

Sound Learning Audiobook Collection Lists & Samples

Use this annotated list to guide your audiobook collection development and implementation of audiobooks to meet Common Core State Standards. Click on each title to hear an audio clip.

Sound Learning and Early Childhood Support for Literacy

There are millions of sounds in the world, and the most powerful of all is the human voice. From infancy, children become attuned to their parents' voices as well as the noises around them: the weather outside, road traffic, music, dogs barking, and so much more. These sounds create a bridge from the child's developing brain to the very beginnings of early literacy --what children know about language, reading, and writing before they can actually read or write.

A good story, well told, increases vocabulary and assists children in learning how words are put together to construct meaning. The more words a child hears, especially "rare" words not used in everyday conversation, the more likely they are to be successful in school. In presentations to preschool teachers and librarians, audiobook-friendly picture book author Jamie A. Swenson talks about using both rare words and onomatopoeia in her books for young children, specifically to help grow vocabulary and to encourage children, and the grown-ups who share books with them, to have fun with language.

Both Swenson and Michelle R. Weirich, Lead Early Childhood Education Instructor at Blackhawk Technical College in Beloit, Wisconsin, advocate using picture book read-alongs with young children at home, in libraries, and in preschool classrooms. Swenson's experiences working with young children in the library setting has led to her understanding the important role played by picture book read-alongs in supporting the six principles of early literacy: print motivation, print awareness, phonological awareness, vocabulary, narrative skills, and letter knowledge. Swenson works toward developing these skills in her story time programs and they are also foundational to writing her own picture books.

Research has shown that through their unique medium, picture book read-alongs create an experience that fosters a love of reading by:

- ✓ Offering an excellent means of acquiring both print and visual literacy skills
- ✓ Relieving of the pressure of decoding so that children can follow the story through sound and illustration
- ✓ Providing expert pacing, accents, and inflection to support early literacy by modeling fluency, increasing vocabulary, and providing opportunities for cultural awareness

- ✓ Giving children the opportunity to look at the illustrations which helps them to begin to understand the concepts of print
- ✓ Presenting text orally so that listeners learn that those squiggles have meaning and represent language
- ✓ By fostering recognition, when the book is viewed while being heard, of when to turn the page and the fact that, in English, print is read from left to right

Michelle Weirich teaches her students how picture book read-alongs can be used effectively in classrooms by individual students, small groups in learning centers, and in large-group settings, including kindergarten circle time and public library story time programs. As Weirich tells her students, read-alongs teach critical listening skills and highlight the humor in books. She believes the inclusion of music adds emotional context and that sound effects support and reinforce text and story. Weirich points out that read-alongs “recapture the essence and the delights of hearing stories beautifully told by extraordinary, talented storytellers.” ([Baskin & Harris, 1995](#)).

The following suggested titles, thematically grouped, include engaging activities and instructional extensions to enhance early literacy development and instill a love of reading. These stories provide a good foundation for using picture book read-alongs with children in homes, libraries, and classrooms. Most of these titles are available through public library online audiobook portals such as OverDrive, and copies of the print editions are available at many public and school libraries. [OverDrive also features many other read-along titles](#), some of which include the images from their books. Families may also enjoy the OverDrive read-alongs featuring [Disney](#) and other popular children’s television characters. [For online audiobook collections in your area, check with your local public library.]

➤ Music & Rhyme



[Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?](#)*, written by Bill Martin Jr, illustrated by Eric Carle, narrated by Gwyneth Paltrow, Macmillan Young Listeners

Paltrow’s understated narration, mildly evoking the cavalcade of colorful animal characters--created with tissue paper, crayon, and paint--is perfectly suited to the iconic picture book and its rhyming text. A soft musical underbed, moves the story along while

maintaining an appropriately slow pace, allowing emergent readers to follow along. There are tracks with and without page-turn signals, as well as a track read by the author, and a track read in Spanish, translated by Teresa Mlawer (the Spanish edition, not included, will be needed for this track). *In Overdrive as *Brown Bear and Friends*

[Deep in the Swamp](#), written by Donna M. Bateman, illustrated by Brian Lies, narrated and sung by Tom Chapin, Live Oak Media

The flora and fauna of the Okefenokee Swamp take center stage in this rhythmic homage to “Over in the Meadow,” and the leisurely narration, authentic sound effects, and quiet banjo music, leave plenty of time to enjoy the richly detailed acrylic paintings. Singing along with Chapin at the end will extend phonological awareness and vocabulary-building and the back matter will encourage further interest and research into this swampy environment.

[Joseph Had a Little Overcoat](#), written, illustrated, and narrated by Simms Taback, with music provided by The Klezmatics, Live Oak Media

When the jacket he makes himself becomes so worn that, after many smaller permutations, there is only enough cloth left for a button, Joseph the tailor discovers that the story is really the most important part, one that will never fray beyond repair. Young listeners will enjoy the vibrant paintings and cleverly inserted die-cuts, as the whimsical sound effects and klezmer music extend the humor of Taback’s 2000 Caldecott-winning retelling of an old Yiddish folksong. When children listen to the song at the end, they can be encouraged to tell what is the same, or different, from Taback’s original story for a lively lesson in comprehension and story sequence.

[The Wheels on the Bus](#), adapted and illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky, with paper engineering by Rodger Smith, music and vocals by the Bacon Brothers, Weston Woods

The Bacon Brothers provide a rousing rendition of the classic children’s song, complete with musical interludes and fitting sound effects, to expand the enjoyment of the original story in this lively moveable book format. Why read this book when you can sing it instead?

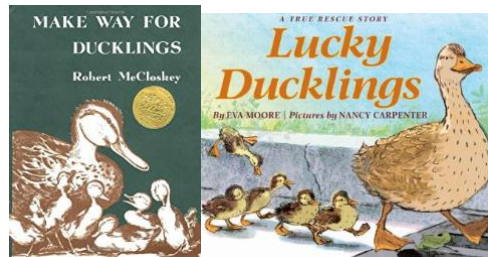
Activities & Literacy Extensions

- ❖ Singing and rhyming help build [phonological awareness](#), an essential precursor for learning to read.
- ❖ Use rhyming and musical read-alongs as part of story or circle time, encouraging children to “read” along with you to build phonological awareness and increase vocabulary.
- ❖ Read and sing *Deep in the Swamp* and *The Wheels on the Bus*. Ask children how

the story is the same or different when reading or singing.

- ❖ Name the various repeated phrases in each story to encourage critical listening skills.

➤ **Rescuing Animal Friends**



[*Make Way for Ducklings*](#), written and illustrated by Robert McCloskey, narrated by Owen Jordan, Weston Woods

Narrator Jordan perfectly captures the essence of McCloskey’s classic picture book, with its soft sepia illustrations of a duck family’s search for a perfect nesting place in the heart of Boston. By today’s standards, this is a long text and early learners will benefit from having book read aloud while they listen and enjoy the illustrations.

[*Lucky Ducklings*](#), written by Eva Moore, illustrated by Nancy Carpenter, narrated by Tavia Gilbert, Weston Woods

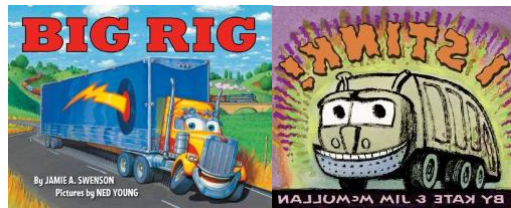
The brief, true story of five little ducklings rescued from a storm drain in Montauk, New York, is a splendid match for the longer McCloskey tale in any family or preschool story time setting. Tavia Gilbert’s narration, paired with Jon Carroll’s music, wrings all of the drama from this exciting little story, delightfully depicted in Nancy Carpenter’s charcoal and digital media illustrations.

Activities & Literacy Extensions

- ❖ Discuss similarities and differences in these two duckling rescue stories to promote comprehension and memory skills.

- ❖ Have the children retell the stories by drawing them out and telling them to their classmates to encourage sequencing and build narrative skills.
- ❖ Encourage children to talk about how they felt when the ducklings needed to be rescued in these stories. Conversations about emotion will help build empathy, an important quality for getting along with others.

➤ **Truckin' Along!**



Big Rig, written by Jamie A. Swenson, illustrated by Ned Young, narrated by L.J. Ganser, Live Oak Media

Swenson’s energetic text is well-served by Ganser’s spirited, fast-paced narration, complemented by Young’s color-drenched illustrations, lively original music by Chris Kubie and all of the sound effects any truck-loving young listener could want. Children--and some adults as well--will learn the ins and outs of long-haul trucking as they listen to this engaging read-along. The use of onomatopoeia presents a fun way to increase vocabulary.

I Stink!, written by Kate & Jim McMullan, narrated by Andy Richter, Weston Woods

Intertwining the use of language with music and effective background sounds, the listener is taken on a nightly trip to pick up, crush, and compact trash. The narrator’s voice personifies the deep, raspy, tough job of a garbage truck that includes humor and an excellent vocabulary that will delight the young. Just thinking about the gross volume and contents of garbage adds to the fun, but, as the text says, without him “you’re on Mount Trash-o-rama, baby!” Spoken in the first person, listeners are pulled into the world of refuse that heightens awareness of the wide scope of what is thrown out.

Activities & Literacy Extensions

These books present multiple opportunities to work with vocabulary and language:

- ❖ Using *Big Rig*, ask children think of other words that sound like the noise they imitate.
- ❖ With *I Stink!*, children may make up their own alliterative pairs of types of trash, i.e. putrid pumpkin, finny fish -- the grosser the better.

Explore the topic of environmental awareness. Ecology and recycling can easily be woven into discussions of both of these titles.

- ❖ What happens to the trash?
- ❖ Talk about noise pollution--the noise of the “Jake brake” and the noise of a working trash truck.
- ❖ Ask children to make a list of many kinds of trash, beyond what is stated in the story, and come up with ways the trash can be reduced, reused, recycled.

➤ **Farmyard Fun**



Chicken Little, written and illustrated by Rebecca and Ed Emberley, narrated by Walter M. Mayes, Weston Woods

Foolish Chicken Little initiates a cascading series of animal hysteria when he brings together an excitable group of animals who believe “the sky is falling!” The repetition of the ominous phrase builds the anxiety of the animals with their silly rhyming names and the expressive voicing enhances the absurdity of the reactions of Henny Penny, Loosey Goosey, and all as they rush into the “warm, dark cave” offered by the nefarious Foxy Loxy. Energetic, color-saturated collage illustrations, playful sound effects, and animated music heighten the hilarity in this familiar and well-loved story that never fails to bring a laugh.

Dooby, Dooby, Moo, written by Doreen Cronin, illustrated by Betsy Lewin, narrated by Randy Travis, Weston Woods

Farmer Brown’s rambunctious animals led, of course, by Duck, decide to enter the talent show at the county fair and their practices and performances will have young listeners

and their grown ups rolling with laughter. Travis’s languid drawl, accompanied by raucous barnyard sound effects and music by Scotty Huff and Robert Reynolds take this amusing story to hilarious new heights. Included are not only the usual tracks with and without page-turn signals, but also a track with “Duck” singing “Born to Be Wild” and a track with the pigs’ laconic dance.

