

**NONFICTION GEMS  
FOR KIDS & TEENS  
FROM TEXAS  
TOPAZ**



[txla.org/topaz](http://txla.org/topaz)

# ABOUT US



**CANDACE  
HUDSON**

LIBRARIAN  
MESQUITE ISD  
CHUDSON@MESQUITEISD.ORG



**RACHEL  
ATH**

PUBLIC SERVICES LIBRARIAN  
RACHEL.ASSELIN@STTHOM.EDU



**BETHNI  
KING**

YOUTH SERVICES LIBRARIAN  
GEORGETOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BETHNI.KING@GEORGETOWN.ORG



**CURREN  
MCLANE**

LIBRARY DIRECTOR  
AZLE MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
CMCLANE@CITYOFAZLE.ORG



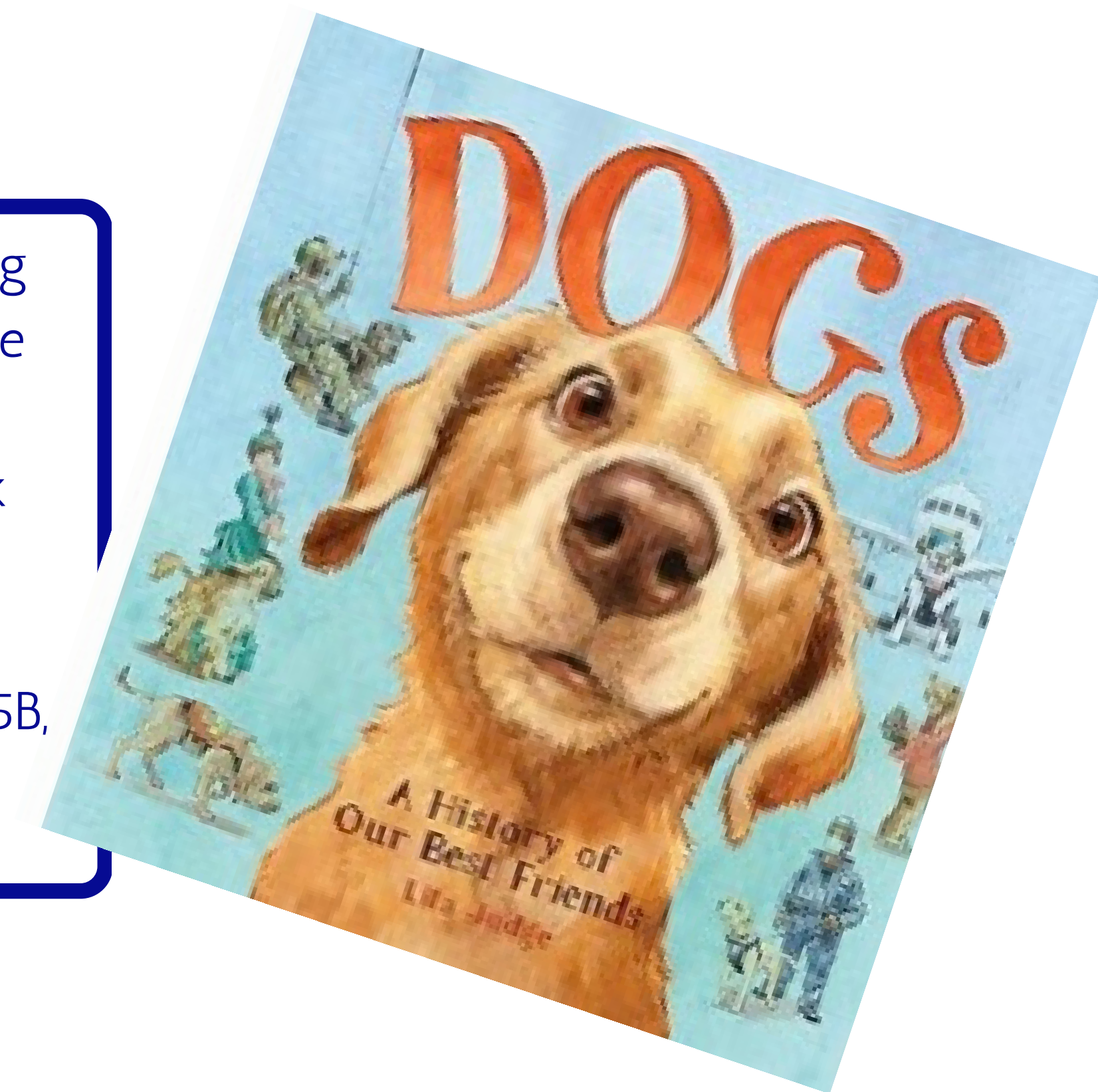
**KRISTI  
STARR**

LIBRARY MEDIA DIRECTOR  
MUSTANG PS  
STARRKR@MUSTANGPS.ORG



# DOGS: A HISTORY OF OUR BEST FRIENDS BY LITA JUDGE

- Create a timeline of the history of dogs from being wild to domestic. Read Write Think.org - Interactive Digital Timeline
- Research the different ways dogs are put to work (rescue, service, etc.)
- How to care for a dog: for the younger students
- TEKS: Social Studies- K.14C; 1.9A, 1.16B, 1.7A; 2.15B, 2.16AC; 3.2, 3.14ABC; 4.19BC, 5.23B

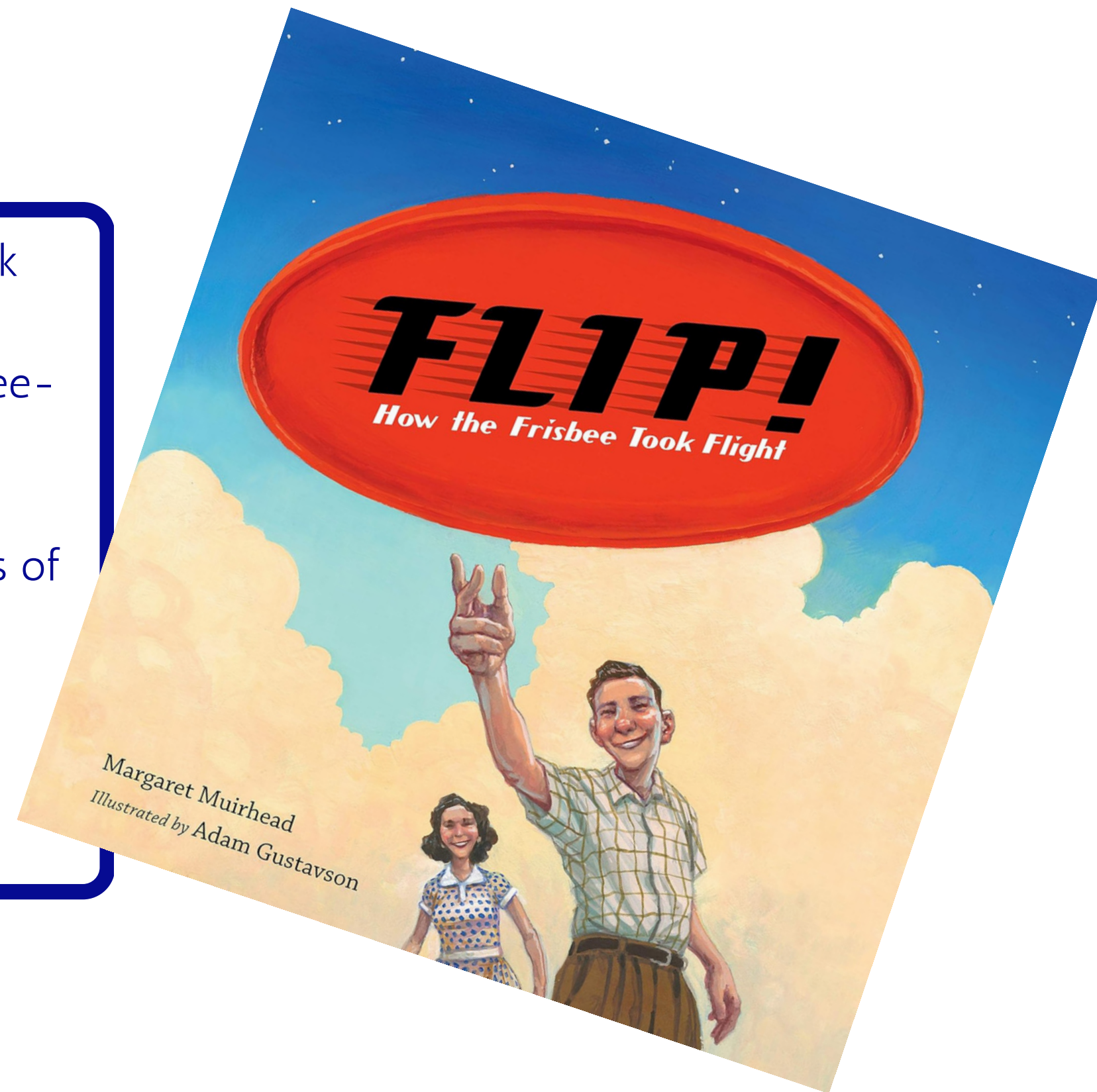


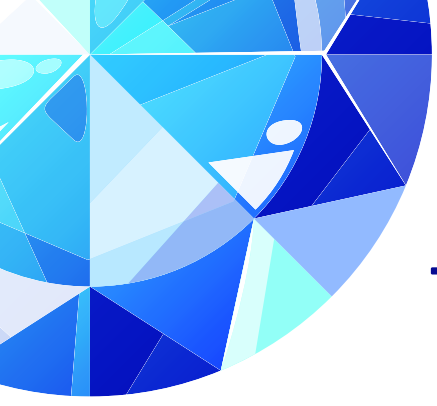


# FLIP! HOW THE FRISBEE TOOK FLIGHT

## MARGARET MUIRHEAD

- Stem Challenge: Using pie plates or paper plates design a disk that students can test its flight. (Author has ideas posted online) <https://homemadecity.com/tag/flip-how-the-frisbee-took-flight/>
- Research other popular toys within that time period.
- Examine the effects of the Roswell UFO hysteria on the sales of the Frisbee (cause/effect).
- TEKS: Science- 3.2A; 4.2A; 5.2A  
ELA - 3.7ABC, 3.9Dii, 3.13ABCDEFGH; 4.6DEF, 4.7ABC, 4.13ABCEDFGH; 5.7ABC, 5.13ABCEDEGH

