**Utah**

- (P) *Buster Hunts for Dinosaurs* by Marc Brown. Little, Brown and Company, 2006.
- (I) *The Great Brain* by John D. Fitzgerald. Puffin, 1969.

**Vermont**

- (P) *Nora's Ark* by Natalie Kinsey-Warnock. HarperCollins, 2005.
- (I) *Counting on Grade* by Elizabeth Winthrop. Random House, 2006.

**Virginia**

- (P) *Miz Berlin Walks* by Jane Yolen. Puffin, 1997.
- (I) *Homefront* by Doris Gwaltney. Simon & Schuster, 2006.

**Washington**

- (P) *Sockeye's Journey Home: The Story of a Pacific Salmon* by Barbara Gaines Winkelman. Soundprints, Smithsonian Institution, 2000.
- (I) *Our Only May Amelia* by Jennifer L. Holm. HarperCollins, 1999.

**West Virginia**

- (I) *Shiloh Season* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. Atheneum, 1996. (and others in the set)
- (I) *Witch Catcher* by Mary Downing Hahn. Clarion Books, 2006.

**Wisconsin**

- (P) *The Giant Ball of String* by Arthur Geisert. Houghton Mifflin, 2002.
- (I) *Ida B: And Her Plans to Maximize Fun, Avoid Disaster, and (Possibly) Save the World* by Katherine Hannigan. Greenwillow Books, 2004.

**Wyoming**

- (P) *Dinosaur Hunter* by Elaine Marie Alphin. HarperCollins, 2003.
- (I) *Red Dog* by Bill Wallace. Holiday House, 1987.

### STATE-PER-CHILD REPORTS

The states are evergreen subjects for school reports. Encourage casual use of state reference books by listing the students who were born in each state. Break students into mixed groups then ask them to discover three interesting facts about their birth state in the reference books and share them with the two or three other students in their group.

### STATE SERIES TITLES

There are a number of state series that are currently available and useful for the elementary grades. The following series were used and recommended by librarians responding recently on LM\_NET, a list-serv for school librarians:

- *Count Your Way Across the U.S.A.* (series in progress) by Sleeping Bear Press (K–3)
- *Discover America State by State* (series in progress) by Sleeping Bear Press (K–3)
- *From Sea to Shining Sea*, 52 titles by Children's Press, 2001–2003. (3–6)
- *Hello USA*, 52 titles by Lerner Publishing Group, 2002. (3–6)
- *It's My State*, 51 titles by Benchmark Books/Marshall Cavendish, 2003–2007. (3–6)
- *Rookie Read-About Geography: States*, 52 books by Children's Press, 2002–2007. (K–3)
- *United States*, 50 books by Abdo Publishing, 2006. (3–6)

### LOCATING BOOKS ABOUT YOUR STATE

In addition to using your school and public library catalogs, you can also search the database of your book vendors to find a variety of state-specific fiction books.

### MAP SKILLS FUN

State geography is important. Knowledge of the location of all fifty states takes time and practice. Several products that can help are wooden and paper puzzles, floor maps, and games.

Wooden puzzles are available from Toys R Us or Puzzibilities ([www.babyscholars.com/uwomappufprpu.html](http://www.babyscholars.com/uwomappufprpu.html)). A variety of wooden and cardboard state puzzles are available from Educational Learning Games at

[www.educationallearninggames.com/puzzle-preschool-2.asp](http://www.educationallearninggames.com/puzzle-preschool-2.asp). Discover America carpets in three sizes are available at [www.highsmith.com](http://www.highsmith.com). I liked the one in my previous library because we could use it to step around the country (I would say, "Step in the state north of Texas. Name the states as you step from coast to coast—each is marked with a picture and a state abbreviation.") It was also useful when locating the state setting for a book we were reading aloud.

Oriental Trading Company has a paper assembly map with fifty state cutouts that measure 54 inches wide by 34 inches tall when assembled. Students can write titles on the cutouts. A United States Travel Map Sticker Game can be used as a way to track student progress. Perhaps they can add a state sticker to the map each time they complete a fiction book that contains a city, river, or other landmark from a state. Finally, for review of the states in the various areas of the country, try their large, magnetic, vinyl maps.



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