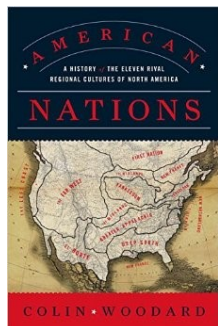


Book Reviews

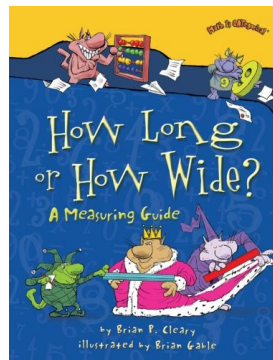


American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures

Written by: Colin Woodard
(2012) New York, NY: Penguin Group

Reviewed by: Christine Benedict, Kristin Pesz, and Charles Pipes, Sam Houston State University's Grades 4-8 Teacher Candidates

Imagine for a moment that the United States wasn't comprised of 50 states but instead of eleven regions; eleven regions with different names, distinct cultures, and fiercely developed identities. That is the scenario postulated in *American Nations*. An American history book written for advanced readers with a firm grasp of early US history, *American Nations* explores the early story of the United States. The author suggests that these regions were created from deep-reaching histories that were influenced by people, geography, and circumstance. Rather than New Mexico, Rhode Island, and Florida being the final word on US territorial divisions, this nation is divided into regions such as El Norte, Yankeedom, The Left Coast, and New France. The case made for each region is built on a foundation of the region's history – notable who lived there, where they came from, how they lived, and what their worldview was. The author goes on to assert that these regional divides are the reason why Americans have trouble agreeing on fundamental issues. Using reliable history, *American Nations* encourages readers to take another look at who we are as a nation and to think critically about how our foundations have influenced who we are today. A highly recommended read that would be a good fit in the classroom to promote next-level thinking and historical analysis.



How Long or How Wide?: A measuring guide

Written by: B. P. Cleary
(2007) Minneapolis: Millbrook Press

Reviewed by: Becky Deluna and Arghya Dhar, Sam Houston State University's Grades 4-8 Teacher Candidates

What is a decimeter? What can we measure with a meter stick? There are things we never really think about in our daily lives, but are used when we need to purchase or construct things. This fictional book is an exciting way to learn how to measure the width, height and length. This will help student learn the correct way to measure as well see the compare and contrast different units of measurements. Students will be able to visually see as they read through the book many examples. Also they will use their critical thinking skill in order to solve a few problems found in the book. This book will be great to read before learning about measurements or converting units in a math or science class. It will work well with both contents and the students will find this book very fun and engaging.

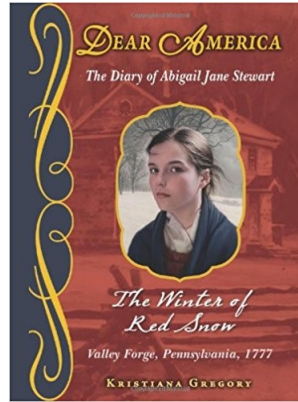


Last to Finish: A Story about the Smartest Boy in Math Class

Written by: B. Esham
(2008) Ocean City,
MD: Mainstream Con-
nections

Reviewed by: Luisa Dominguez and Meghan Janecek, Sam Houston State University's Grades 4-8 Teacher Candidates

“All I could think about was that terrible timer ticking that terrible tick-tick-tick!” Poor Max, the struggles, and the anxiety he endured! The work load that his math class had him going through was not only affecting his ability to complete his tasks but his social life as well. Feeling as if his world was falling apart, Max found it hard to believe that he was capable of being great at anything ever again and all because he just couldn't function the same as the rest of his classmates. Many students today could definitely relate themselves to Max on how they feel about mathematics and not only that, however, this story does a magnificent job on turning Max's life around for the better! Just the motivation every student needs to hear and experience when learning gets tough. Although this book is aimed for young children, I say it is fit for all ages up to 13 since a strong resemblance can be made directly between the characters in the story and the reader. This story will help students to continue down their path of being a successful math student by having them realize that although everyone's learning capabilities may contradict one another, each individual will always carry a unique trait that makes them special in their own way.