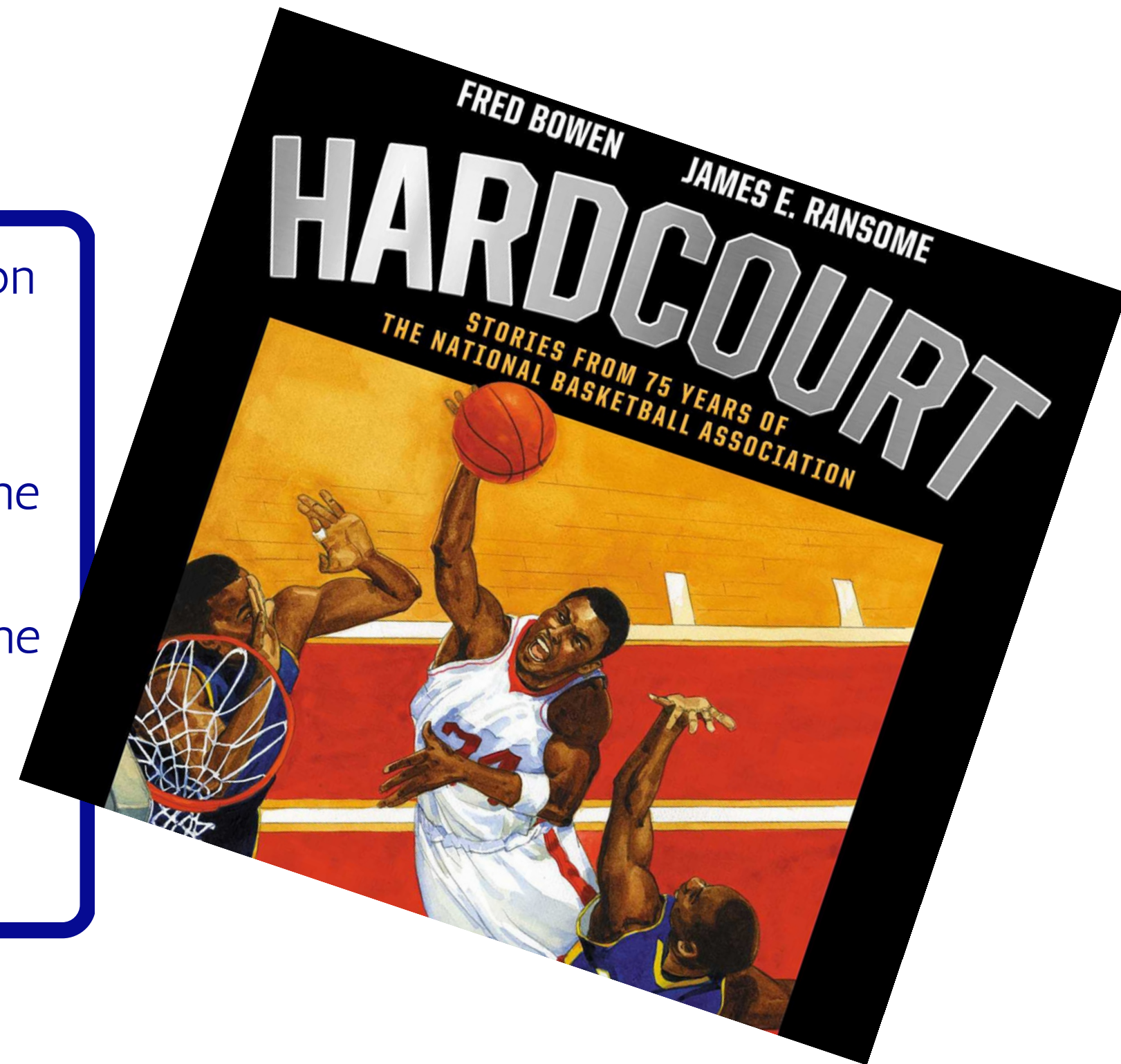




# HARDCOURT: STORIES FROM 75 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION

## FRED BOWEN

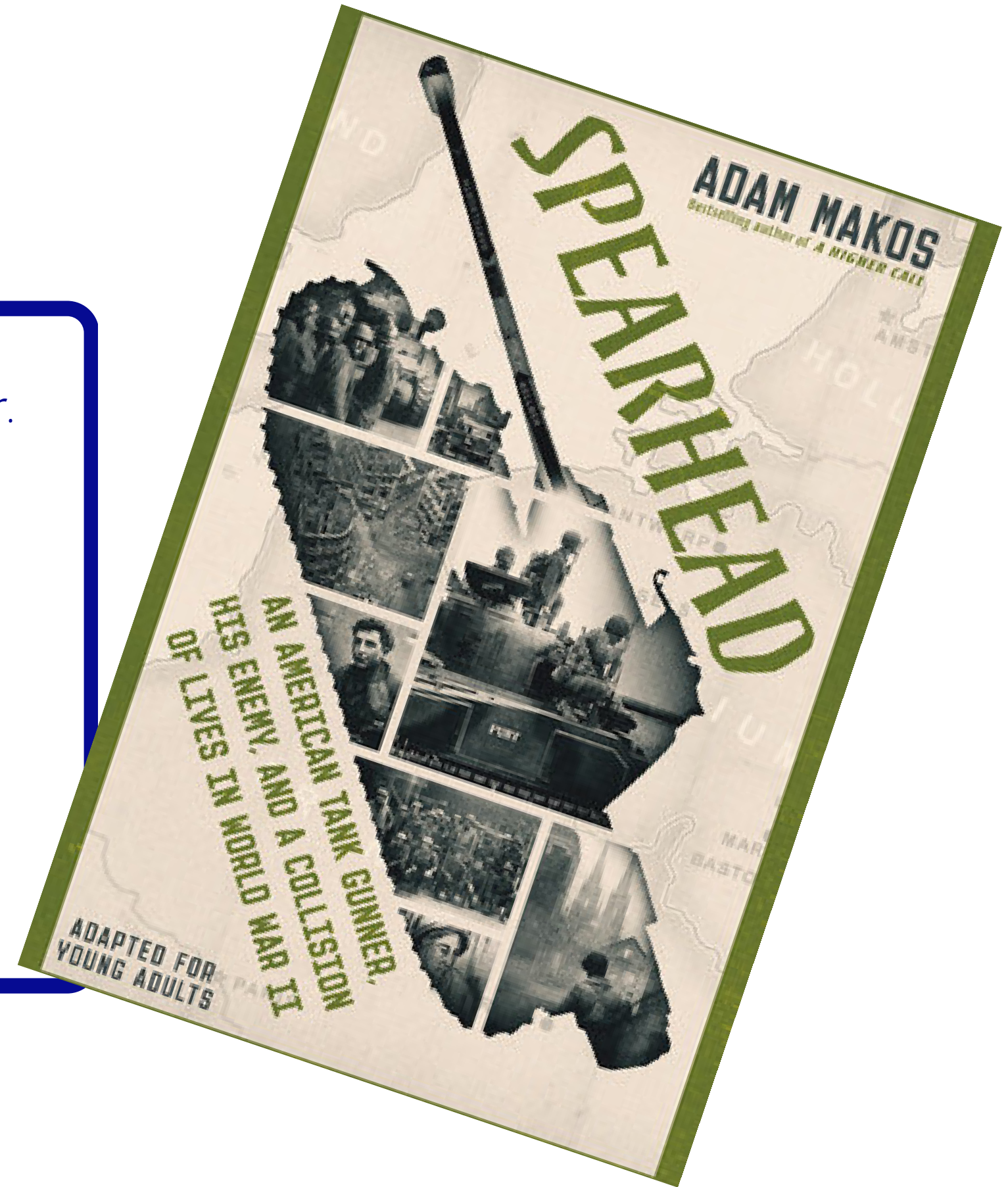
- STEM Challenge: Code Spheros to drive into baskets on the ball. They get a turn every time they answer a question over the book correctly.
- Create a flyer or advertisement over each quarter of the book (beg. of the league towards current league standards) highlighting the different rules/aspects of the game.
- TEKS: 3-5 Technology - 1.A, 6.A  
Social Studies - 6.1, 6.2AC, 6.14C, 6.19, 6.21