[Duck on a Tractor](#), written and illustrated by David Shannon, narrated by Walter Mayes, Weston Woods

This fun, rousing story features indomitable Duck who discovers the joy of driving a tractor, so much so he invites all his barnyard friends along for the ride. And what a ride it is, with sound effects that support and reinforce the text and Mayes’ narration highlighting the humor. Page turn signals give the listener ample chances to enjoy the outrageous illustrations and background music adds to Duck’s escapade.

Activities & Literacy Extensions

- ❖ Increase the hilarity of these stories by inviting listeners mimic the various animal sounds.
- ❖ Ask children to imagine other scenarios that Duck could encounter on the tractor and, as a group, write an alternate ending.
- ❖ Has anyone in the group gone to a county fair? If so, ask them to share their own favorite fair activities.
- ❖ Hold your own classroom or library story time talent show to encourage children to display their abilities.
- ❖ Have a discussion of what makes these stories silly. Group discussion can elicit ideas about humor, funny rhyming names, effectiveness of music, and repetition of vocabulary. Compare and contrast the elements that make these three stories so funny.

➤ Stories Around the World



[The Cazuela That the Farm Maiden Stirred](#), written by Samantha R. Vamos, illustrated

by Rafael López, narrated by Adriana Sananes, Live Oak Media

Adriana Sananes’s measured cadence introduces a young farm girl and the barnyard animals that help her make arroz con leche in this bilingual twist on the story of “The House That Jack Built.” An excellent resource, filled with color-drenched illustrations, for early bilingual lessons, includes farmyard sound effects and playful music to enliven the text, while Sananes allows children to hear accurate pronunciations, in English and Spanish, of the cooking implements, animals, and ingredients that go into the creation of this tasty rice pudding.

[*Imani’s Moon*](#), written by JaNay Brown-Wood, illustrated by Hazel Mitchell, narrated by MaameYaa Boafo, Live Oak Media

Tiny Imani, who yearns to do something big and important, is instead, bullied by the older children in her Maasai village. Parents, teachers, and young listeners will appreciate the universality of this experience through the cadence and inflection of MaameYaa Boafo speech pattern and the accompanying music and sound effects evoking the African landscape. Imani’s demonstration of coping skills and problem solving strategies will make this a good choice for both classroom use and family discussion.

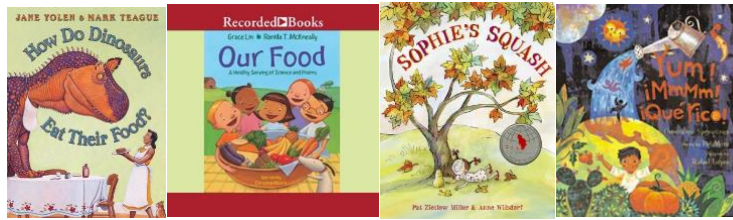
[*Lon Po-Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China*](#), written and illustrated by Ed Young, narrated by B.D. Wong, Weston Woods

Three sisters, alone at night when mother goes off to visit grandmother, are threatened by a fearsome wolf disguised as an old woman. This 1990 Caldecott Medal-winner becomes even more deliciously menacing with assistance from Wong’s carefully measured pacing, culturally authentic cadence and pronunciation, and exquisitely-pitched narration. The muted musical underbed pairs well with Young’s shadowy, watercolor and pastel panels, recalling both Chinese music and art.

Activities & Literacy Extensions

- ❖ At home, or in your library or school kitchen, make a batch of arroz con leche (rice pudding), and practice naming the ingredients in Spanish.
- ❖ Talk about the ways that Imani deals with bullying. How does it make her feel? What does she do to feel better?
- ❖ Compare and contrast Lon Po-Po with Red-Riding Hood stories from other parts of the world and have students discuss the similarities and differences.
- ❖ Make a word wall of the new words that children learn from these stories set in different countries.

➤ **Let's Eat!**



[How Do Dinosaurs Eat Their Food?](#), written and narrated by Jane Yolen, illustrated by Mark Teague, Weston Woods

What better way to learn about table manners than with a silly story featuring dinosaurs eating human meals? Jane Yolen’s understated narration of her rhyming text, accompanied by outrageous sound effects and peppy music by Jon Carroll, leaves lots of time to study Mark Teague’s wonderfully silly, yet realistic, illustrations and pick out the names of all of the dinosaurs.

[Our Food: A Healthy Serving of Science and Poems](#), written by Grace Lin, illustrated by Grace Zong, narrated by Christina Moore, Recorded Books

Extensive information about food is read with pacing that allows time to absorb both the information and colorful illustrations. Each page spread includes a poem, explanations of types of food (fruit, fiber, cheese, etc.) and interesting facts. A good introduction to the many facets of food that can serve as a springboard for extensive teaching activities. Christina Moore’s narration gives matter-of-fact information an interesting and comfortable presentation. *Note:* having a discussion about the use of the word “poop” or the term “gassy beans,” might curtail silliness, as the word is in the text several times.

[Sophie's Squash](#), written by Pat Zietlow Miller, illustrated by Anne Wilsdorf, narrated by Elizabeth Morton, Recorded Books

From the whimsical illustrations to the loving attachment that Sophie makes to a squash, young listeners will understand the predicament Sophie faces and delight in her creative problem solving. Morton’s quiet voicing lends a just-right tone to the story that features family, affection, and a squash. A fun introduction to a spunky girl and a plant’s life cycle with a happy ending.

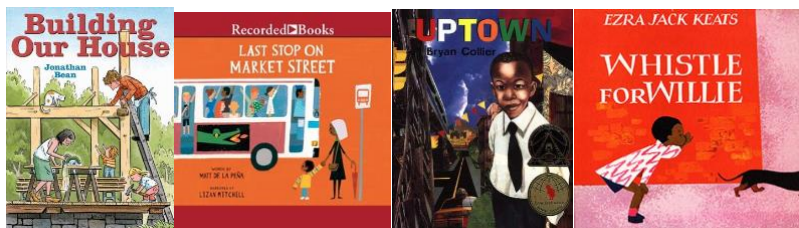
[Yum! ;MmMm! ;Qué rico! Americas' Sproutings](#), Haiku by Pat Mora, illustrated by Rafael López, narrated by Gabriella Cavallero, Live Oak Media

Pat Mora presents fascinating information about a variety of foods found in the Americas (blueberries, chile peppers, peanuts, and more) coupled with delightful haiku, and Rafael López’s color-drenched illustrations. Gabriella Cavallero presents the facts with authority and obvious interest, and brings a lively cadence to the haiku. Subtle sound effects, Chris Kubie’s sprightly musical underbed, and an excellent note from the author round out this read-along, guaranteed to make you hungry.

Activities & Literacy Extensions

- ❖ In *Our Food*, the use of poems on each page offers opportunities for children to create their own poems about fruit, vegetables, protein, etc. Parents, teachers, or librarians can write down the words that children suggest for creating a food poem.
- ❖ At home, or in the school kitchen, create a healthy meal using the five food groups.
- ❖ Talk about new words like “fiber,” “carbohydrate,” or “nutrient.”
- ❖ *Sophie’s Squash* is the perfect introduction to start growing some plants from seeds. Children will enjoy taking care of the plants and watching the changes.
- ❖ This is the time to learn about and discuss the life cycle of plants.
- ❖ Make dinosaur masks and have children act out the bad manners exhibited in *How Do Dinosaurs Eat Their Food*. Invite parents and other special grown-ups to the group’s tea, where children can present their dinosaur antics and then demonstrate their own good manners.
- ❖ Have a food tasting to celebrate *Yum! ;MmMm! ;Qué rico! Americas’ Sproutings*. Children will enjoy seeing what the real foods look like and may learn to try different foods than they’ve eaten previously.

➤ Around My Neighborhood



[*Building Our House*](#), written and illustrated by Jonathan Bean, narrated by Matthew Brown, Macmillan Audio

Matthew Brown's enthusiastic reading tells the story of a young girl's family adventure building their own house in the country without sound effects or musical embellishments, well-suited to the family's dogged persistence to get the job done. Young listeners will be fascinated by the hard work and simple tools that are used to create a home where once there was only a field of weeds.

[*Last Stop on Market Street*](#), written by Matt de la Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson, narrated by Lizan Mitchell, Recorded Books

The simple story of CJ and Nana riding the bus is transformed into a journey of discovery, beautiful imagery, and language. Mitchell's well-modulated voicing gives Nana a soothing presence, and contrasts with CJ's youthful petulance as he realizes the wonders of the everyday world. This Newbery Medal and Caldecott Honor book is a fine example of how an audio production can lift and enhance the meaning of the narrative.

[*Uptown*](#), written and illustrated by Bryan Collier, narrated by Ricky Smith, Live Oak Media

The youthful voice of narrator Ricky Smith combines with Bryan Collier's brief text and watercolor and collage illustrations to invite reader-listeners to savor the sights and sounds of Harlem. Quietly appropriate sound effects, including cars, baseball, and the Boys and Girls Choir of Harlem, along with a musical score celebrating the city, enhance the experience. City kids will recognize their neighborhoods here and suburban and rural kids will enjoy learning about a different landscape.

[*Whistle for Willie*](#), written and illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats, narrated by Loretta Long, Weston Woods

Peter wanders the local streets, trying to whistle so that he can call to his dog, Willie. This long-time favorite springs off the pages with delightfully restrained narration by Loretta Long, better known to children as Susan from Sesame Street. Barry Galbraith's sprightly music is the perfect accompaniment to a neighborhood story that will resonate with its many fans--young and old.

Activities & Literacy Extensions

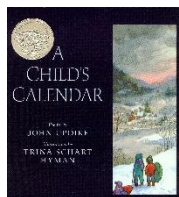
- ❖ Ask children to tell you what they see when they walk or ride around their neighborhood.

- ❖ If the weather cooperates, take a walk around the neighborhood and talk about all the things you and the children notice.
- ❖ Have any of the children helped build a house? If not, how do they help create, fix, or clean things up at home?
- ❖ Talk about new vocabulary found in these stories, such as these words from Last Stop on Market Street : “lurched,” or “crumbling,” or new phrases and what they might mean, such as the rain “freckled CJ’s shirt” and “stray-cat showers.”
- ❖ Who can whistle? Try assisting the group in learning to whistle, just like Peter.

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Grades K-2



[*A Child's Calendar*](#), written and narrated by John Updike, illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman, Live Oak Media

The changing seasons are embodied in twelve child-centered poems, one for each month of the year. Celebrations as well as observations of the natural world are delightfully rendered through Updike's elegantly understated narration and Hyman's saturated watercolor paintings depicting a multiracial cast in rural New England. The quiet, even pacing will help children follow the poetry, identifying rhyming words as well as the patterns of the seasons to support the following Common Core State Standards.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.5

Recognize common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7

With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).



[*Creepy Carrots!*](#), written by Aaron Reynolds, illustrated by Peter Brown, narrated by James Naughton, Weston Woods, 2014

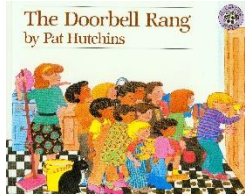
Jasper Rabbit loves to eat carrots. In fact, he eats them anywhere he finds them - on the way to school, walking home, in the fields - anywhere and all the time. And then, one day, the carrots begin to follow him! What will those carrots do? How can Jasper save himself? Orange and brown-toned, stylized illustrations add to the tension and the hilarity, while Naughton's sometimes sinister baritone heightens the humor as the carrots terrify poor Jasper. Spooky music and appropriate sound effects round out this 2014 Odyssey Honor.

