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Review of Gotcha Good: Nonfiction Books to Get Kids Excited About Reading

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Kristine Lynn Still

**GOTCHA GOOD: NONFICTION BOOKS TO GET KIDS EXCITED
ABOUT READING**

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This volume is the fourth addition to the excellent collection of “Gotcha” guides. Its focus on nonfiction is critical as educators strive to increase the use of nonfiction in both library and classroom settings. As the text *Exploring the Literature of Fact* (2003) so eloquently reminds us, “Children don’t leave their curiosity at the schoolroom door. They bring it into their classrooms, along with their fears, their fantasies, and their dreams for the future.” This curiosity often sparks learning that persists long after the bell has rung – and sometimes continues throughout life. Regardless of a child’s area of interest, whether rocks, horses, dinosaurs, medieval weaponry, outer space, or art, nonfiction books can fuel this curiosity. These are the books that answer children’s questions about the universe – about other people, places, and things children encounter in their daily lives. Too often, though, we teachers don’t capitalize on our youngsters’ fascination with exploring facts. Instead, we fill our classrooms with a plethora of stories — fairy tales, fantasies, and realistic tales — ignoring the excitement for reading that information books might ignite” (Moss, p. 1).

This highly useful and updated resource is appropriate for anyone involved in encouraging children to read and enjoy nonfiction selections. This text is particularly geared to audiences of public and school librarians as well as elementary and middle grade teachers. The over 1,000 selection annotations presented in this edition have been well reviewed as well as kid tested and are appropriate for readers in grades 3 through 8. All selection titles were published between 2005 and 2007 with a few titles outside of that range also included for good measure.

The selections in this edition represent eight highly successful authors. This nonfiction guide is divided into seven chapters which include the following; American Journeys, People to Know, Around the World and Through the Ages, Animals, Science, Playing with Words, and Monsters, Mysteries, Mummies, and Other Quirky Books. Select authors include Kathleen Krull, Ken Mochizuki, Jacob Berkowitz, Steve Jenkins, Sally Walker, Loree Griffin Burns, Catherine Thimmesh, and Kelly Milner Halls.

Each chapter is filled with book covers and lists of features and facts about the selected works highlighted in the chapter as well as the grade appropriateness for each. In addition, for select authors, their top 10 picks for book talks are offered as well. This volume includes indexes by title as well as author for ease of navigating through its pages.

This edition is a must for those librarians and teachers passionate about integrating meaningful and high quality nonfiction into daily instructional activities.

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