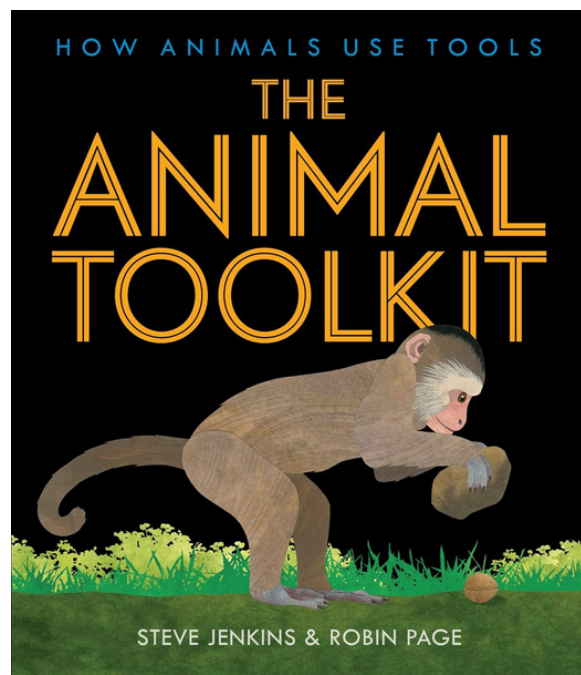




# **SPEARHEARD: AN AMERICAN TANK GUNNER, HIS ENEMY, AND A COLLISION OF LIVES IN WORLD WAR II ADAM MARKOS**

- Compare and Contrast the American point of view of Clarence Smoyer with the German soldier Gustav Schaefer.
- Make a diary entry from the front lines in a first person point of view
- Online Battleship
- Map of the routes of the 3rd Armored Division
- TEKS: Geography - 8A, 14, 15, 17, 23  
World History - 1F, 12ABC, 13A, 15C, 18, 20B, 21D  
,27CD, 28ABD, 29A, 31  
U.S History - 2, 4E, 7E, 26B, 28BD, 30, 31



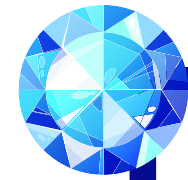


# THE ANIMAL TOOLKIT: HOW ANIMALS USE TOOLS BY ROBIN PAGE & STEVE JENKINS



## Program Idea #1: Nature Walk

Get outside and observe! Take students on a walk to observe animal behaviors in the wild. Make binoculars out of paper towel rolls to observe the animals, and bring along paper and pencils to sketch the different "tools" they see animals using.



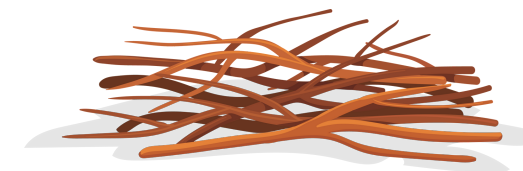
## Program Idea #2: Build a Tool!

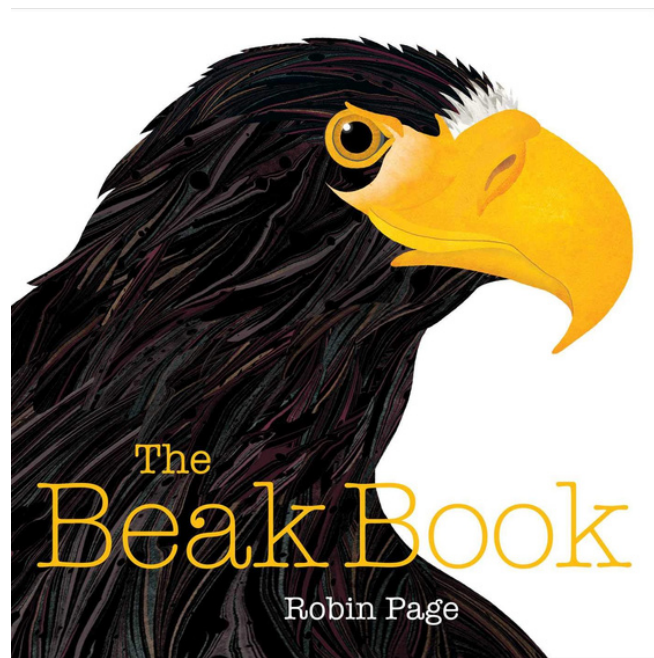
Give students an assortment of age appropriate craft tools (paper clips, pipe cleaners, etc.) and have them design a tool to help them in their daily lives. It can be as simple or as complicated as the students want!



## Program Idea #3: Scavenger Hunt

Use this discussion guide and take students on a nature scavenger hunt for tools in the wild. Have them find each tool and identify which animals use them after reading the book.





# THE BEAK BOOK BY ROBIN PAGE

## Program Idea #1: Build a Beak!

After reading the book, encourage students to construct their own bird beaks out of basic craft materials (popsicle sticks, notecards, etc.) and see which beak works best at picking up different types of food. Full instructions are available [here](#).

## Program Idea #2: Bird Beaks Lab

Wild Earth Lab has a wonderful Bird Beak Lab to teach students about bird adaptations! The students will simulate using different beaks to pick up food sources. After selecting a beak (chopsticks for example), time the students to see how fast they can pick up different food sources.

## Program Idea #2: Bird Beaks Lab (Cont.)

Students will be able to discover which beaks are the best at "catching" food through trial and error. Have them share their findings at the end of the experiment with the class!



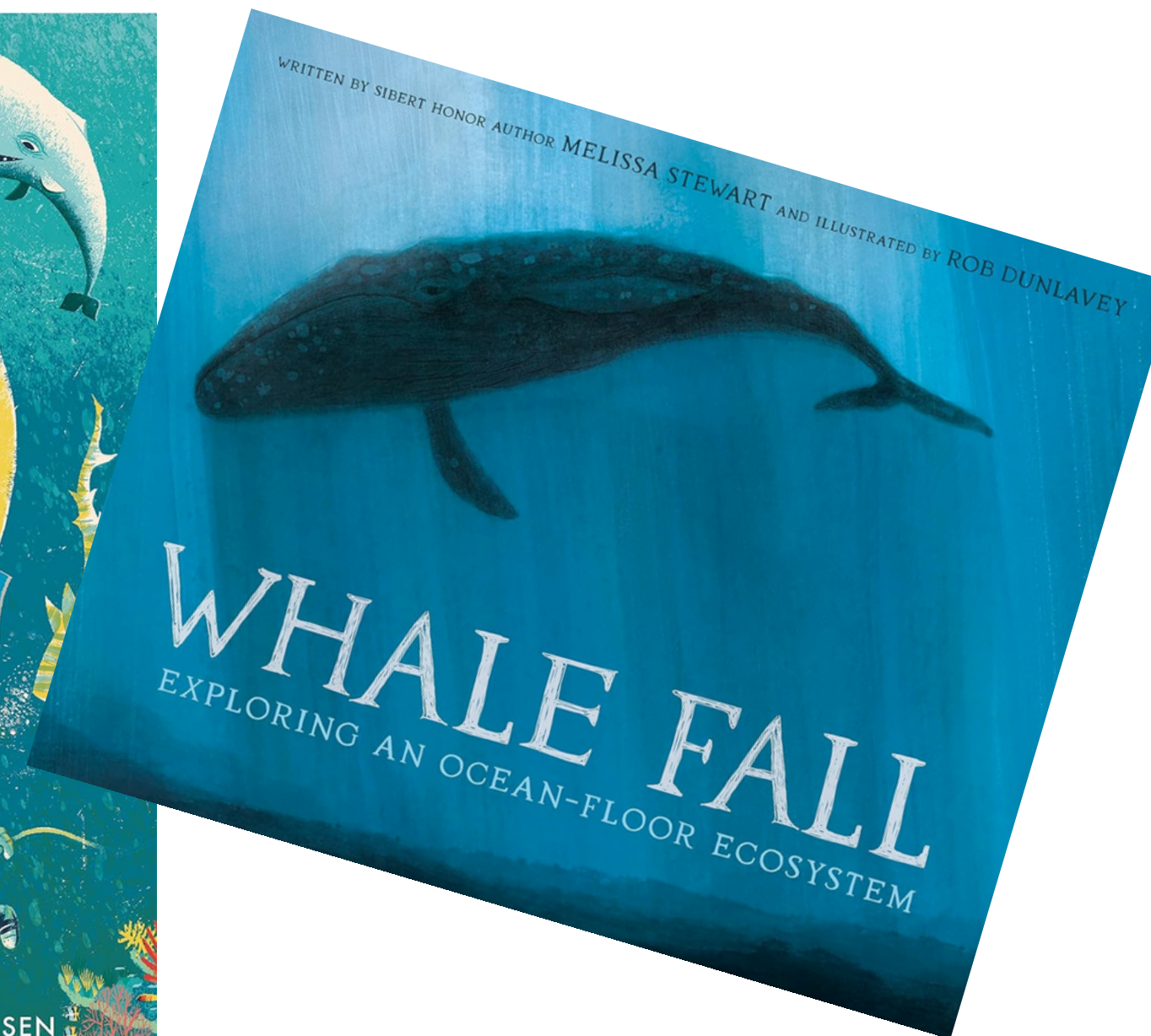
# EXPLORING THE OCEAN FLOOR!