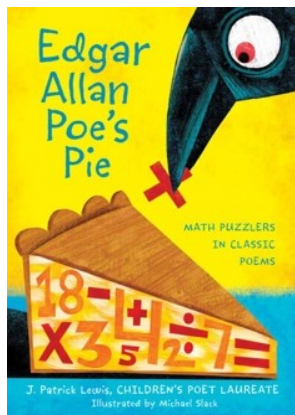


Dear America: The Winter of Red Snow; The Revolutionary War Diary of Abigail Jane Stewart

Written by Kristiana Gregory

Reviewed by: Kristian Evans, Zack Nichols, and Taylor Alexander, Sam Houston State University's Grades 4-8 Teacher Candidates

The Winter of Red Snow follows fictional eleven - year old Abigail Jane Stewart as she writes about her life in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania during the climax of the American Revolution. Readers can see as she gives a personal account to dealing with the tragedy and hope brought on by the uncertain times in 1777 and 1778. Abigail is able to give new insight to the struggles and victories the General George Washington and his soldiers faced during the winter at Valley Forge. This book, appropriate for middle grades, also students to read a fictional firsthand book on what someone might have dealt with during that time. Students are able to see a young girl close to their age dealing with situations that are way about their age level. In an effort to make the American Revolution a more personal story this piece of literature would be help to bring students to the reality of the people alive during that time frame.

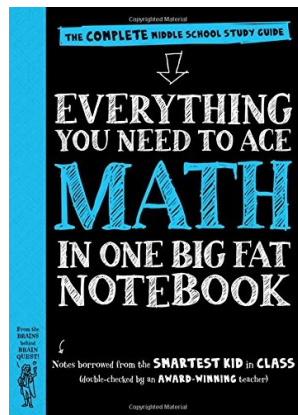


Lewis Carroll's Fish and Chips in Edgar Allan Poe's Pie: Math Puzzlers in Classic Poems

Written by: J.P. Lewis and M. H. Slack
(2012) Boston: Harcourt Mifflin Harcourt

Reviewed by: Lindsay King and Jennifer Novark, Sam Houston State University's Grades 4-8 Teacher Candidates

This fun puzzle poem catches students' eyes because it is about an argument between a young boy and an old man. The old man quizzes the young boy with different math problems and says that the fish and chips are the only way the old man can solve the problem. This poem will really get the kids to pay attention because they have to listen to the poem closely to find the math problems. But do not let the old man trick you! These are all different types of math problems, addition, subtraction, and even converting a decimal!



Everything You Need to Ace Math in One Big Fat Notebook: The Complete Middle School Study Guide

Written by: A. Peterson and C. Pearce

Reviewed by: Lesli Serano and Erica Turner, Sam Houston State University's Grades 4-8 Teacher Candidates

In middle school students begin learning how to take their own notes to study and use on homework and tests. This guide is full of diagrams, colorful hints and tips, easy instructions, and clear examples. Students will need to learn how to take notes to advance in all content areas, the layout of this book shows a great strategy students could use when beginning to take notes. The section of dividing fractions is short and sweet to the point but provides a visual aid for students that use visual learning to tap into understand this concept. Teachers could also use the layout as skeleton notes for students to follow along with during a lesson. Understanding how to divide fractions is extremely important in math because this is something that will follow them through their academic journey. The authors of this book prove that short and simple is effective and can easily teach students new content as well as help them review content they have learned previously.

Teaching Percentage ideas and Suggestions

Written by: D. J. Glatzer

Reviewed by: Kayla Siegert, Sam Houston State University's Grades 4-8 Teacher Candidate

Have you ever eaten at a restaurant, gotten your bill and wondered how much to tip? Well not to fear, Glatzer is here! *Teaching Percentage Ideas and Suggestions* by David J. Glatzer is an easy to read, relatable article that breaks down teaching percentages. For example, in the beginning Glatzer states an example by using percentages when tipping. Tipping is a good topic to easily relate to children because most are already familiar with the concept. All ages have experience with eating at a restaurant where it is custom to give gratuity, but few are familiar with how to actually calculate it by hand. This article will help educators learn how to better reach our children and turn the, "math is boring" switch off. Also noted in the article, are fractional percentages, in which an example is given by relating percentages to news headlines. This is also great opportunity to teach cross-curricular ideas and concepts. Glatzer does a great job at incorporating percentages into interesting and relatable topics for students of the middle grades.