This is a great story for introducing a writing project. Have students determine what other fruit or vegetable might be scary and encourage them to write, and illustrate, their own story.

Text Types & Purposes:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3

Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.



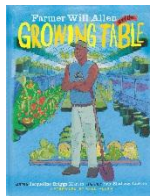
[The Doorbell Rang](#), written and illustrated by Pat Hutchins, narrated by Suzanne Toren, Live Oak Media, 2001

Children will get practice with adding and removing in this amusing look at cookies shared further than might be optimal. Ma brings out a dozen cookies - six each for Sam and Victoria - and then the doorbell rings (cleverly disguised as page-turn signals). And rings; each time bringing more friends to share the cookies. Text and illustrations combine, providing visual clues to help with the math (and to determine Victoria and Sam's feelings). Toren's unhurried narration allows young listeners to follow along with the reading, reinforcing the repetition of the text and giving time to determine the distribution of the cookies. Extend the story by having the children make paper cookies (great for building fine motor skills) and sort them according to the storyline.

Operations and Algebraic Thinking

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.OA.A.1

Represent addition and subtraction with objects, fingers, mental images, drawings, sounds (e.g., claps), acting out situations, verbal explanations, expressions, or equations.



[Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table](#), written by Jacqueline Briggs Martin, illustrated by Eric-Shabazz Larkin, narrated by Peter Jay Fernandez, Live Oak Media, 2014

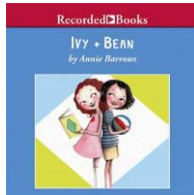
In this read-along, listeners will be introduced to a modern day urban farmer with a unique background, from a rural boyhood to professional football and then a dedicated return to farming. This true story of Will Allen will fascinate listeners with his practical ideas for success in building viable city farms. Fernandez' narration provides good pacing so that both the information and illustrations can be absorbed. The audio production details include an afterword by Will Allen himself where he stresses important facts about starting to grow crops in an urban setting, i.e. a worm factory is essential!

A recommended learning extension for this audiobook is a visit to Allen's web site, Growing Power (www.growingpower.org) where a video of Allen talking about how he began his farming project in Milwaukee, Wisconsin can add further motivation for young farmers-in-the-making. The site also offers more information for curriculum development activities.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1

Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.



Ivy and Bean, written by Annie Barrows, narrated by Cassandra Morris, Recorded Books, 2007

When quiet, book-loving Ivy moves next door to tomboy Bean, the two girls are sure they will never be friends. But Bean's help with a prank on Ivy's older sister convinces them that combining their talents can lead to great fun. The first in a beginning chapter book series, this features a lively performance, with young and girlish narration. Each chapter introduces a separate event, making this just right for new listeners. Students can describe their listening skills and comprehension in support of these Common Core State Literature Standards:

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1

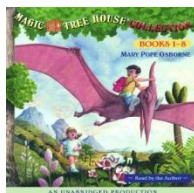
Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2

Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3

Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.



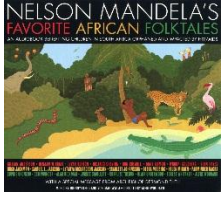
Magic Tree House Collection, Books 1-8, written and narrated by Mary Pope Osborne, Listening Library, 2001

The first eight books of the ever-popular series introduce brother and sister duo, Jack and Annie. Each story features an adventure where they time travel to different historical periods, from dinosaurs to pirates and beyond. Each episode brings opportunities to solve a mystery, and build their sibling bond. An added bonus for listeners is the author's friendly tone and good pacing as she reads the simple beginning chapter text. The themes of magic time travel, mystery, and historical settings brings a winning combination to young listeners as they follow Jack and Annie through their continuing journeys.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.9

Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).



[Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales](#), collected by Nelson Mandela, narrated by a full cast, Hachette, 2009

The rich oral tradition of storytelling is apparent in this collection from cultures across the African continent. Selected by Nobel Laureate Mandela, each of the 32 stories is performed by a notable celebrity, ranging from Samuel L. Jackson and Scarlett Johansson to Matt Damon, Whoopi Goldberg, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The production also contains source notes plus original music by South African musicians Johnny Clegg and Vusi Mahlasela. A perfect combination of masterful narration and an authentic soundscape, this title was named winner of the 2010 Audie Award for Audiobook of the Year by the Audio Publishers Association. Younger students may retell the story through drawing the characters and setting while listening. Older children may pair & share to retell the stories asking their partner questions to clarify details. Educators will want to make use of resources available as bonus material on the final CD and at www.mandelasfavoritefolktales.com.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2

Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.



[The One and Only Shrek](#), written by William Steig, narrated by Stanley Tucci and Meryl Streep, Macmillan Audio, 2007

This excellent collection of Steig picture books (*Shrek! Doctor De Soto, Caleb and Kate, Brave Irene, The Amazing Bone, and Spinky Sulks*) focuses all the attention on his extraordinary use of language. Without the accompanying illustrations, listeners get the full effect of Steig's ability to paint pictures with words. Steig's rich language and complex storytelling is perfectly complemented by Tucci's superb voicing and pacing, while Streep's extensive vocal range and her talent for creating sound effects with her voice elevates even the wind to character level in this outstanding production.

To build comprehension, have students convey their understanding of the characters and settings in the stories and draw pictures to extend their descriptions. Compare the student illustrations with Steig's illustrations in the print picture books and allow the students time to discuss the different interpretations.

Comprehension and Collaboration

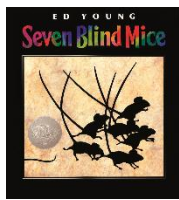
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.5

Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.



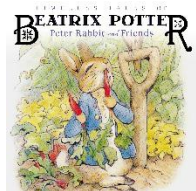
[*Seven Blind Mice*](#), written and illustrated by Ed Young, narrated by B.D. Wong, Weston Woods, 2007

Seven variously colored, and blind, mice venture down to the pond during the course of a week to investigate the strange thing that has come there. One finds it to be "sturdy," while another feels that it is "supple." Each discovers a differing attribute in this vocabulary-rich tale, but it takes the wise white mouse to determine the whole. Exotic music, lots of squeaking, and a deliberate narration heighten the tension of the story. The afterword, read by author/illustrator Young, offers insight into his creative process and provides useful advice on instructional extensions.

Measurement & Data

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.MD.A.1

Describe measurable attributes of objects, such as length or weight. Describe several measurable attributes of a single object.



[*Timeless Tales of Beatrix Potter: Peter Rabbit and Friends*](#), narrated by Katherine Kellgren, Tantor Media, 2014

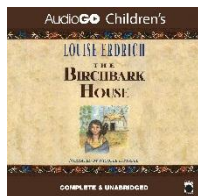
The timeless stories of Peter Rabbit, Nutkin, Benjamin Bunny, and all the Beatrix Potter creations are deliciously crafted with the performance of Katherine Kellgren. Her authentic British accent, perfect pacing, and emotional inflections give the listener a sense of the wonderful scenes of idyllic country life. That is not to say that Peter's terror of Mr. MacGregor or the Tailor of Gloucester's happiness in finding a completed waistcoat are understated, no, Kellgren can lend each character a definite persona, that includes some appropriate sounds and singing of various rhymes and songs throughout. This modern production includes a pdf of the print version and gives listeners a fresh appreciation for the universality of these classic tales.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.9

Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

Grades 3-5



[The Birchbark House](#), written by Louise Erdrich, narrated by Nicolle Littrell, Audio Bookshelf/Blackstone, 2002

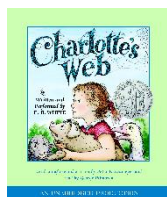
Life is lived by the cycle of the seasons in this story of Omakayas and her Ojibwa family on an island in Lake Superior in the 1800s. Recounting the rhythm her people have shared for generations, Omakayas details what was lost when white settlers moved inexorably westward. Listeners will gain an understanding of the rich culture that makes up the Native American heritage as Littrell's storyteller's pacing describes planting, harvesting, tanning a moose hide, and the devastation of smallpox.

To further understanding of the settling of the United States, students can discuss the differences in perspective from Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* series to this story with its Native American point of view.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.9

Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.



[Charlotte's Web](#), written and narrated by E.B. White, Listening Library, 2001

The familiar tale about Charlotte, Wilbur and Fern is, if possible, strengthened by the author's narration. The realities of farm life, the connection between humans and animals, and the strong theme of friendship demonstrates universal appeal. To hear the voice of E.B. White heightens the listener's pleasure and showcases the grandfatherly voice of the creator of the well-loved story. As the plot unfolds, listeners surely experience the delight of listening to stories. The author knows the characters, because they are *his*, and this gives a real and unique power to the words, presenting students with a whole new perspective about storytelling.

An interesting curriculum activity would support the CCSS standard noted below by having students listen to two other E.B. White stories, *The Trumpet of the Swan* (also narrated by the author, Listening Library) and *Stuart Little* (narrated by Julie Harris, Listening Library). This trio of E.B. White novels remain important examples of children's literature for young listeners.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.9

Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).



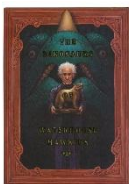
[*Coretta Scott*](#), written by Ntozake Shange, illustrated by Kadir Nelson, narrated by Phylcia Rashad, Weston Woods, 2014

Growing up in the segregated south hardened the resolve of the young Coretta Scott to seek equality. Married to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., she became an icon of the civil rights movement, marching, singing, speaking, and working toward freedom. Ntozake Shange's moving, brief poems describing the life of Coretta Scott King are wonderfully paired with Kadir Nelson's brilliant, sturdy oil paintings on birch plywood. The addition of Phylcia Rashad's quietly elegant narration, with a musical underbed of "Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round," lifts both text and art to a level that allows listeners to fully understand the meaning of Mrs. King's contributions to the civil rights movement. The third track is a reading of the excellent author's note, giving more information about Mrs. King and her work. The Common Core State Standards specify that students should be exposed to informational text; this poetic look at history is an excellent means of showing students how historical information can be communicated in a non-traditional fashion.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.3.

Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.



[*The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins*](#), written by Barbara Kerley, illustrated by Brian Selznick, narrated by Jonathan Pryce, Weston Woods, 2010

Biography, science and art combine to bring listeners the fascinating story of Waterhouse Hawkins, a 19th century artist who crafted life-size, three-dimensional models of just-discovered dinosaurs. Working with scientists, Hawkins' creations were an original achievement. Having the beautiful print version at hand is a must, as Pryce's strong and confident narration gives listeners time to peruse the breath-taking Caldecott Honor paintings. The production includes music and sound effects that highlight Hawkins' perseverance to bring scientific models of extinct animals to a large population. The opportunities for interdisciplinary study are many in this wonderful audiobook package.

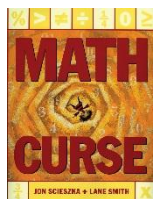
As a learning extension, the International Reading Association's ReadWriteThink web site offers activities related to the dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins in London.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/crystal-palace-hosted-first-20544.html>

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3

Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).