## Book Titles

- From Shore to the Ocean Floor  
by Gill Arbutnott
- Whale Fall: Exploring an Ocean Floor Eco-System by Melissa Stewart

## Program Ideas:

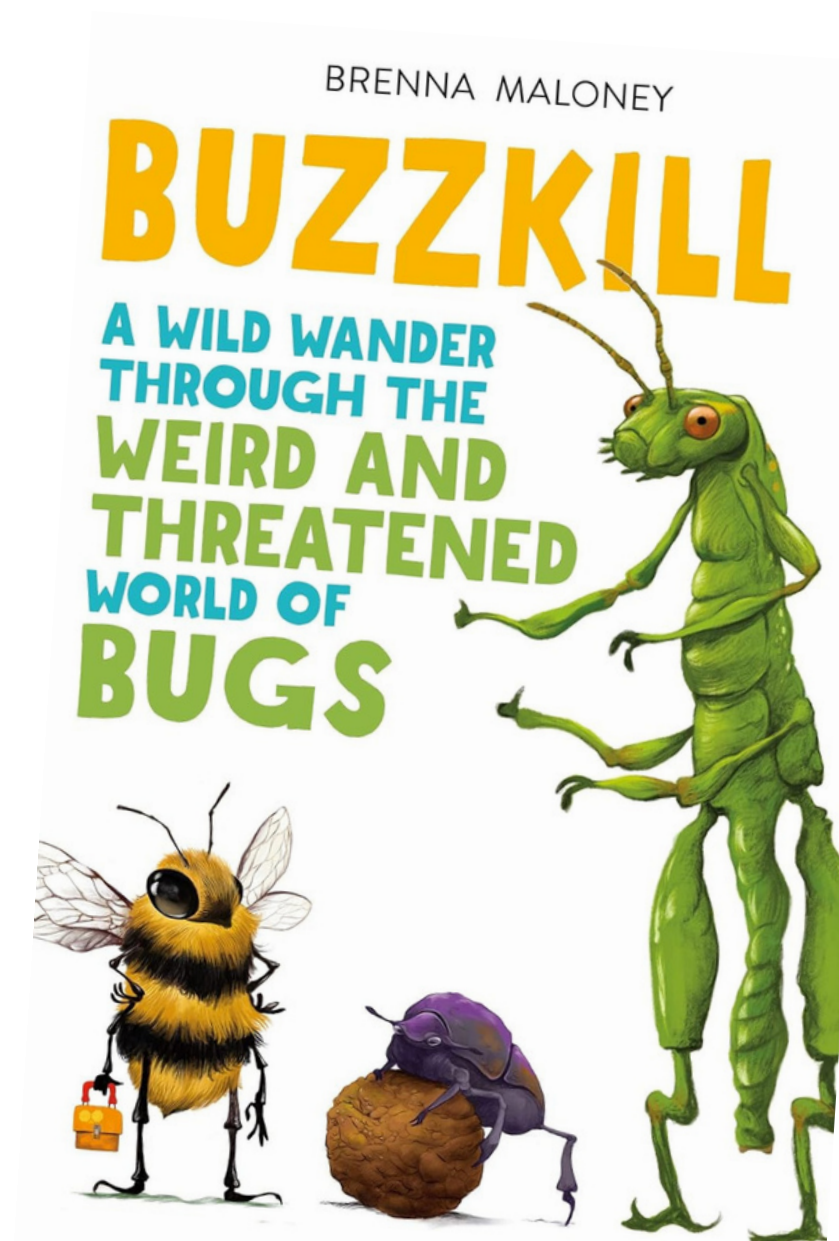
- Use shaving cream to recreate the different topography of the Ocean Floor
- Create a "creatures of the deep" museum using basic craft tools (paper plates, tissue boxes) to craft a deep sea animal along with a small report of the animal.



# **BUZZKILL: A WILD WANDER THROUGH THE WEIRD AND THREATENED WORLD OF BUGS**

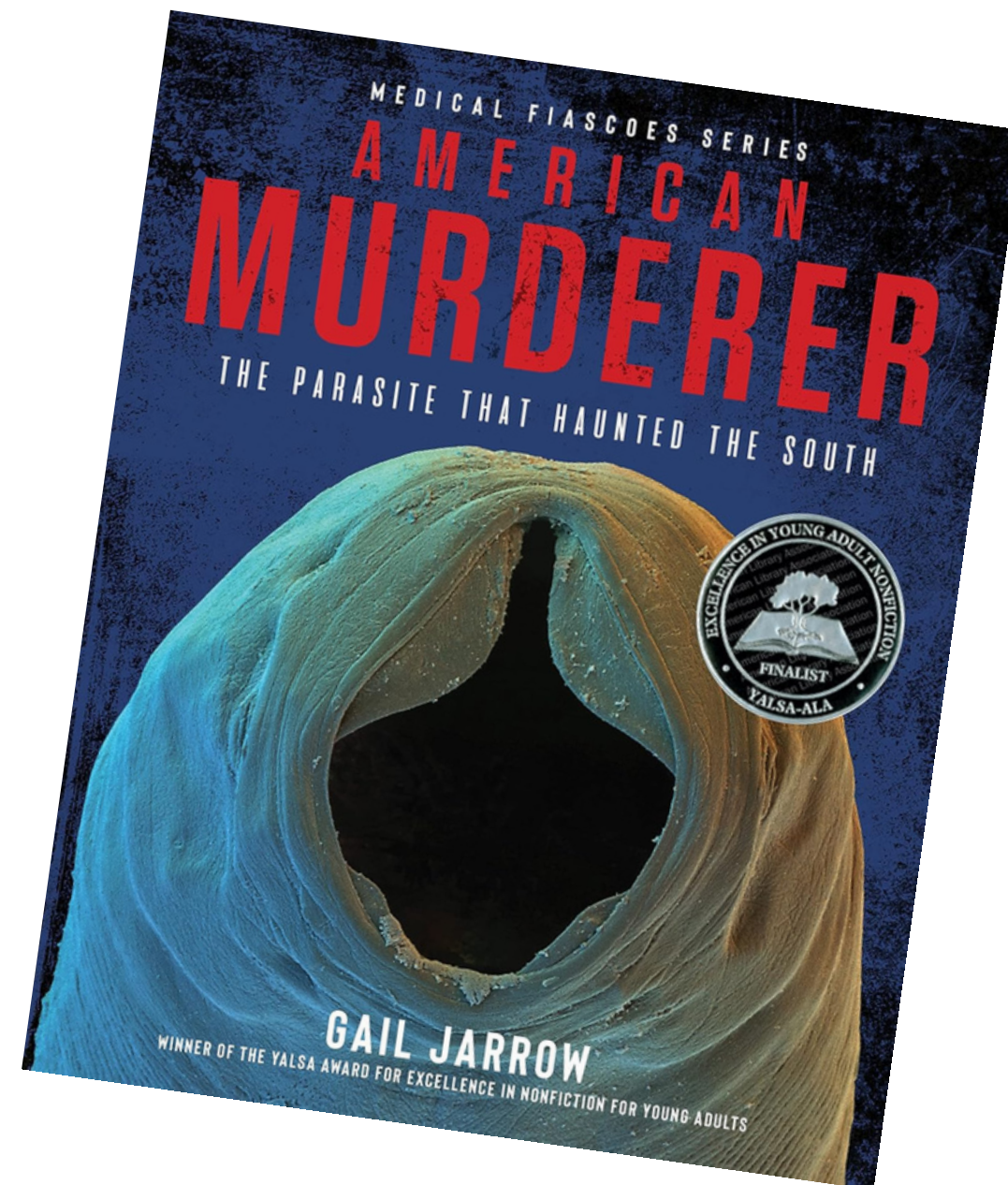
**BY BRENNA MALONEY**

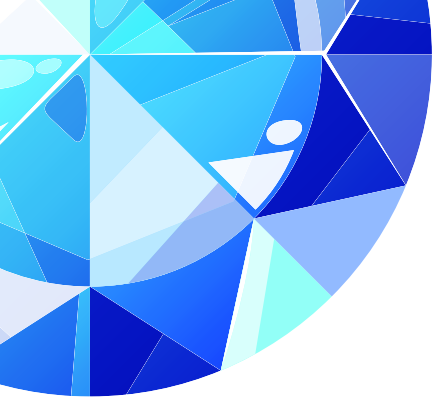
- Explore the [interactive insect collection lab](#) from New Mexico State University
- [Create a Pest Taxonomy lab](#) to help students identify insects and how they are organized by scientists
- Have a local natural science museum bring their "Bugs on the Go!" outreach program to your students



