

**Julie M. Jensen & Nancy L. Roser (Editors).**

**ADVENTURING WITH BOOKS.**

**A BOOKLIST FOR PRE-K – GRADE 6 (10th Edition).**

**Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1993.**

**593 pp. \$19.95 (NCTE members \$14.95). ISBN 0-8141-0079-1.**

**C. Anne Webb (Editor).**

**and the Committee on the Junior High and Middle School Booklist.**

**YOUR READING: A BOOKLIST FOR JUNIOR HIGH  
AND MIDDLE SCHOOL (9th Edition).**

**Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1993.**

**250 pp. \$16.95 (NCTE members \$12.95). ISBN 0-8141-5942-7.**

Teachers, parents, students and all those concerned with the selection of quality literature for children and young people will welcome the most recent editions of *Adventuring with Books: A booklist for Pre-K – Grade 6* (10th Ed.) and *Your Reading: A booklist for junior high and middle school* (9th Ed.), both published by committees formed by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Every four or five years since the late sixties and early seventies the NCTE has issued new editions of these annotated booklists which serve as valuable resources. Because thousands of books for children and young adults are published each year the task of selection becomes increasingly difficult. Annotated booklists, such as these, greatly assist the process of selection, but they are valued for other reasons. They provide interesting data concerning trends in books. These data are of considerable value to researchers and scholars of children's literature, who have long recognized the historical, anthropological, sociological, and psychological implications in this field.

*Adventuring with Books: A booklist for pre-K – grade 6* (10th ed.) includes approximately 1,800 annotations of books published between 1988 and 1992. The books are classified under thirteen headings, and the volume is as vibrant and interesting as have been its predecessors.

Headings include books for young children, celebrations, classics, contemporary realistic fiction, fantasy, fine arts, historical fiction, language and reading, poetry, sciences and mathematics, social studies, and traditional literature. *Your Reading: A booklist for junior high and middle school* (9th ed.) contains annotations of over 600 titles selected from over 5,000 books submitted by publishers and printed during 1991 and 1992. Difficult as it is to categorize literature, the editor has attempted to group topics under four headings, namely, Imagining, Learning, Exploring, and Understanding. These headings tend to overlap and be rather vague; however, on the whole they include most topics relevant to young people. Some of these include fantasy, mystery, folklore, poetry, science

fiction, short stories, sports and games, arts and crafts, history, science and technology, family and personal relationships, biographies and autobiographies, and careers.

Both books attain their goals, namely, to assist those concerned with the selection of quality literature for children and young people; however, these collections of annotations do more than this. It is a recognized fact that children's books are a reflection of our times, and these books of annotations provide valuable information concerning trends in books for children and young people. Of interest to historians and students of literature, they help define American society in the 1980s and 1990s.

A brief examination of earlier editions, including those of the seventies, does indeed illustrate this idea. When compared with earlier decades, children's books of the seventies and early eighties tended to be much more realistic, reflecting themes not normally appearing in children's books. These themes included a variety of problems related to the human condition, such as, divorce, single parenting, adoption, foster homes, death, handicaps and disabilities, racial prejudice, and aging. Another interesting factor emerged during this period. Much greater attention was given to the preschool child and, for the first time, picture books appeared in the annotations. In the eighties and nineties many of the themes of previous years continued, but there was an interesting increase in historical books, especially those about World War II. Other books focused on working parents, the problems of aging, and the role of grandparents in childrearing. There was also a marked increase in books in the social studies and science categories. Other themes focused on the environment and diversities of ethnicity and religion. The concern for early education, which began in the seventies, became more marked. There was a focus on reading and language development and books for babies and wordless picture books and special categories for language and vocabulary development. Many of these trends can be traced to the sociological concerns of the times, such as changes in family structure and the growing importance of literacy.

As with previous issues, the most recent editions of *Adventuring with Books* and *Your Reading* contain themes which are of concern to American society in the nineties. Themes reflect topical issues and include, for example, diseases such as AIDS, cystic fibrosis, and leukemia; societal problems like child abuse, orphans of war, and missing children. Family structure is further considered with books about remarriage and step-families. Feminism continues to be a theme in books, and sexual abuse and harassment are also featured. Other themes include immigration, race relations, gun control, abortion, recycling, and preservation of

rain forests, to mention just a few. Thus, as well as assisting those concerned with the selection of quality literature for children and young people, these two collections of annotations provide a fascinating overview of trends in books and concerns of American society during the nineties. They are welcome additions to the field of literature for children and young adults.

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## Film Review

**National Film Board of Canada (1993).**  
**FIRST NATIONS: THE CIRCLE UNBROKEN.**  
**Ottawa, ON: National Film Board of Canada**  
**ISBN 0-7722-0490-x.**

*First Nations: The Circle Unbroken* is a video series about First Nations (as used by the producers, this term includes all aboriginal peoples) and about their relationship with Canada.

Lorna Williams, one of the directors of the series, says of the goals of this series:

This collection. . . will introduce students, age 9 to adults, to a variety of contemporary First Nations perspectives on history, culture, spirituality, education, justice, the environment, racism, colonialism, Aboriginal title to land. . . . These programs will provide students with rich and complex images of the contemporary reality of the First Nations, their sense of identity, and their relations with Canada.  
(p. 2, workshop guide)

According to the supporting documents, the series was produced by *Face to Face Media* and the *National Film Board* in cooperation with First Nations teachers and filmmakers. Three of the four series directors are aboriginal educators from British Columbia. Over the course of a year, the four of them collaborated with over seventy-five educators and filmmakers in reviewing and revising NFB, CBC, and independent documentaries. The result is thirteen video programs about aboriginal peoples and issues of concern to them which run an average of twenty minutes each.