Math Curse, written by Jon Scieszka, illustrated by Lane Smith, narrated by Nancy Wu, Weston Woods

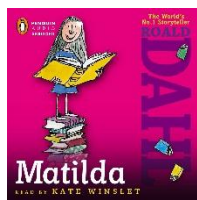
Scieszka's young protagonist is doomed when her teacher, Mrs. Fibonacci, declares that math applies to every facet of life, reducing everything to a math problem: "I wake up at 7:15. It takes me 10 minutes to get dressed, 15 minutes to eat my breakfast, and 1 minute to brush my teeth . . . if my bus leaves at 8:00, will I make it on time?" Listeners are guided through this mathematical nightmare by Wu's inflection and pacing, clearly defining characters and allowing time to grasp not only the complex and hilarious text, but also Smith's frenzied illustrations. Background music and sound effects heighten the amusement of this very silly, and very real, math lesson.

Word problems are often the bane of elementary school existence. Offer this audiobook as an antidote to math hatred.

Operations and Algebraic Thinking:

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.4.OA.A.3

Solve multistep word problems posed with whole numbers and having whole-number answers using the four operations, including problems in which remainders must be interpreted. Represent these problems using equations with a letter standing for the unknown quantity. Assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computation and estimation strategies including rounding.



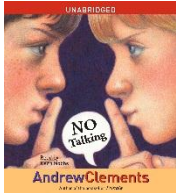
Matilda, written by Roald Dahl, narrated by Kate Winslet, Penguin Audio

Brilliant Matilda, who reads every book in the library before starting school, is unfortunately born into a horribly boorish family. School - and her wonderful teacher, Miss Honey - is her refuge even though her parents try to thwart her enjoyment of learning at every turn. When Miss Honey is threatened by the evil headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, Matilda discovers amazing powers to save the day. Winslet's remarkable narration captures the snarky tenor of Dahl's writing and even manages to add regional accents that hint at the answer to a mystery in this 2014 Odyssey Honor audiobook.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.



No Talking, written by Andrew Clements, narrated by Keith Nobbs, Simon & Schuster Audio, library edition Recorded Books

War between the sexes breaks out when Laketon Elementary School's fifth grade class get caught up in angry outbursts between ringleaders Dave and Lynsey. Their 48-hour, self-imposed no talking competition leads to some interesting results, not only among the boys and girls, but also between kids and adults. Accurately capturing the cadence and tone of early adolescence, Nobbs allows listeners to feel as if they are in the hallways and classrooms with this clever and inventive group of students.

No Talking lends itself to fulfilling not only a CCSS literature standard (see below) by encouraging students to look at theme and characterization, it also is a model for civics lessons in responsibility and courtesy, as shown in the example from the Virginia History and Social Studies Standard shown below. Students can not only discuss how and why the behavior of characters in the book determine and move forward the theme of the story, they can also attempt to follow the rules concocted by the students in an attempt to restrict talking and regain decorum.

Key Ideas and Details:

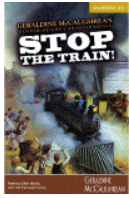
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2

Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

History and Social Science Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools

CE.4 The student will demonstrate knowledge of personal character traits that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in civic life by

- a) practicing trustworthiness and honesty;
- b) practicing courtesy and respect for the rights of others;
- c) practicing responsibility, accountability, and self-reliance;
- d) practicing respect for the law;
- e) practicing patriotism;
- f) practicing decision making;
- g) practicing service to the school and/or local community.



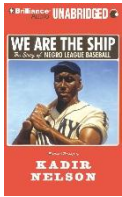
[Stop the Train!](#) written by Geraldine McCaughrean, narrated by Ellen Myrick and the Full Cast Family, Full Cast Audio, 2005

This historical fiction story is dramatized by a full cast performance that suitably matches the eccentric group of characters. Based on the early settlement of the Oklahoma Territory and the western expansion of the railroads, Cissy Sissney and her family arrive in the “middle of nowhere” only to find that the railroad plans to bypass their town. This scenario begins the “train” of events that are both comic and practical as the town works together to solve this critical problem. It is the good fortune of listeners to hear each character’s individual voice, appreciate the original musical score, and learn how life in the Old West brought friends and neighbors together.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.5

Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.



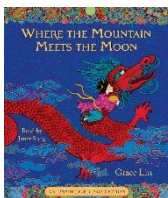
[We are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball](#), written by Kadir Nelson, narrated by Dion Graham, Brilliance Audio, 2009

Dion Graham's mellow baritone invites listeners into the dugout and onto the field as he personifies the "Everyman" Negro Leagues ball player who serves as narrator of this parallel history of America's pastime. It's all covered here, from the despair of racism to the elation of the game well-played. This consummate audiobook package includes a blues harmonica introducing and ending the story and Nelson's striking paintings, one of the highlights of the print edition, are available on an accompanying CD. This Common Core Text Exemplar for grades 4-5 was also a 2010 Odyssey Honor Audiobook, making it an excellent example to use not only as an informational text, but also to support speaking and listening standards.

Speaking and Listening – Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.2

Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.



[Where the Mountain Meets the Moon](#), written by Grace Lin, narrated by Janet Song, Listening Library, 2010

Minli and her parents live a hard life in the shadow of Fruitless Mountain. Her bitter mother rails against Minli's tale-spinning father, especially when the young girl spends one of her last two coins on a goldfish alleged to have magical capabilities. Setting out to prove the truth of her father's tales, Minli is accompanied by the fish (who really is magical) and a dragon. The girl stumbles into danger, friendship, and wisdom

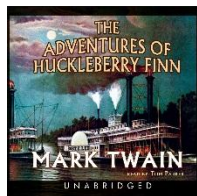
along the way, eventually saving her family and her village. Song wraps this enchanting story with a slight hint of Chinese inflection and cadence, adding to the authentic feel of this original folktale. This grade 4 – 5 Common Core Text Exemplar can be used to support the following standard:

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3

Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a characters thoughts, words, or actions).

Grades 6-8



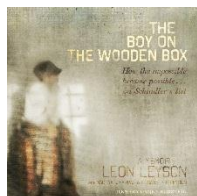
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, written by Mark Twain, narrated by Tom Parker, Blackstone Audiobooks, 1997

Twain's classic, much debated novel of life along the Mississippi is served well by Parker's narrator-as-storyteller style. On many middle-school reading lists, but a difficult slog for numerous students, the audio format combined with an excellent production eases the way to understanding and interpretation of this wide-ranging look at greed, racism, corruption, slavery, and friendship. Parker's smooth tones and measured pace work well to untangle the many dialects and zany, dangerous escapades in the novel. This production is uncensored and the use of the "N" word is shocking. However, this offers an excellent starting place for classroom and family discussions on the power of words and the unconscionable ways that people often treat those who are different from them.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.



The Boy on the Wooden Box, written by Leon Leyson, narrated by Danny Burstein, Simon & Schuster Audio, 2013

This autobiographical memoir recounts Leyson's childhood as the youngest member of Schindler's list. Born Leib Lezjon, he was ten years old when his family was moved to the Krakow ghetto at the outbreak of World War II. Danny Burstein's dignified and controlled narration allows younger listeners to relate to Leyson's hopeful response to the horrific events surrounding the Holocaust as well as Leyson's later life as a high school teacher in the United States. As the only memoir written by a Schindler's List child, this title makes an excellent listen-aloud companion to a comparative classroom study of other Holocaust literature or as a multimedia extension of gifted learners' exploration of Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

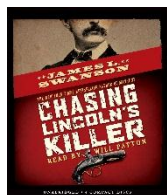
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.9

Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

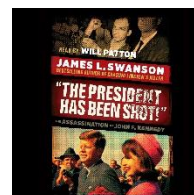
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.9

Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.



[*Chasing Lincoln's Killer*](#), written by James L. Swanson, narrated by Will Patton, Scholastic Audiobooks, 2009

[*The President Has Been Shot! The Assassination of John F. Kennedy*](#), written by James L. Swanson, narrated by Will Patton, Scholastic Audiobooks, 2013



The assassinations of these Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy are explored in two audiobooks, in an attempt to make sense of seemingly senseless. These presidents, both beloved and reviled, were shot in the head by men who opposed their political views. Both were in the midst of struggles for equality. One ended slavery, one was working toward civil rights for African Americans.

Swanson's research into the circumstances surrounding these national tragedies is articulated in Patton's soft, southern lilt, making the horrific details of the killings more bearable. Students will be able to make comparisons between the two accounts of presidential assassination.

Craft and Structure:

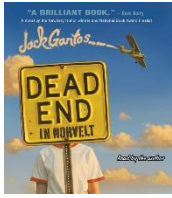
CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.RI.7.5

Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of ideas.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).



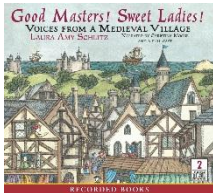
[*Dead End in Norvelt*](#), written and narrated by Jack Gantos, Macmillan Audio, 2011

The 2012 Newbery Medal story features the indomitable Jack Gantos, telling the “mostly” true adventures of a summer vacation that provide a funny yet meaningful listening experience. Writing obituaries as a summer penance might not seem like an engaging beginning, but Gantos lends his voice to give a nuanced performance of a young boy’s growing self-awareness. Jack’s predilection for nose bleeds is only one recurring theme in this comic, historical, coming-of-age novel. As Jack learns to appreciate the lives of his town’s recently deceased residents, some of his adventures include a homemade airplane, Girl Scout cookies, Hell’s Angels, and Eleanor Roosevelt – an odd combination, but a winning romp. Listeners will want to find out more about Norvelt, Pennsylvania where the author grew up and will definitely want to listen to the conclusion of Jack’s escapades with his eccentric neighbor in *From Norvelt to Nowhere* (Macmillan Audio, 2013).

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.



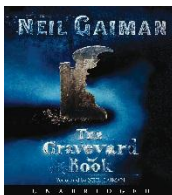
[*Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village*](#), written by Laura Amy Schlitz, narrated by Christina Moore and a Full Cast, Recorded Books, 2008

Superb performances and excellent production will draw in students who might otherwise find it difficult to read this 2008 Newbery Medal winner. Medieval music sets the stage for monologues that capture the intertwining cross-section of village life, from blacksmith to the heir of the manor as the various narrators “take the stage” to present a memorable play. Students can use both print and audiobook to produce their own versions of the monologues for classroom discussions of feudal society.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.



[*The Graveyard Book*](#), written and narrated by Neil Gaiman, HarperChildren’sAudio, 2008

Winning both the Newbery Medal (2009) and Carnegie Medal, this novel is brought to audio with a wonderful performance by the author. The setting is a cemetery, the main character is Bod (for Nobody, poor boy). Bod’s parents and

sister have been murdered, and the “residents” of the graveyard are raising him – certainly not a fortuitous beginning, but Gaiman is a master storyteller, and Bod’s tale, the chilling mystery (the murderer is still looking for him), the ghosts and ghouls who care for him, and a satisfying conclusion will entice listeners throughout. The true meaning of family and friendship is the central theme, and Bod’s predicament, though extreme, is familiar. Add eerie background music, well-crafted language, the author’s compelling voice, and an engaged audience is a certainty.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3

Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).