# AMERICAN MURDERER: THE PARASITE THAT HAUNTED THE SOUTH BY GAIL JARROW

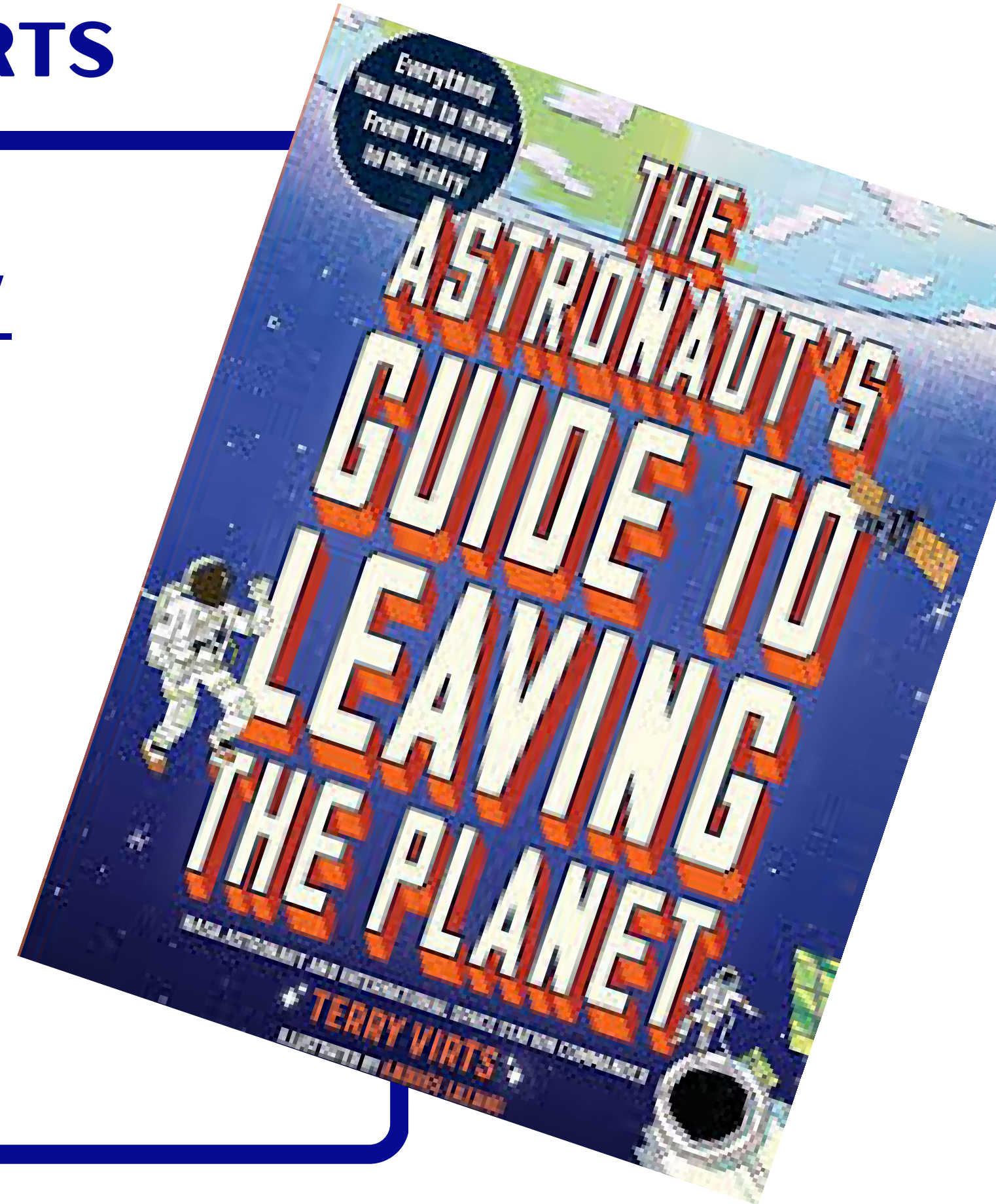
- As the dangers of hookworm infections became known, the book features posters from the public health campaign. Have students design their own public health campaign posters after researching a disease of their choosing.
- The publisher has an excellent discussion guide for a book club setting.





# THE ASTRONAUT'S GUIDE TO LEAVING THE PLANET BY TERRY VIRTS

- Learn about astronaut food:  
<https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/esdmd/hhp/space-food-systems/>
- Let students sample freeze dried astronaut food
- Guest speaker: NASA Solar System Ambassadors :  
<https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/solar-system-ambassadors/directory/>



# THE LITTLE SPACECRAFT THAT COULD BY JOYCE LAPIN

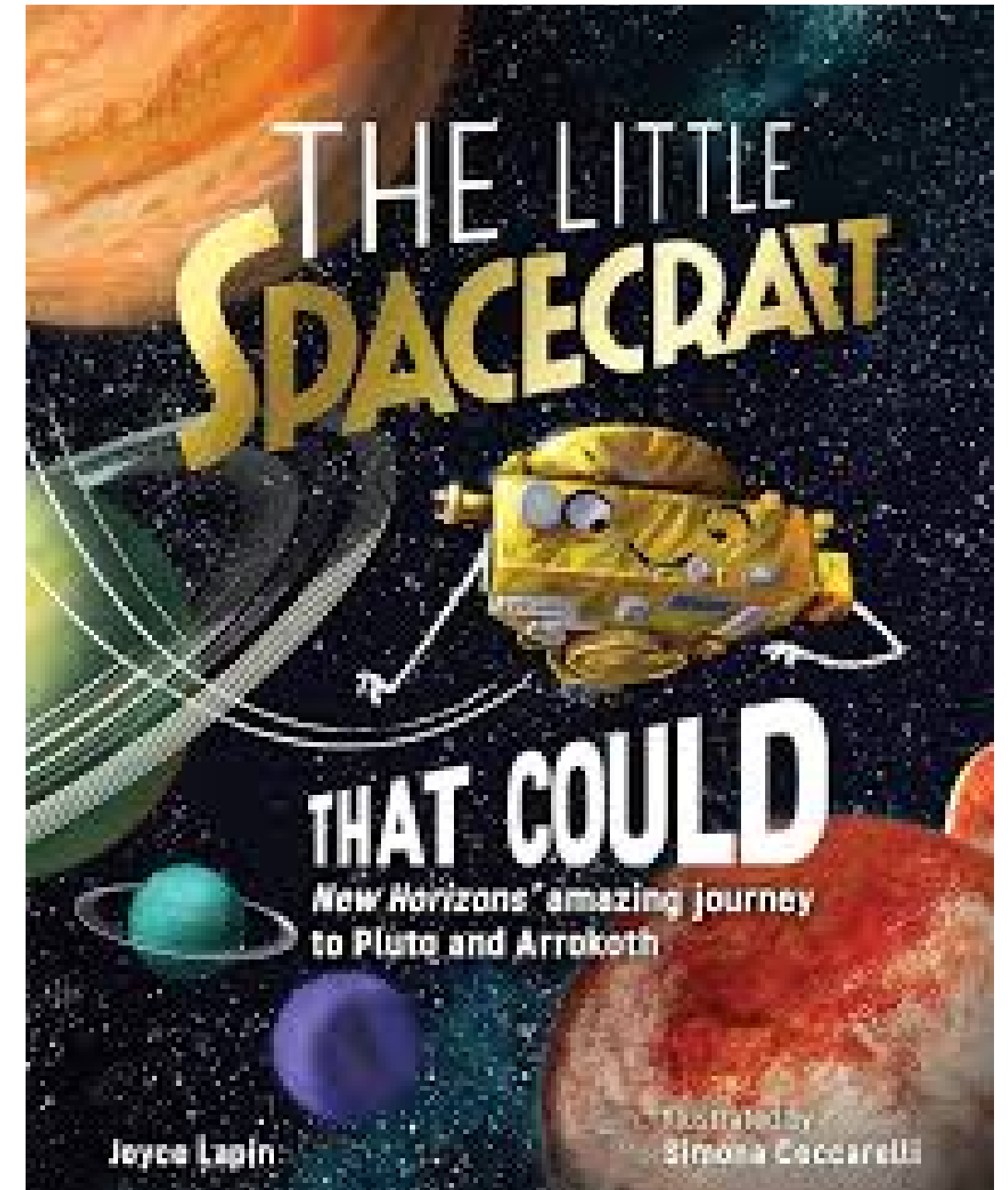


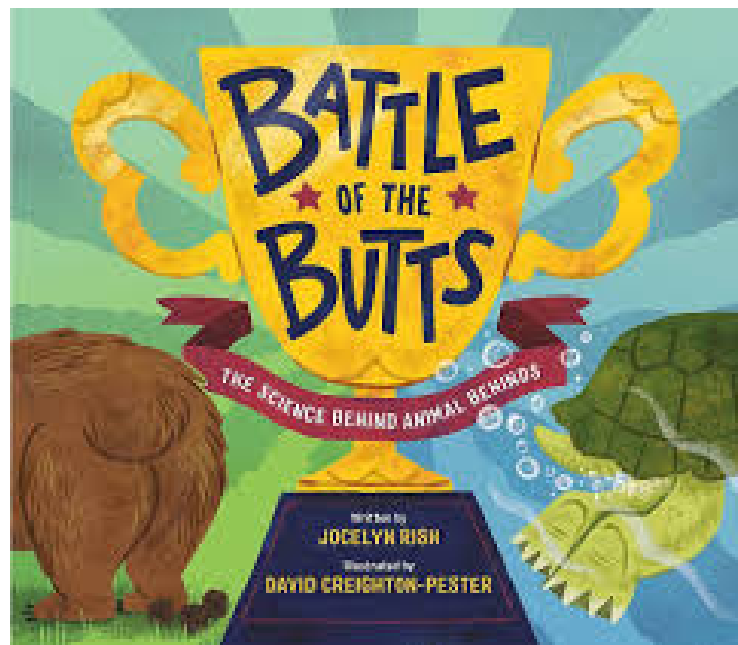
- New Horizons Flyover of Pluto

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1fPhhTT2Oo>

- Create a timeline of New Horizon's trip including it's new expanded mission
- Solar System Bead Activity

[https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/edu/teach/activity/\\_solar-system-bead-activity/](https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/edu/teach/activity/_solar-system-bead-activity/)





# BATTLE OF THE BUTTS: THE SCIENCE BEHIND ANIMAL BEHINDS BY JOCELYN RISH

## Program Idea #1: Battle of the Butts

Follow along with the book and rate the various posteriors from Terrific Tushie to Boring Backside then choose a champion



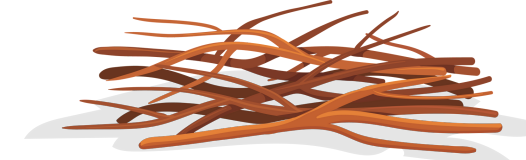
## Program Idea #2: Single Elimination Tournament

