



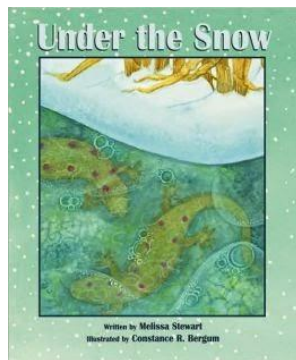
Melissa Stewart's Science Clubhouse



The Nonfiction Book Review-Persuasive Writing Link

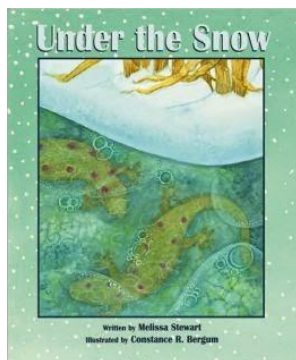
According to Common Core, students should know how to write persuasive texts. Writing and orally presenting book reviews is one way for them to practice this style of nonfiction writing AND learn to summarize and synthesize the nonfiction (or fiction) books they've read.

In the early elementary grades, children can focus on the topic of the book and the information they found most interesting. A sample might look like this:



Ever wonder what happens to fish and frogs in winter? What about snakes, salamanders, woodchucks, and waterboatmen? *Under the Snow* by Melissa Stewart answers these question by giving readers a close-up peek at a hidden world. Soft watercolor illustrations show nineteen animals living in four different habitats.

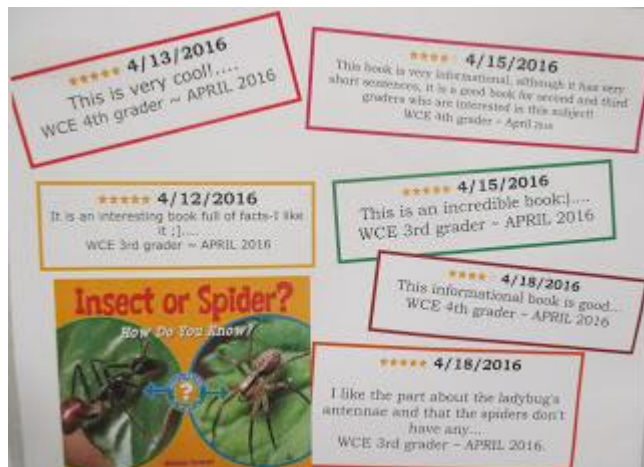
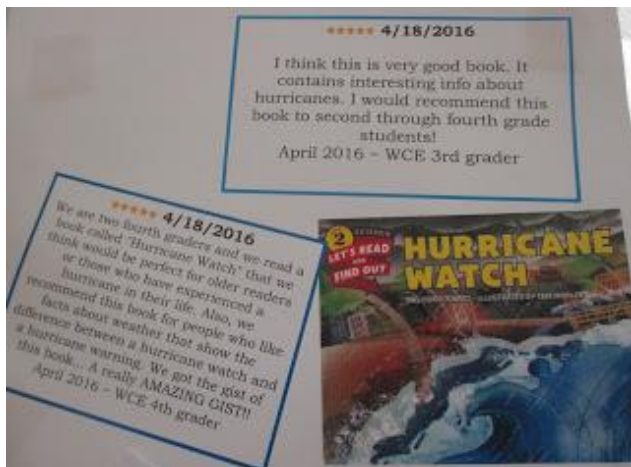
Older students can highlight the book's nonfiction category (survey, concept book, specialized book, life story), writing style (expository or narrative), and text structure (description, sequence/order, compare & contrast, question & answer, cause & effect, problem & solution) and include information about the author's choice of voice and point of view. A sample might look like this:



Under the Snow by Melissa Stewart is a concept book with an expository writing style and a circular descriptive structure. It features a calm, cozy, soothing voice and a third person point of view. Carefully-chosen words and soft, muted watercolor paintings show and tell readers how a variety of animals eke out an existence during chilly winter weather.

To write these reviews and then present them as booktalks, students must study the text and determine how the author crafted it. In the process, they will be adding tools to their own writer's toolboxes.

To take this project one step further, students could print out their reviews and post them around the library to help children in other classes choose books. The examples below were written by third and fourth graders at West Carthage Elementary School in West Carthage, NY.



After a little proofreading by teacher-librarian Camelia Moses, the students typed their reviews into the school district's library catalog, which is hosted by Follett. The catalog is designed to serve the district's three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school, but it can be accessed by anyone anywhere in the whole world—including the children's parents and grandparents and family friends. What a great way to make kids feel like their opinions matter!

Interested in trying a something similar with your students? You can take a look at what the West Carthage students did: <http://destiny.carthagecsd.org/> From the home page, click on one of the school links, such as Carthage Elementary School Library Media Center. When you type "Melissa Stewart" in the FIND box, you will get a list of my books owned by the school. When you click on a book's title, you can see the student reviews.