Jazz, written by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Christopher Myers, narrated by James “D-Train” Williams and Vaneese Thomas, Live Oak Media, 2007

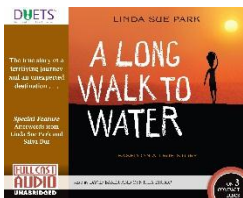
Winner of the inaugural (2008) Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production, this splendid audiobook combines painting, poetry and music into a mesmerizing whole. The production begins with the authentic illustrations by Christopher Myers (2006 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Award), adds the lyrical words of Walter Dean Myers, and ends with an original musical score to create a thoroughly enjoyable audio experience. The readings of the two narrators expand the effect of the poetry and the jazz music immerses listeners, enabling them to hear the nuances and emotions of the story (and reflexively move to the beat!). Each poem has a separate track, and the glossary is read, so that students may easily listen and learn about favorites multiple times.

Opportunities to extend learning include various poetry units, a study of the history of jazz, and learning more about illustration as a means to heighten the narrative of a story.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.7

Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).



A Long Walk to Water, written by Linda Sue Park, narrated by David Baker and Cynthia Bishop, Full Cast Audio Duets, 2013

The terrors of South Sudan are highlighted by the plight of two children living years apart. David Baker's ability to replicate the cadence and intonation of young Salva's speech gives heartrending immediacy to the boy's awful predicament - caught in the crosshairs of a dreadful war that forces him to suffer gunmen, dehydration, and the death of friends and family as he makes his way to a refugee

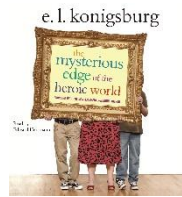
camp. Cynthia Bishop quietly portrays Nya, a young Sudanese girl who, 10 years after Salva's ordeal, still struggles each day to carry enough water back to her village so her family can survive. The author's note and Salva's own words at the end will give further understanding to the difficulties faced by other young people around the world in their efforts to survive.

After listening to this audiobook, students can research the situation in South Sudan to determine how well the author succeeded in conveying the stories of Salva and Nya.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3

Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).



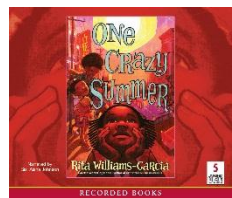
The Mysterious Edge of the Heroic World, written by E.L. Konigsburg, narrated by Edward Herrmann, Simon & Schuster Audio, library edition Recorded Books, 2007

Herrmann's distinct voicing and deliberate pacing allows the focus to be placed squarely on the eccentric, poignant characters in this tale of mystery and yearning. Precocious sixth-grader Amedeo Kaplan eagerly accepts the offer to help catalog the belongings of his peculiar neighbor, Mrs. Zender, a former opera star now on her way to a retirement home. More than anything, Deo wants to discover something spectacular and Mrs. Zender's hoard may just yield his heart's desire. Nazi brutality, degenerate art, and friendship combine with intelligent prose and a flawless production to create a remarkable listening experience. To further their understanding of this complex story and Deo's relationship to art, students can research the work of artist Amedeo Modigliani and the attack on what the Nazi's termed degenerate art in the years leading up to and including World War II.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS-ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6

Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.



One Crazy Summer, written by Rita Williams-Garcia, narrated by SiSi Aisha Johnson, Recorded Books, 2010

Listeners spend a tumultuous summer in Oakland, California, with 11-year-old Delphine, her two younger sisters, and the mother who abandoned them seven years earlier. When their father and grandmother send them on a plane from Brooklyn, New York, the girls dream of beaches and Disneyland. Instead, they discover their mother does not want them and they are shuffled off daily to a Black Panther community center where they learn, for the first time, about African Americans struggling against racism and injustice. Johnson's unvoiced reading portrays the large cast of characters through subtle changes of inflection and pacing, allowing the spotlight to shine on Delphine - through whose eyes the

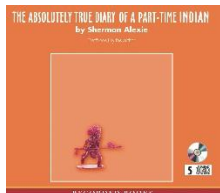
story unfolds - and her growing awareness of who she is and her role in society. Winner of the 2010 Coretta Scott King Author Award, a 2010 Newbery Honor Book, and a 2010 Audies finalist for Distinguished Achievement in Production.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Grades 9-12



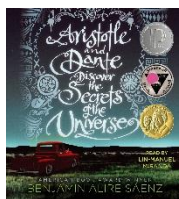
The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian, written and narrated by Sherman Alexie, Recorded Books, 2008

Sherman Alexie *is* the central character and voice of Arnold Spirit, a.k.a. Junior. Semi-autobiographical, Alexie imparts this inspired narration to thoroughly capture Junior's complex persona. Set on the Spokane reservation, the realities of Native American life are vivid, especially the alcoholism and poverty. Junior's anguish is fraught with barriers – a disability, the entrenched inequality, his family's dysfunction – but he determines that education is his path out of the cycle, and his perseverance is remarkable. Only Alexie could tell the story, and only Alexie could create a memorable performance that cemented the well-deserved 2007 National Book Award for Young People's Literature and the 2009 Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production. The vivid details of Junior's resilience, his ability to overcome prejudice, his self-deprecating humor, and a hope for the future, makes this audio a memorable listening experience.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS-ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.



Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe, written by Benjamin Alire Sáenz, narrated by Lin-Manuel Miranda, Simon & Schuster Audio, library edition Recorded Books, 2013

Polar opposites Aristotle and Dante become fast friends after meeting at the pool in the summer of 1987. Ari recognizes that he is on the cusp of manhood, but cannot find his place in the world. His Vietnam-veteran father is distant and his incarcerated brother has vanished from family discussion. By contrast, Dante's family is secure and he seems to know exactly who he is and where he wants to go. Miranda skillfully creates the voice of the

Mexican American community of these two friends and guides listeners through their difficult journeys of self-discovery in this powerful, poetic, multi-award winner (2013 Printz Honor Book, 2013 Pura Belpré Medal for Narrative, and 2013 Stonewall Book Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature).

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS-ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of the text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.



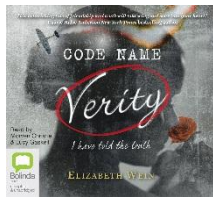
The Book Thief, written by Marcus Zusak, narrated by Allan Corduner, Listening Library, 2006

Set in Nazi Germany during World War II, Death narrates the story of the power of words to harm, inspire, and heal. Seeing young Leisel steal a book from her brother's gravesite, Death follows the girl throughout her relationships with her foster family, her community, and years of stealing books. Though Death refers to this as a "small story," it strikes on the best and worst of human interactions. Corduner gives unique voices to Leisel, her family, and community, while his detached interpretation of Death mines the depths of his observations—laden with irony and laced with humor. A 2007 Michael L. Printz Honor Book, this Common Core Text Exemplar for Grades 9-10 is now a major motion picture, offering students an opportunity to explore this novel through support of this standard:

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.7

Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.



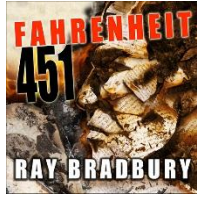
Code Name Verity, written by Elizabeth Wein, narrated by Moreven Christie and Lucy Gaskell, Bolinda Audio, 2012

Queenie and Maddie form an unlikely friendship, each working to advance the allied cause during World War II. Captured by the Gestapo, Queenie's story twists around on itself, leaving listeners wondering what is real and what is false. This 2013 Michael L. Printz Honor Book plumbs the meaning of truth with a beautiful, heartbreaking text and mesmerizing performances by Christie and Gaskell that will have listeners stunned and weeping at the tragic turn of events.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning



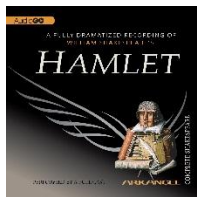
[Fahrenheit 451](#), written by Ray Bradbury, narrated by Stephen Hoye, Tantor Media, 2010

In this novel of a twisted dystopian future, firemen don't put out fires—they start them. Their explicit task of burning the subversive ideas found in the pages of books has become impossible for one fireman, Guy Montag, whose questioning of the system brings down its wrath on him, his wife, and the challengers he seeks to join. Hoye narrates with a tempo that moves Montag's actions and musings at just the right pace, steeping listeners in the terrors of a world that seems frighteningly familiar. The story's final message of the need to keep books alive by memorizing and speaking them aloud works especially well in an audio medium. This eminently discussable book, a Common Core Text Exemplar for Grades 9-10, is found on many high school reading lists.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.



[Hamlet](#), written by William Shakespeare, narrated by Simon Russell Beale, Imogen Stubbs, Jane Lapotaire and a Full Cast, Blackstone Audio/AudioGo, 2005

The tragedy of a young prince who exacts revenge on his uncle for the death of the king, his father, is arguably one of Shakespeare's most famous plays. For students, the scope of Elizabethan language and poetry as well as the hidden meaning buried in the text is more easily understood when performed aloud, and this first-rate, full cast production more than fits the bill. Musical interludes and an insert listing track details with a scene-by-scene summary make this a must-have for classroom use. A Common Core Standards Text Exemplar for Grades 11-CCR (College and Career Ready).

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.



[*Here in Harlem: Poems in Many Voices*](#), written by Walter Dean Myers, narrated by multiple voices, Live Oak Media, 2010

The beautifully crafted poetry of Walter Dean Myers is given a memorable performance that introduces the lives of Harlem residents to listeners. In a spare 54 poems, the characters elicit a picture of life in the iconic New York neighborhood. Background sound effects, jazz, and other urban music, serve to underscore a cast of diverse characters: Lois Smith, age 12, student; Homer Grimes, age 83, blind veteran, Harland Keith, age 33, reporter, and Clara Brown, age 87, who binds the narrative with her view of Harlem's history. The introduction, read by the author, is another highlight of this wonderful production. Listeners will benefit from having the print version nearby, as it includes graphics, a map of Harlem, and period photographs. Simply put, using this audiobook can improve any poetry unit.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.



[*If You Could Be Mine*](#), written by Sara Farizan, narrated by Negin Farsad, HighBridge Audio, 2013

Seventeen-year-old Sahar despairs when she learns that Nasrin has bowed to her prominent, wealthy family's demands that she marry a suitable young man. Best friends since they were both young girls, Sahar and Nasrin are deeply in love, forbidden in their native Tehran where same-sex relationships are illegal. Desperate, Sahar explores the Iranian government-subsidized sex-change practice to accommodate homosexual relationships as a solution. Written by an Iranian-American lesbian, the depiction of how upper-class and well-educated Iranians conceal activities suppressed by political and religious authorities is conveyed with cultural accuracy. Narrator Negin Farsad's authentic accent richly enhances the audiobook, while her sharply-nuanced teen tone creates a universal characterization, creating a vivid portrayal of contemporary Iran. An important title for GLBTQ literature studies by older students, this title can be a springboard to research on current gay rights issues by comparing practices in various countries.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

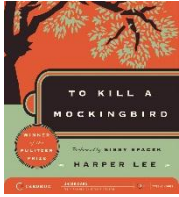
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.