Find a 10 team single elimination bracket online and have a patootie playoff



## Program Idea #3: Candy Scat Identification

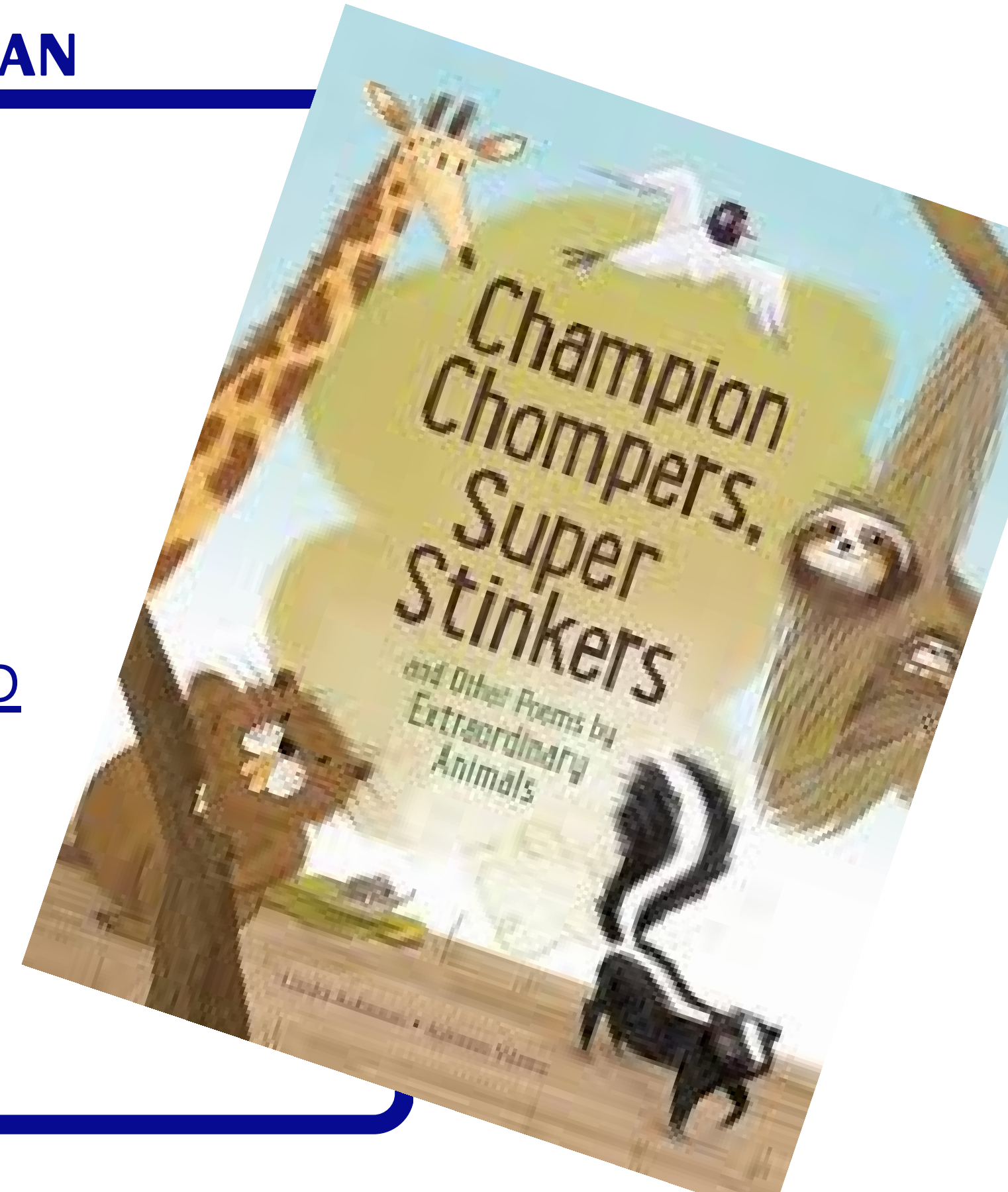
Use various candy to practice identifying and matching scat to the correct animal rump  
<https://naturalsciences.org/docs/special-exhibits/CandyPoo.pdf>

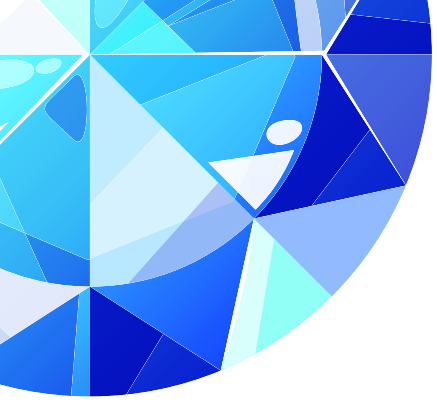




# CHAMPION CHOMPERS, SUPER STINKERS AND OTHER POEMS BY EXTRAORDINARY ANIMALS BY LINDA ASHMAN

- Write a mask poem about an animal of your choice
- Explore other record setting animals:  
<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/records/showcase/animals>