[To Kill a Mockingbird](#), written by Harper Lee, narrated by Sissy Spacek, Harper Audio

Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning classic story of a small southern town's descent into racial bigotry gains even more power and poignancy through Spacek's measured, unvoiced performance. Her lilting southern accent perfectly embodies Scout Finch, a young girl whose life is turned upside down when her lawyer-father takes on the defense of a black man accused of raping a white girl. This staple of high school reading lists is a Common Core Text Exemplar for Grades 9-10.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.



[The Watch That Ends the Night: Voices from the Titanic](#), written by Allan Wolf, narrated by Michael Page, Phil Gigante, Christopher Lane, Lural Merlington, and Angela Dawe, Brilliance Audio, 2011

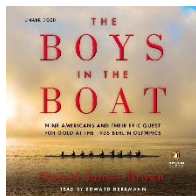
The sinking of the Titanic has elicited multiple stories, but this audiobook production presents a distinctly unique perspective. Told by the many unheard voices: mail clerks, the captain, the ship's rat, and even the iceberg, the fate of the inaugural sailing creates a palpable sense of being on the ship's deck as it sinks. The gifted ensemble cast includes the indomitable Molly Brown, telegraphers giving Morse code messages, and the formidable iceberg giving indications of tragedy as the ship approaches. Even knowing what will transpire, the listener is captured by this worthy 2012 Audies award for Distinguished Achievement in Production.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Adult Titles for High School Students



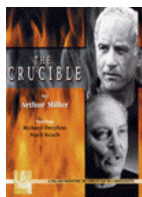
[The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics](#), written by Daniel James Brown, narrated by Edward Herrmann, Penguin Audio, 2013

In order to sit in the boat and become the rowing team that won the gold medal in the 1936 Olympics in Germany, nine young men from the University of Washington had to rise above the financial and emotional adversities of the Great Depression as well as often-troubled family situations. Their fortitude and determination to succeed and the support of their coaches and loved ones is the stuff of sports' legend. Edward Herrmann's conversational tone and controlled pacing carries the action forward, often leaving listeners on the edge of their seats, always leaving them cheering on this amazing band of brothers.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.3

Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.



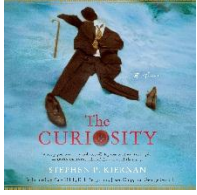
[The Crucible](#), written by Arthur Miller, narrated by a full cast, L.A. Theatre Works, 2001.

American dramatist Miller's classic, written as a 1953 indictment of McCarthyism, takes place in Salem, Massachusetts, as the Puritan New Englanders are caught up in accusations of witchcraft. High school students may examine this play through a multimedia lens, analyzing a variety of formats. The students' own interpretation of this text, the portrayals of the audiobook's performers: Michael York as Reverend Harris, Richard Dreyfuss as Reverend Hale, and Stacy Keach as John Proctor, an evaluative appraisal of the freely-available Williams College video production available at <http://youtu.be/o3hDrTAmDH0>, as well as a comparison with the 1959 drama *A Raisin in the Sun* (included in this list), will extend the appreciation of this work.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)



[The Curiosity](#), written by Stephen P. Kiernan, narrated by Kate Udall, George Guidall, Jason Culp, Erik Bergmann, Harper Audio, 2013

Scientific research on the origins of life, religious extremism, and journalistic bias are topics investigated in this science fiction work. As the lead scientist on an Arctic expedition, Dr. Kate Philo discovers a perfectly-frozen man who is later re-animated in a Boston laboratory, sparking a media frenzy and religious protests. Four narrators portray the accounts of the main characters, presented in alternating chapters, with each voice expanding the listener's understanding, from Guidall's depiction of Judge Jeremiah Rice's phrasing and vocabulary from the early 1900s to Udall's sympathetic rendering of Dr. Philo's ethical reservations. An excellent title to add to a study of science fiction literature while integrating research on the possibility of re-animating extinct life, or to extend a biology class study on the ethics of scientific research.

Key Ideas and Details:

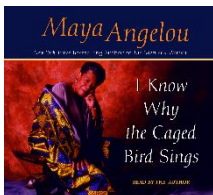
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to the precise details of explanations or descriptions.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.



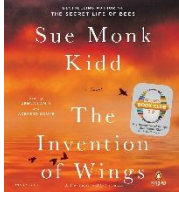
[I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings](#), written and narrated by Maya Angelou, Books on Tape, 2011

No one tells the story of poet Maya Angelou's hardscrabble life, her rise above racism, rape, and teenage pregnancy better than the late author herself. Growing up with a variety of family members in the Deep South, in St. Louis, Missouri, and in southern California, Dr. Angelou went on to become an acclaimed author and educator. This Common Core Standards Text Exemplar for Grades 9–10, on many high school reading lists, makes for involved classroom discussion.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.



[The Invention of Wings](#), written by Sue Monk Kidd, narrated by Jenna Lamia and Adepero Oduye, Penguin Audio, 2014

Set in Charleston, South Carolina in the early 1800s, this historical novel begins on the eleventh birthday of Sarah Grimké, when she receives the gift of ten-year-old Hetty “Handful” as her personal slave. The social structure and cultural rhythm of Sarah and Handful’s backgrounds are recreated as Jenna Lamia and Adepero Oduye expertly voice the alternating segments of this dual point-of-view novel. Inspired by Kidd’s research into the actual diaries of abolitionist and suffragette Sarah Grimké, the novel follows the intertwined lives of the two women into their adulthood, as Sarah and Handful both struggle with the desire for freedom. The beautifully performed text illuminates Kidd’s mastery of rhetoric, as the dual narration explicates the work’s central themes.

Craft and Structure:

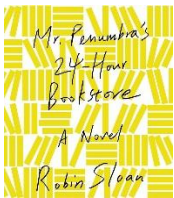
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.



[Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore](#), written by Robin Sloan, narrated by Ari Fliakos, Macmillan Audio, 2013

Clay Johnson loses his job in Silicon Valley, and impulsively takes a job as the night manager of an obscure 24-Hour Bookstore. Curious about the lack of customers, Johnson discovers a secret society and embarks on a quest to solve a centuries-old mystery involving ancient texts with Google-based computer coding. Narrator Ari Fliakos’ narration is an outstanding example of the power of audio to engage listeners in pleasure reading. Suggest this audio as an option for overbooked students who need to multitask, combining free-choice reading assignments with active pursuits, or to hook reluctant readers required to report on an independent read, who will be captivated by Fliakos’ quirky interpretation of a cast of bookish nerds and computer-savvy geeks.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS-ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.



[*A Raisin in the Sun*](#), written by Lorraine Hansberry, narrated by a full cast, L.A. Theatre Works, 2011

Hansberry's 1959 landmark drama portrays a pivotal episode in the lives of the Younger family, an African-American working-class clan whose matriarch's dream of relocating to a white neighborhood of Chicago clashes with the actions and dreams of her family. Pair this audio with the 1961 film version, starring Sidney Poitier and the entire original Broadway cast, to expand study of the works through critical analysis of this audiobook's performance by a stellar cast of contemporary actors compared with those who originated the roles. Teachers will want to explore L.A. Theatre Work's free educator resources at <http://www.latw.org/EDU-latw/aliveandaloud/aliveandaloud.html> for more resources on this and other dramatic works.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

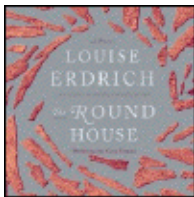
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluate how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.7

Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.



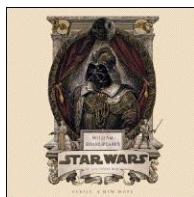
[*The Round House*](#), written by Louise Erdrich, narrated by Gary Farmer, Harper Audio, library edition Recorded Books, 2012

Thirteen-year-old Joe Coutts leads a sheltered life on the Ojibwe reservation in North Dakota with his tribal judge father and tribal enrollment specialist mother. And then his mother is brutally attacked and life is never the same again. Joe's coming-of-age is infused with the frustration of injustice, the bewilderment of hate, and the love and humor of family and friends. Erdrich's brilliant foray into the communities she has been plumbing for years is accurately narrated with Native American pitch and cadence by Farmer, heightening the cultural authenticity of the listening experience.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).



[*William Shakespeare's Star Wars Collection*](#), written by Ian Doescher, narrated by a full cast, Books on Tape, 2014

The three original Star Wars movies are retold in iambic pentameter in the audiobook version of *William Shakespeare's Star Wars, The Empire Striketh Back*, and *The Jedi Doth Return*. Replete with Shakespearian motifs, quotes, and characters, this highly humorous compendium is a light-hearted addition to Shakespeare studies. The full cast recreates the sound of George Lucas' classic Star Wars, with the perfectly-rendered voices of Luke, Han, Leia, Darth Vader, and other movie notables. There's even an entire soundscape of space gadgets, R2D2's beeps and whistles, and musical selections from the original score. Educators will appreciate the included author's notes that address instructional goals, as well as the author's website with extended materials.

Craft and Structure:

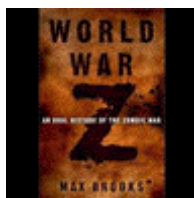
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS-ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)



[*World War Z: The Complete Edition*](#), written by Max Brooks, narrated by Max Brooks and a full cast, Books on Tape, 2013

Author Max Brooks portrays a survivor of the Zombie War who sets out to compile an oral history of the political and military response to the world-wide invasion. Short, episodic chapters document interviews with key players in the global disaster. An all-star cast of forty narrators provides culturally-appropriate voices that convince listeners that they are actually hearing documentary material. The dramatic performances provide primary-source commentary that reflects upon the moral and social imperatives that drove response to catastrophic events, material that will spark rich discussion in both language arts and social studies classrooms. The audiobook provides an unabridged version

that expands and enhances the print title, which is completely unlike the movie of the same name.

Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2

Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Introduction to Summer Listening

“School's out for summer” proclaims the lyrics of a popular 1970s song by Alice Cooper. Kids are thrilled, but teachers and parents want to be sure kids don't fall prey to the dreaded summer slide, a term researchers have given to studies that show that students [can lose one to three months](#) of hard-won reading skills during the school break.

How can parents and other caring adults help kids keep literacy skills strong? Dr. Teri Lesesne (“Summertime and the Reading Is Required?” *Knowledge Quest*, v. 43, no. 5, p 46-49), children's literature and reading expert, as well as an enthusiastic audiobook advocate, recommends that we “CARE about readers” by offering kids “Choice, Access, Response, and Enthusiasm.” Lesesne’s suggestion is echoed by Search Institute, creator of a framework of 40 [Developmental Assets](#) for young people that are key to school success and development into successful and contributing adults. Search Institute names reading for pleasure as a core asset and suggests creating a family tradition of reading together each day, with all screen media—television, cell phones, tablets, computers—turned off. How can families follow the advice of Dr. Lesesne and Search Institute? Try the pleasurable magic of audiobooks!

Summer’s here, and the time is right for listening as families spend lots of time in the car: from pool to practice field or on trips to cross-country treks. Audiobooks turn those hectic travel times into shared literary experiences that banish boredom. Researchers have proven that audiobooks increase a listener’s vocabulary, comprehension skills, and fluency while educators advocate audiobooks for all ages, as listening is the fundamental language art which serves as the basis of reading, writing, and speaking skills. But most importantly, the power of a great story serves to connect listeners of all ages, creating bonds that foster those important assets that demonstrate CARE. Let your kids choose an audiobook CD or download titles from your public library to turn the family car into a traveling book club. Use the audio to spur discussion: What would you do if you were that character? How would you act in that situation? Can you predict what will

happen next? Talking about the audiobooks is a great way to foster comprehension and response to literature without making it seem like a school assignment. And, with a family listen, the enthusiasm will grow without trying. Everyone will be hooked!