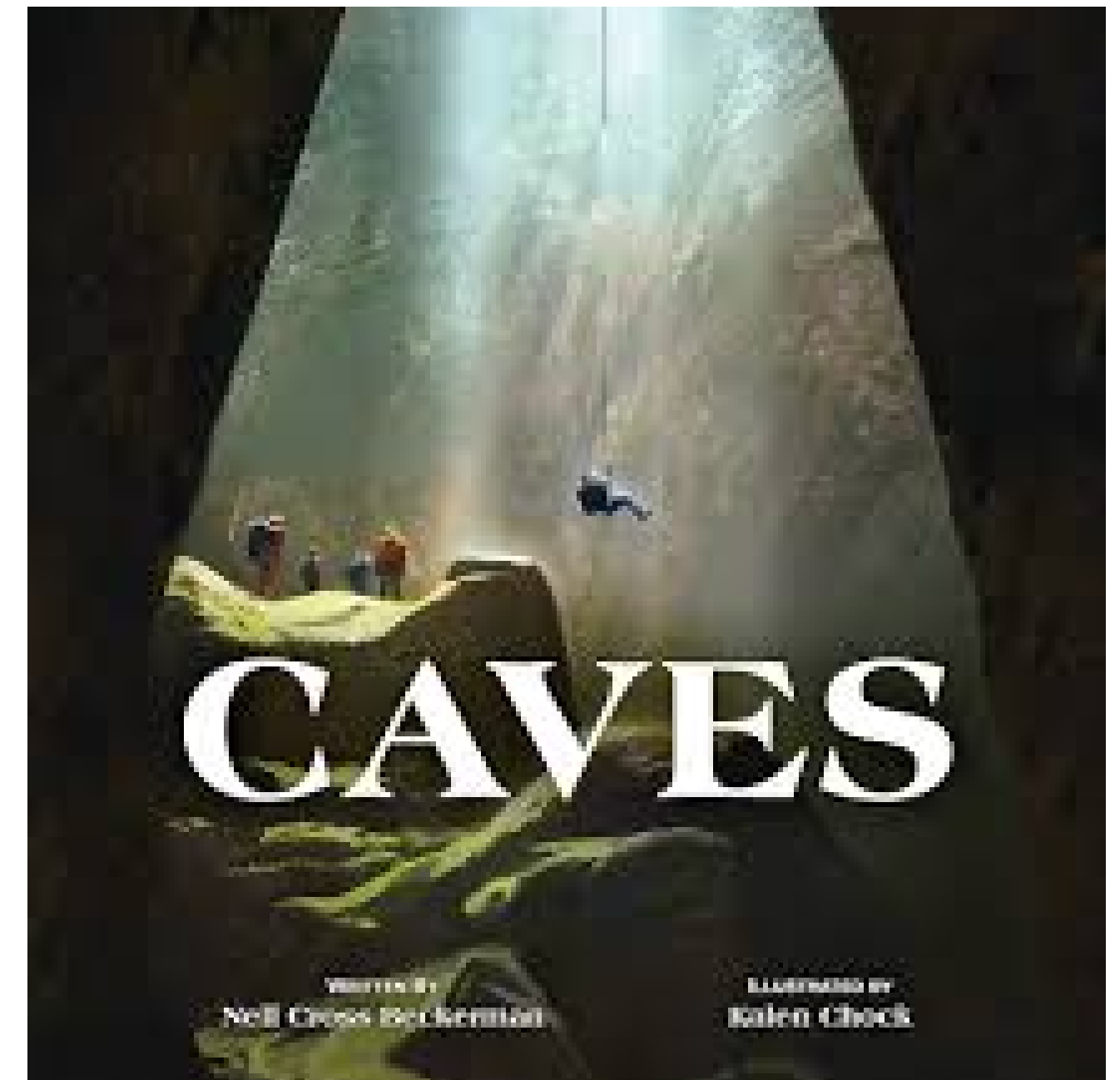




# CAVES

**BY NELL CROSS BECKERMAN**

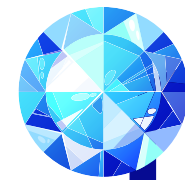
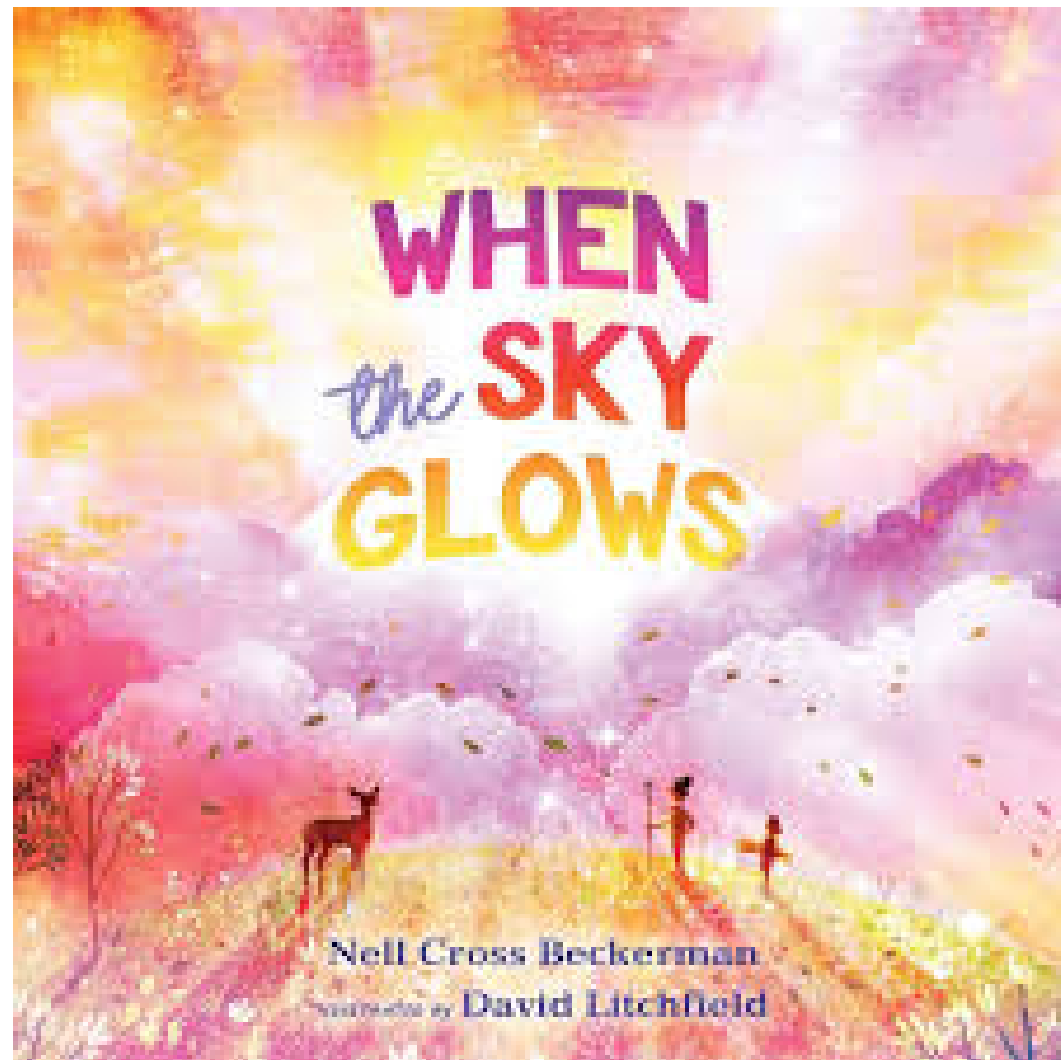
- Create cave paintings: Brown paper plus crayons, chalk pastels, markers
- Grow Crystals: Stalagmites or stalagtites:
- <https://springfieldmuseums.org/blog/stem-experiment-grow-crystals/>







# WHEN THE SKY GLOWS BY NELL CROSS BECKERMAN



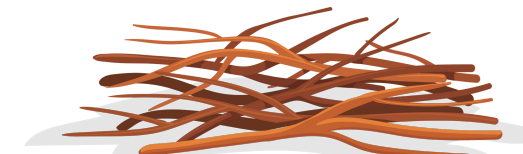
## Program Idea #1:

Build a rainbow  
with Legos or  
magnetic tiles

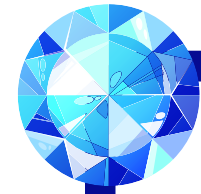


## Program Idea #2:

Eclipse Chalk Art:  
<https://ppld.org/eclipse-chalk-art>



# GRAPHIC MEMOIRS



## Books to Use:

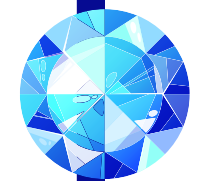
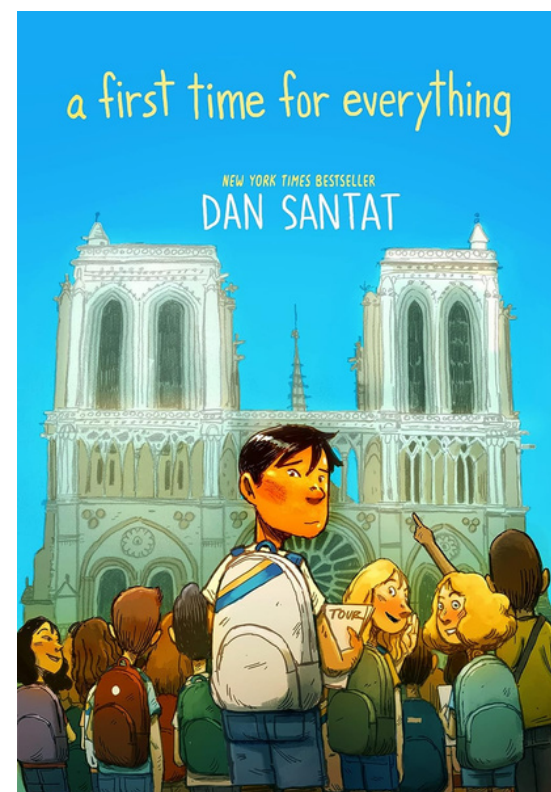
- *A First Time for Everything* by Dan Santat
- *Mexikid* by Pedro Martin
- *Sunshine* by Jarrett Krosoczka

## Tools to use:

- Post-It, notecard, or scratch paper
- Canva
- Adobe Express
- Book Creator
- Print a grid or template and let students draw by hand

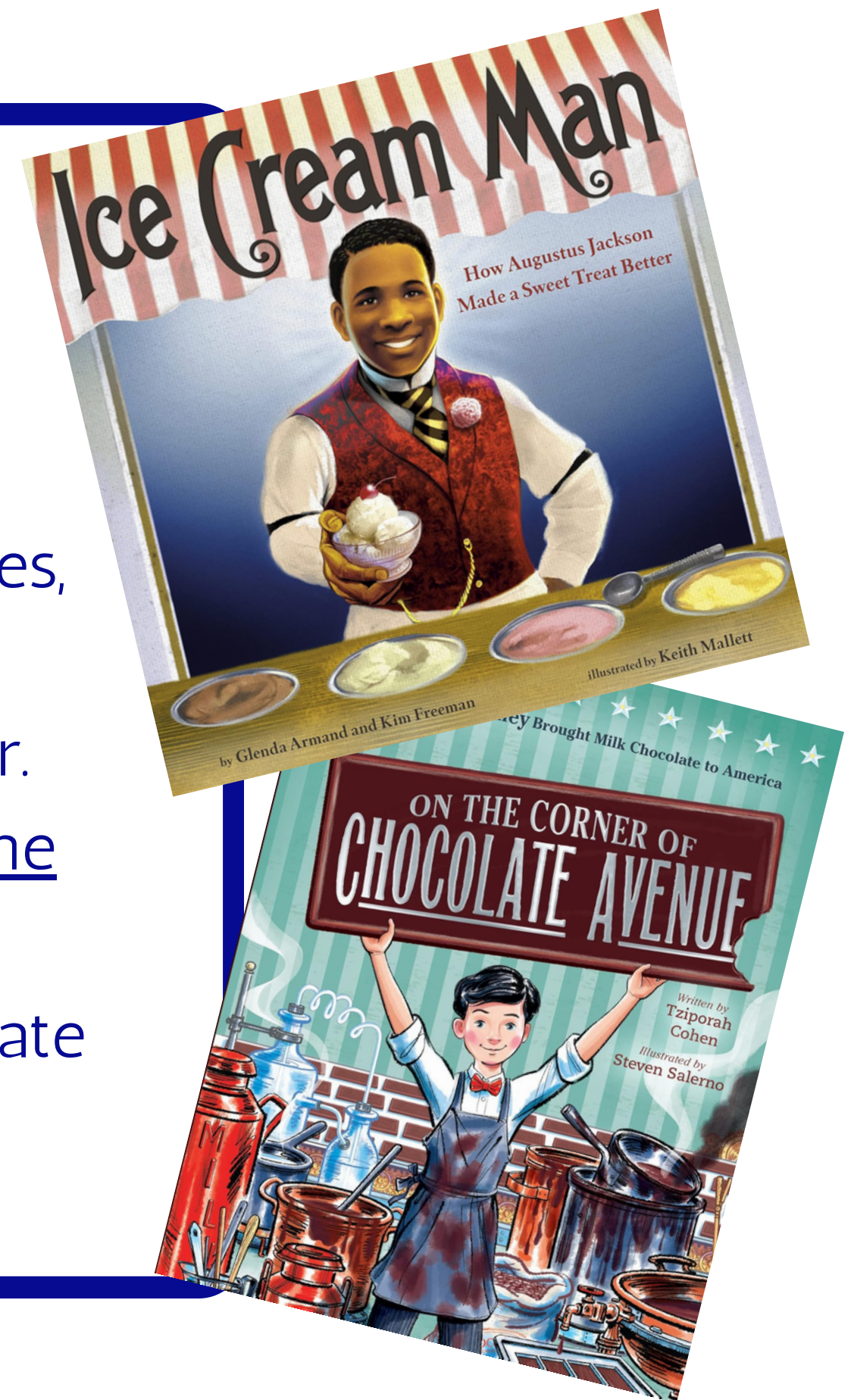
## Program Idea: Become an author

- Have students think of specific times in their lives, maybe only a few minutes or a day - a special occasion, trip, etc.
- Use a Post-It to think of 2-3 highlights.
- Create 1-2 lines of text to set up the event and 4-6 lines of narrative or dialog.
- Provide illustrations to supplement the text.
- Things to discuss - chronology, cause-effect, establishing setting, demonstrating passage of time, showing feelings



# YUM!

- Books - *Ice Cream Man* by Glenda Armand & Kim Freeman and *On the Corner of Chocolate Avenue* by Tzipora Cohen
- Both books lend themselves to cooking or baking, and recipes are a great way to talk about fractions, sequences, and following directions.
- Other topics can include cause & effect and trial & error.
- [Make ice cream in a bag with this recipe \(or search online for similar recipes\).](#)
- Use construction paper and craft supplies to let kids create their own sundae or dessert, then share with the group what flavors and toppings they chose.