We've put together a list of terrific audiobooks for family listening, selected to satisfy wide-ranging interests and ages. There are fabulous stand-alone titles that will introduce new ideas, new cultures, and new worlds. Plus, we recommend great series that will spark the “potato chip effect”—start with the first title in the car, and young listeners will just have to listen to the entire series on their own.

Check out each audio's summary for an overview, then listen to the audio clip to sample the treat that's in store for your child or your family when you listen together. If you need more suggestions, we recommend [Kids on the Go](#), an extensive list of audiobook titles from [AudioFile](#) for first grade through high school. If you're looking for audiobooks that you can share with teens, be sure to try the 14 free weeks of downloads available from [SYNC](#), pairing a contemporary YA title with a classic, or required reading list title each week.

The Audio Publishers Association 2012 Consumer Survey found that adults listen while commuting in the car and traveling during vacations. Parents note that the second most common time youth under age 18 listen to audios is during vacation travel. Load up the family car with audiobooks, a terrific literacy tool when school's out for the summer. Listen up and defeat the summer slide!

As summer reading is, and should be, a much broader, free-flowing experience than reading for curriculum purposes, these titles are categorized into younger listeners and older listeners. All of the titles in the younger category would (unless noted in the annotation) be acceptable for families with a wide range of ages, from Kindergarten to 7th grade. Older listeners encompass 8th grade and up.

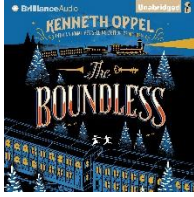
Summer Reading for Younger Listeners – Individual Titles



Bad Girls: Sirens, Jezebels, Murderesses, Thieves & Other Female Villains,

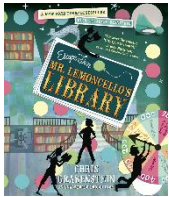
written by Jane Yolen and Heidi E.Y. Stemple, narrated by Barbara Rosenblat and the authors, Live Oak Media, 2014

Mother-daughter team Jane Yolen and Heidi Stemple examine the lives and possible motivation behind 26 of history's most notorious women, among them Delilah, Salome, Bloody Mary, and Lizzie Borden. Rosenblat delivers each story with delicious sly restraint while Yolen and Stemple provide humorous rationale for this bad behavior.



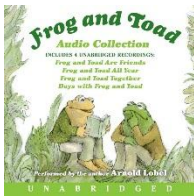
[*The Boundless*](#), written by Kenneth Oppel, narrated by Nick Podehl, Brilliance Audio, 2014

Oppel combines fantasy and adventure when Will Everett climbs aboard the longest train in the world for a voyage across Canada. Set upon by cut-throat brakemen and roaring Sasquatch, Will is rescued by the wily members of the Zircus Dante, who have their own secrets to guard. Into this wild fray steps narrator Nick Podehl, creating distinct and lively vocal interpretations for this large and varied cast of characters.



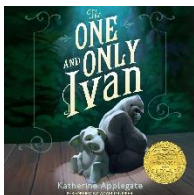
[*Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*](#), written by Chris Grabenstein, narrated by Jesse Bernstein, Listening Library, 2014

Enthusiastic and energetic narration portrays a dozen 12-year-olds invited to spend the night in the elusive Mr. Lemoncello's new library. Once there, the students discover that friendship, determination, and good library skills are needed to solve the puzzles that will allow them to escape the building and win the grand prize in this rollicking adventure story.



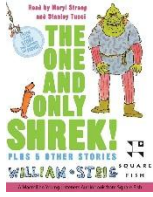
[*The Frog and Toad Audio Collection*](#), written and narrated by Arnold Lobel, HarperChildren's Audio, 2004

Beloved by beginning readers for over 45 years, the *Frog and Toad* series has an enduring place in children's literature. Author Arnold Lobel affectionately reads his timeless short chapter books *Frog and Toad Are Friends*, *Frog and Toad All Year*, *Frog and Toad Together*, and *Days with Frog and Toad*.



[*The One and Only Ivan*](#), written by Katherine Applegate, narrated by Adam Grupper, Recorded Books, 2013

The 2013 Newbery Medal winner highlights the plight of animals trapped at a roadside circus. Grupper is outstanding in his ability to define the various residents of the Exit 8 Big Top Mall and Video Arcade: the older, deep voice of silverback gorilla artist Ivan, or the young and vulnerable baby elephant, Ruby and, especially, the frenzied exuberance of the stray dog, Bob. An outstanding choice for family listening.



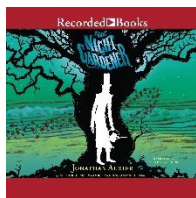
[*The One and Only Shrek! Plus 5 Other Stories*](#), written by William Steig, narrated by Meryl Streep and Stanley Tucci, Macmillan Young Listeners, 2007

This compilation of six of William Steig’s picture books communicates the beauty of his writing through the audio medium: *The Amazing Bone*, *Brave Irene*, *Spinky Sulks*, *Doctor De Soto*, *Caleb and Kate*, and the original *Shrek!* (which is nothing like the movie). Marvelous narration by Meryl Streep and Stanley Tucci reinvents these classic stories with performances that convey all of Steig’s colorful nuances solely through the power of their voices.



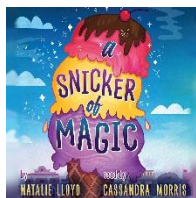
[*The Meaning of Maggie*](#), written by Megan Jean Sovren, narrated by Therese Plummer, Audible Studios, 2014

There have been scary, incomprehensible changes in 11-year-old Maggie Mayfield’s family since her dad’s legs “fell asleep” and he’s been confined to a wheelchair. Therese Plummer’s expert vocal interpretations convey the intense emotional ups and downs that Maggie describes in her memoir of this turbulent year.



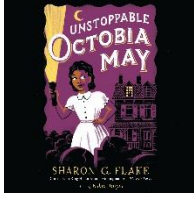
[*The Night Gardener*](#), written by Jonathan Auxier, narrated by Beverly A. Crick, Recorded Books, 2015

Jonathan Auxier’s spine-chilling ghost story offers a thoroughly engaging listen for tweens eager for a well-told tale tinged with horror. Beverly A. Crick’s British accent transports listeners to a lonely English manor house with mesmerizing, perfectly-paced storytelling that illuminates Auxier’s lovely language, literary allusions, and moral reflections on the value of trust and evil of greed.



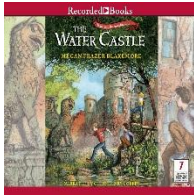
[*A Snicker of Magic*](#), written by Natalie Lloyd, narrated by Cassandra Morris, Scholastic Audiobooks, 2013

Felicity Pickle is in a quandary. She loves Midnight Gulch, but her wandering mama just can’t stay put. Morris narrates with a slight drawl that plunks listeners right down in this Southern mountain town with its sad history and lingering magic. Families will delight in Felicity’s magical words and will cheer as she and her new friends seek to right old wrongs.



[*Unstoppable Octobia May*](#), written by Sharon G. Flake, narrated by Bahni Turpin, Scholastic Audiobooks, 2014

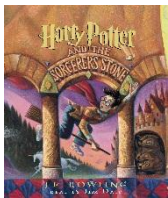
Convinced that her auntie’s new boarder is a vampire, 10-year-old Octobia May sets out to prove he’s up to no good in a hair-raising mystery set in the Jim Crow south. The fully-voiced reading showcases Turpin’s ability to add dimension to a multiplicity of characters, expanding the comedic elements of this complex, enjoyable story.



[*The Water Castle*](#), written by Megan Frazer Blakemore, narrated by Chris Henry Coffey, Recorded Books, 2014

Mystery and science fiction combine with alternating modern and historical narrative in a wholly believable tale enhanced by Coffey’s sturdy pacing and inflection. When Ephraim Appledore-Smith’s father is felled by a stroke, his mother moves their family to the ancestral home in Crystal Springs, Maine, a small town steeped in a legend of the local fountain of youth. Listeners will be breathless with anticipation as author and narrator build to the exciting climax.

Summer Reading for Younger Listeners – Series Titles

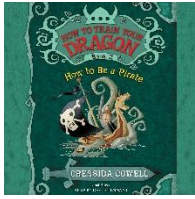


[*Harry Potter series*](#), written by J.K. Rowling, narrated by Jim Dale, Listening Library

Essential listening for all ages, whether a young listener encountering the wizarding world for the very first time, or a parent reliving a touchstone literary life experience. Jim Dale received the first Audio Publishers Association “Hall of Fame Award” for his tour-de-force achievement as the voice of the Harry Potter series, noting “each adventure is more riveting and exhilarating than its predecessor. The charm and humor of J.K. Rowling’s inventive magical world and its quirky and endearing characters are brought to full life by Jim Dale’s brilliant reading.”

- *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* (1999)
- *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1999)
- *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2000)
- *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000)
- *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003)
- *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005)

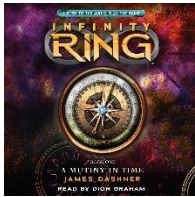
- *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007)



[How To Train Your Dragon](#), written by Cressida Cowell, narrated by David Tennant, Hachette

David Tennant performs Cowell’s popular series with a nimble and witty animation that will capture fans of the movies based on the books, and convert them to eager listeners. The heroic quests of young Viking Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III provide a showcase for Tennant’s ability to infuse dialog with slapstick humor and generate magical creatures through a cacophony of grunts and growls.

- *How to Train Your Dragon* (2013)
- *How to Be a Pirate* (2013)
- *How to Speak Dragonese* (2013)
- *How to Cheat a Dragon’s Curse* (2013)
- *How to Twist a Dragon’s Tale* (2013)
- *A Hero’s Guide to Deadly Dragons* (2013)
- *How to Ride a Dragon’s Storm* (2013)
- *How to Break a Dragon’s Heart* (2013)
- *How to Steal a Dragon’s Sword* (2014)
- *How to Seize a Dragon’s Jewel* (2014)
- *How to Betray a Dragon’s Hero* (2015)

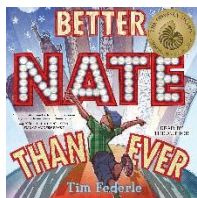


[The Infinity Ring](#), written by various authors, narrated by Dion Graham, Scholastic Audiobooks

Deftly combining science fiction with history, this series traces the efforts of two 5th-graders and their teen accomplice as they seek to repair history itself with the time-traveling power of the Infinity Ring. Dion Graham’s rich, dramatic narration captures listeners and guides them through a series written by six different top children’s authors. Be sure to extend reluctant reader’s enjoyment by suggesting the companion free online video games.

- *A Mutiny in Time* (2012)
- *Divide and Conquer* (2012)
- *The Trap Door* (2012)
- *Curse of the Ancients* (2013)
- *Cave of Wonders* (2013)

- *Behind Enemy Lines* (2013)
- *The Iron Empire* (2014)
- *Eternity* (2014)

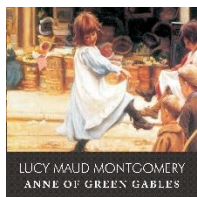


[The Nate Foster series](#), written and narrated by Tim Federle, Simon & Schuster Audio

Thirteen-year-old Nate is obsessed with Broadway musicals—so much so that he runs away from home in order to land a part in *E.T.: The Broadway Musical*. Author and Broadway star Tim Federle endearingly narrates his charming, humorous, semi-autobiographical works which lightly explore issues of family struggles, bullying, and sexual identity, entirely accessible for middle grade listeners.

- *Better Nate Than Ever* (2013)
- *Five, Six, Seven, Nate!* (2014)

Summer Reading for Older Listeners – Individual Titles



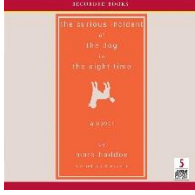
[Anne of Green Gables](#), written by Lucy Maud Montgomery, narrated by Shelly Frasier, Tantor Audio, 2003

The well-loved classic story of the true meaning of family features red-haired, freckled, Anne, a lively orphan mistakenly sent in place of a boy to help at the Cuthberts farm on Prince Edward Island in Nova Scotia. Frasier’s pacing and inflection capture the rhythms of early 20th century speech, lending an enhanced sense of genuineness to this fine production.



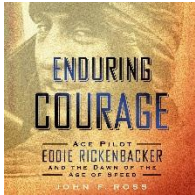
[Black Dove, White Raven](#), written by Elizabeth Wein, narrated by Lauren Saunders and Maanuv Thiara, Bolinda Audio, 2015

Themes of flight and freedom are woven together in this historical novel set in 1935 Ethiopia, on the verge of war with fascist Italy. Teens Em (white) and Teo (black), their idyllic life shattered by inhumanity, politics, and bureaucratic absurdity, are well-wrought through the voices of Saunders and Thiara, who bring youthful, emotional, and cultural legitimacy to their narration.



[*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*](#), written by Mark Haddon, narrated by Jeff Woodman, Recorded Books, 2003

Listeners will gain insight into the perceptions of a teen on the Asperger's spectrum as 15-year-old Christopher Boone investigates the mysterious death of a neighbor's dog. Narrator Jeff Woodman flawlessly portrays a diverse cast of characters, opening a window into the hearts and minds of those different from ourselves.



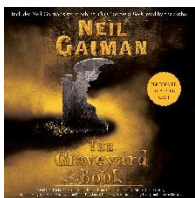
[*Enduring Courage: Ace Pilot Eddie Rickenbacker and the Dawn of the Age of Speed*](#), written by John F. Ross, narrated by Edward Herrmann, Macmillan Audio, 2014

Rickenbacker's biography embodies the All-American success story: immigrant parents, rough-and-tumble childhood, adventurous thrill-seeking, love of technology, WWI war hero, self-made corporate leader. Edward Herrmann provides a sure-fire listen with edge-of-your-seat action, performed with sympathetic naturalism by a master of narrative nonfiction.



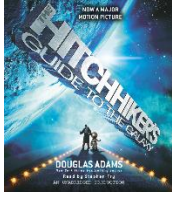
[*Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*](#), written by Isabel Quintero, narrated by Kyla Garcia, Listening Library, 2014

In a series of diary entries over the course of her senior year, Mexican American Gabi—Gabriella—struggles with family, friends, and self-image, as she seeks her own answer to what it means to be a good girl. Garcia's flawless Spanish and culturally authentic pacing and inflection help to create this exceptional package.



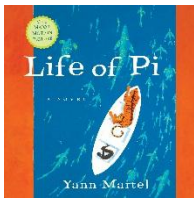
[*The Graveyard Book*](#), written by Neil Gaiman, narrated by a full cast, Harper Audio, 2014

In this enchanting fantasy, the human boy Bod is raised by a caring community of supernatural beings in a ghostly graveyard. Author Neil Gaiman superbly voiced the original Audie Award-winning audio of his Newbery and Carnegie Award-winning novel, but this new full-cast version takes audiobook production to a sublime level. Enthralling and magical, this is an unforgettable listening experience.



[*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*](#), written by Douglas Adams, narrated by Stephen Fry, Books on Tape, 2005

Stephen Fry's narration wrings every drop of humor from Douglas Adam's science-fiction classic through a voicing that varies from deadpan commentary by spaceship stowaways Ford Prefect and Arthur Dent to hilarious oddball alien encounters as the sole survivors of the human race travel the galaxy in search of the answer to life, the universe, and everything.



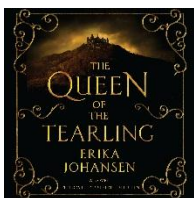
[*Life of Pi*](#), written by Yann Martel, narrated by Jeff Woodman, HighBridge, 2003

Told as a reminiscing interview, Pi recalls being stranded, as a 16-year-old, for 227 days aboard a lifeboat with a Bengal tiger companion. Jeff Woodman's narration clearly defines the shifting perspectives in Yann Martel's award-winning adventure novel, imbuing the production with fantastical realism that will trigger conversations pondering the allegorical meaning of Pi's journey.



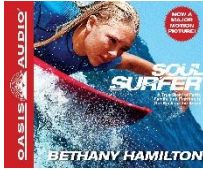
[*The Martian*](#), written by Andy Weir, narrated by R.C. Bray, Podium Publishing, 2013; CD edition distributed by Brilliance Audio, 2014

Science-fiction survival epic *The Martian* provides compelling appeal for mature teens, in a best-seller with occasional strong language, originally published for adults. R.C. Bray's thrilling narration propels listeners through shifting perspectives, from a lone American stranded on Mars, to his crew members en route back to Earth, and to the NASA team desperate to save the castaways.



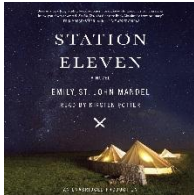
[*The Queen of the Tearling*](#), written by Erika Johansen, narrated by Katherine Kellgren, HarperCollins, 2014

In a future world that holds all the attributes of a medieval fairy tale, 19-year-old Kelsea must emerge from hiding and claim the throne. Narrator Katherine Kellgren conjures a feisty heroine in a fully-realized fantasy world through her impeccable performance of this adult novel, providing listeners with an enchanting tale that raises questions on honor and political power.



[*Soul Surfer: A True Story of Faith, Family, and Fighting to Get Back on the Board*](#), written by Bethany Hamilton, narrated by Eleni Pappageorge, Oasis, 2011

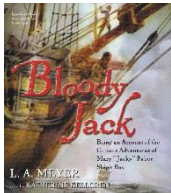
Bethany Hamilton shares the inspiring story of her life before and after losing an arm to a shark attack. Buoyed by her family and her Christian faith, Hamilton’s story of courage and spiritual determination is well-served by Eleni Pappageorge’s sturdy, uplifting performance.



[*Station Eleven*](#), written by Emily St. John Mandel, narrated by Kirsten Potter, Books on Tape, 2014

Emily St. John Mandel’s National Book Award-winning novel details the results of a disturbingly possible flu pandemic in a work ideal for mature teens looking for a literary twist on the dystopian genre. Narrator Kirsten Potter’s subtle, evocative voice and smooth pacing provides clarity during flashbacks while forging strong connections with an array of characters as survivors explore the role of the arts, culture, and community in the new political structure.

Summer Reading for Older Listeners – Series Titles

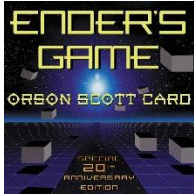


[*Bloody Jack Adventures*](#), written by L.A. Meyer, narrated by Katherine Kellgren, Listen & Live Audio

Katherine Kellgren embodies the roguish Mary/Jacky Faber from her beginnings on the streets of 18th century London to her life on the high seas and beyond. Creating a lively pantheon of characters with her vocal genius, Kellgren leads listeners from laughter to tears through 12 volumes of Meyer’s swashbuckling adventure series.

- *Bloody Jack* (2007)
- *Curse of the Blue Tattoo* (2008)
- *Under the Jolly Roger* (2008)
- *In the Belly of the Bloodhound* (2009)
- *Mississippi Jack* (2009)
- *My Bonny Light Horseman* (2009)
- *Rapture of the Deep* (2010)
- *The Wake of the Lorelei Lee* (2010)
- *The Mark of the Golden Dragon* (2011)

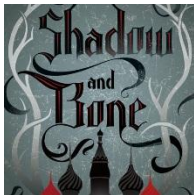
- *Viva Jacqueline!* (2012)
- *Boston Jacky* (2013)
- *Wild Rover No More* (2014)



[The Ender's Game Series](#), written by Orson Scott Card, narrated by a full cast, Macmillan Audio

Orson Scott Card received the 2008 Margaret A. Edwards Award honoring his significant and lasting contribution to writing for teens for his Hugo and Nebula Award-winning novel *Ender's Game*. Performed by a full-cast, these audio productions create a dazzling cinematic experience and bonus commentary by the author provides insight into his work.

- *Ender's Game: Special 20th Anniversary Edition* (2002)
- *Speaker for the Dead* (2002)
- *Xenocide* (2004)
- *Children of the Mind* (2004)



[The Grisha Trilogy](#), written by Leigh Bardugo, narrated by Lauren Fortgang, Brilliance Audio

Magic, mystery, and monsters mix in Ravka, a troubled country reminiscent of tsarist Russia, divided by a bleak, dark expanse known as the Shadow Fold. With subtle character voicing, Lauren Fortgang draws listeners into the story of Alina Starkov, a self-effacing orphan who discovers untapped magical powers that can either save or destroy her people. Listeners will be eager to learn the secrets of the royal court, the beautiful Grisha, and the powerful, charismatic Darkling.

- *Shadow and Bone* (2013)
- *Siege and Storm* (2013)
- *Ruin and Rising* (2014)

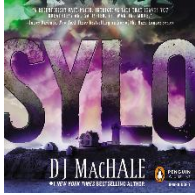


[The Raven Cycle](#), written by Maggie Stiefvater, narrated by Will Patton, Scholastic Audiobooks

Mystical and masterful, Will Patton's narration perfectly interprets author Stiefvater's mythic thrillers that chronicle the quest of five teens to awaken the powers of a buried Welsh king. Slipping easily from the feminine voice of small-town psychic

Blue to the privileged masculine confidence of Gansey and his prep school cohorts, Patton conveys the rural Virginia setting, supernatural mood, and romantic undertones with deft assurance.

- *Raven Boys* (2012)
- *The Dream Thieves* (2013)
- *Blue Lily, Lily Blue* (2014)



[SYLO Chronicles](#), written by D.J. MacHale, narrated by Andrew Bates

From a bucolic life on an island off the coast of Maine to the madness of a world at war, listeners will eagerly follow the exploits of 14-year-old Tucker Pierce and his friends as they rocket from one terrifying event to another in MacHale's thrilling cinematic trilogy, held together by the measured pacing and conversational tone of narrator Andrew Bates.

- *SYLO* (Dreamscape, 2013)
- *Storm* (Dreamscape, 2014)
- *Strike* (Penguin, 2014)