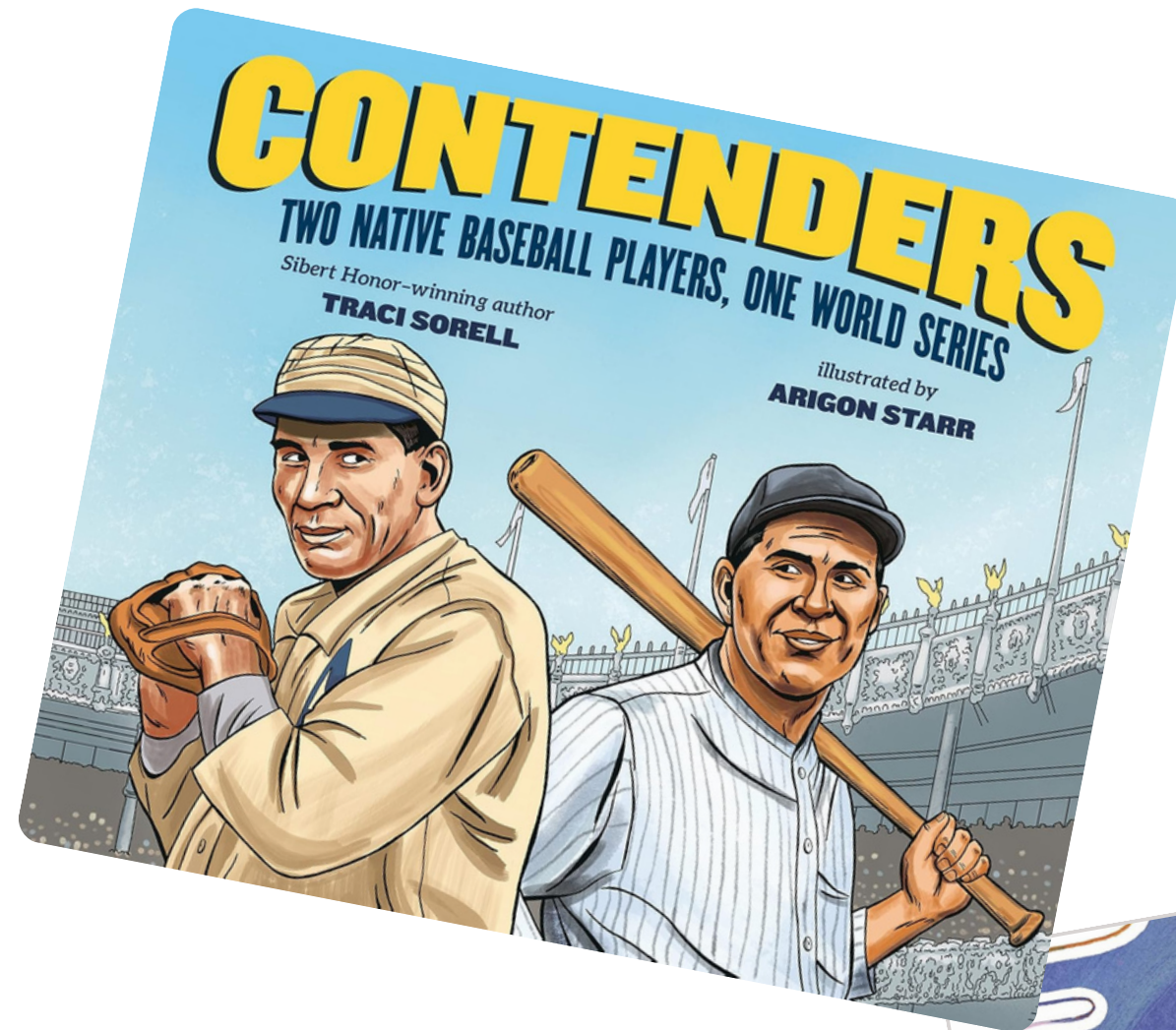
# JUST THE FACTS, MA'AM

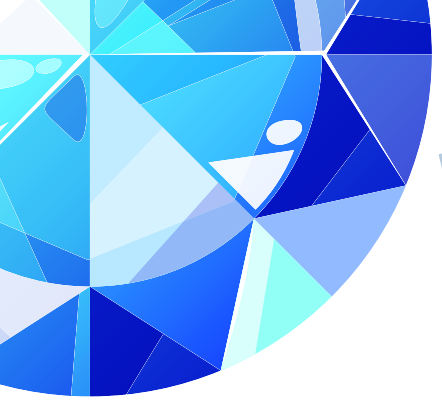
## Book Titles

- *Contenders* by Traci Sorell and Arigon Starr
- *The Fastest Girl on Earth* by Dean Robbins and Elizabeth Baddeley

## Program Ideas:

- Superlatives: brainstorm superlatives (ELA) and explore related records, including oddities.
- Draw or create a trading card for historical figures or important people in students' lives. Try to provide examples of trading cards to demonstrate format and key data points.

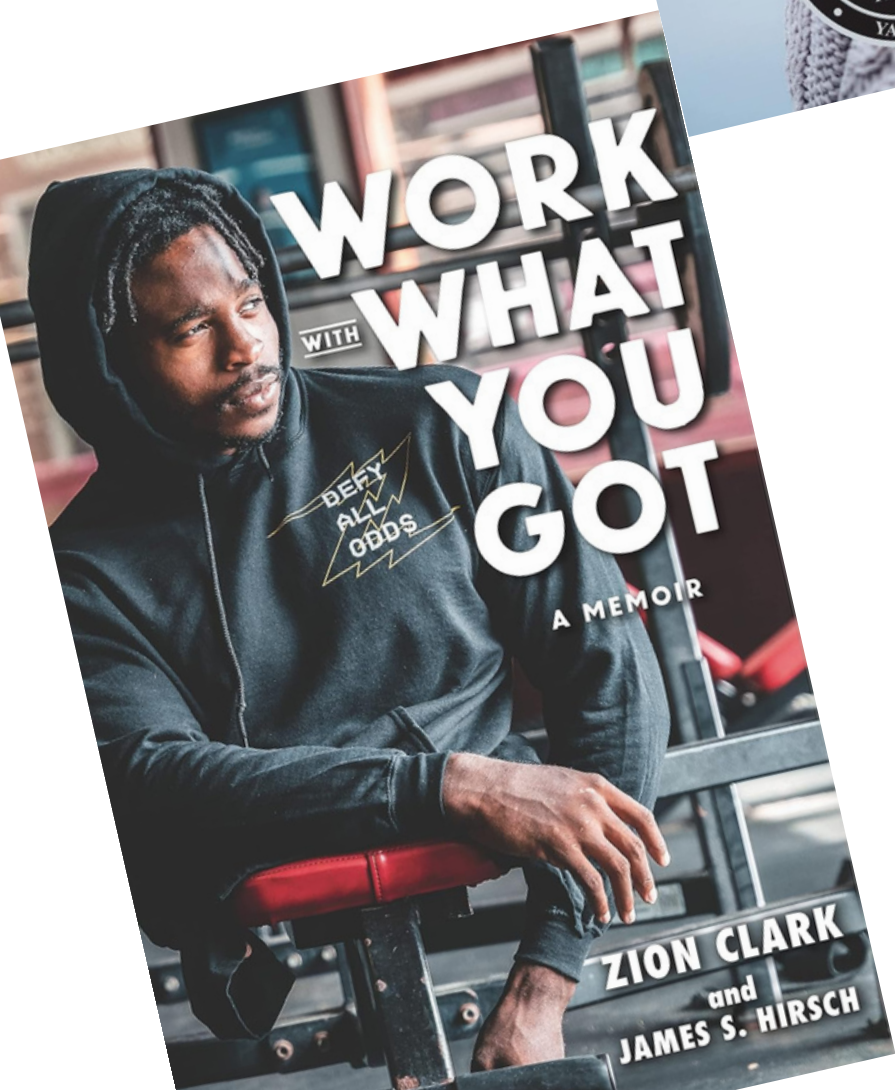




# VISIBLE & INVISIBLE DIFFERENCES



- [Designing for Disability TEDTalk with Elise Roy - universal design](#)
- Discussion - What are differences among people that we can see? What are differences we can't see? What is implicit bias and how does it impact how we treat others? How does it impact us?
- Research famous people who have/had physical, neural, or cognitive challenges. How have they worked to overcome those challenges? What have they accomplished?
- Lesson Plans/Program Ideas: Teaching About Disabilities
  - HIE Help Center Lesson Plans <https://bit.ly/HIElessons>
  - Deer Valley Unified School Dist. <https://bit.ly/dvusd>



**THANK YOU!**

**QUESTIONS?**

