**CYRM Books Previewed by Sally James**

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***Nurse, Soldier, Spy: The True Story of Sarah Edmonds, A Civil War Hero*** by Marissa Moss. A young woman disguises herself as a man and fights against the Confederacy. This is an amazing story of Sarah Edmonds who dressed up as a man to flee an arranged marriage but then embraced the freedom she found as a man.

1. **Marissa Moss’s Study Guide:** [www.marissamoss.com/downloads/NSS\_Study\_Guide](http://www.marissamoss.com/downloads/NSS_Study_Guide).
2. **Discussion Topics**: 1) discuss gender differences and stereotypes today and the mid-1860’s with regard to job choices and life opportunities, 2) the importance of the Civil War in American history, and 3) “invisible” groups in U.S. society.
3. **Civil War Geography**:Find a map of the U.S. during the Civil War. Color the states that seceded and label the major battles discussed in the story. Locate the Missouri Compromise line.
4. **Drawing**:Ask students to draw either Sarah Edmonds or Frank Thompson. Research clothing worn by women as well as the uniforms worn by the Union and the Confederate Armies. Compare the faces drawn for each gender role.
5. **Horse Research**: Horses were a critical part of the Civil War effort and Sarah/Frank was an excellent rider. Learn how horses were used for transportation, farming, and warfare in the U.S. Compare various horse breeds and how they were used for different jobs.
6. **Stories of heroic and adventurous women:** *Riding Freedom* by Pam Munoz Ryan, *Queen of the Falls* by Chris Van Allsburg, *Uncommon Traveler: Mary Kingsley in Africa* by Don Brown, *Women Daredevils: Thrills, Chills, and Frills* by Julie Cummins, *The Watcher: Jane Goodall’s Life with Chimps* by Jeanette Winter, *The Bravest Woman in America* by Marissa Moss.
7. **Companion Book:** *A Soldier’s Secret: The Incredible True Story of Sarah Edmonds*
8. **Civil War connections:** 
   1. Fiction. Newbery Honor book *The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg* and *The Perilous Road* by William O. Steele.
   2. Nonfiction: *A Savage Thunder: Antietam and the Bloody Road* to Freedom by Jim Murphy.

i. **Celebrate America:** Use *And the Pursuit of Happiness* by Maira Kalman for fifth graders throughout the year (great sections on Presidents Lincoln and Washington and so much more!)

***Eleven*** by Patricia Reilly Giff. Sam wonders about his past and whether his grandfather is really related to him. A wonderful story of self -discovery, the importance of belonging to a family (even though it might be unconventional), and a celebration of friendship.

1. **Random House comprehensive Study Guide:** crmsliteracy.wikispaces.com/file/view/Teacher's+Guide+for+Eleven+by+Patricia+Reilly+Giff.pdf
2. **Middle Ages Research Unit and Feast**: Although Sam struggles with reading, he is able to shine in front of his class because his teacher asks him to build a castle. Create an equally rich Middle Ages unit, allowing students to learn about what interests them and to create a variety of final projects.
   * 1. Research topics: types of castles, food of the time, the life of a knight, the social classes, clothing worn.
     2. Fiction books: *Igraine the Brave* by Cornelia Funke, *Thomas and the Dragon* by Shutta Crum, *Tale of Two Castles* by Gail Carson Levine
     3. Nonfiction books: *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village* by Laura Amy Schlitz
3. **Celebrate Grandparents**: Sam’s grandfather Mack means the world to him. Invite grandparents to your class to read their favorite stories or to share a special talent.
   * 1. Fiction book: *The Evolution of Calpernia Tate*
     2. Picture books: *Butterfly House* by Eve Bunting, *Grandpa Green* by Lane Smith, or the *Imaginary Garden* by Andrew Larsen.
4. **Building Unit:** Sam and Mack both share a gift for working with their hands. Invite general contractors, carpenters, and architects to your class to speak.
   * 1. Sandcastle day at the beach (invite professional builders along)
     2. Re-create your own town or medieval town (cardboard, gingerbread)
     3. Nonfiction books: *Recycled Crafts Box: Sock Puppets, Cardboard Castles, and Bottle Bugs & 37 More Earth Friendly Projects and Activities You Can Create* by Laura C. Martin and David Macaulay’s *Built to Last*.
5. **Boats Unit:** The traumatic boat crash coupled with the project of building a new boat together link Sam and Mack. Research different types of boats used in the past and today.
   * 1. Origami boats or boats out of sticks: challenge students to find a stream and launch their boat
     2. Fiction book: *The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech
6. **Encourage Empathy:** Sam must visit a resource teacher because he basically cannot read. The tension of the story is primarily creatd because Sam cannot read an old newspaper article. Teach kids in your class to understand and to respect learning differences.
   * 1. Picture books: *Thank You, Mr. Falkner* by Patricia Polacco, *The Junkyard Wonders* by Patricia Polacco, *The Pirate of Kindergarten* by George Ella Lyon
     2. Fiction book: *Close to Famous* by Joan Bauer

***Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*** by Grace Lin. Minli lives in a ramshackle hut with her parents in the Valley of Fruitless Mountain. Inspired by her father’s stories and a lucky goldfish, lively Minli embarks on a quest to meet the Old Man of the Moon and change her family’s fortune.

1. **Grace Lin’s amazing and comprehensive Website:** www.gracelin.com
2. **Little Brown & Co. Educator’s Guide (PDF):** [www.gracelinbooks.com/inner.html](http://www.gracelinbooks.com/inner.html)
3. **Activity Book by Curious City (PDF):** [www.gracelin.com/content.php?page=wherethemountainmeetsthemoon&display=activities](http://www.gracelin.com/content.php?page=wherethemountainmeetsthemoon&display=activities)
4. **Glogster:** Proving links to the YouTube book trailer and an interview with the author. <http://www.glogster.com/sallyanne2/where-the-mountain-meets-the-moon/g-6lehnh34bhjjssa63m0hta0>
5. **Chinese Folktales and Storytelling:** The power of storytelling is an important theme in the book. Read and re-tell a variety of Chinese folktales. End with a storytelling day, complete with green tea cakes and Chinese tea.
6. **Impossible Dreams/Inventions Unit:** Minli dares to dream an impossible dream, has the impulsivity to follow that dream, and has the courage to see her dream to the end. Have your class learn about famous inventors and speculate together about what the future might hold.
7. **Chinese Calligraphy:** Learn about and practice this ancient form of art and communication.
8. **Dragon Creativity:** The artwork in the book is amazing and inspiring. Ask students to research different artistic depictions of dragons and then to draw their own dragon. Combine with a creative story activity.
   1. Fiction books*: Dragonborn* by Toby Forward and *Seraphina* by Rachel Hartman
   2. Picture books: *Argus* by Michelle Knudson and *Snoring Beauty* by Bruce Hale
9. Companion Book: *Starry River of the Sky*

***Invisible Lines*** by Mary Amato. Trevor is a seventh grader whose wit, artistic skills, and soccer skills make him someone special, but can he fit into his new school attended by many wealthy kids? His family is on the edge of poverty and he has accidentally been placed in an accelerated science class. The story shows how Trevor must balance his loyalty to friends and family with his desire to be accepted in the often brutal world of middle school.

1. **Mary Amato’s Discussion Guide:** [www.maryamato.com/books/invisible-lines](http://www.maryamato.com/books/invisible-lines)
2. **Mary Amato’s excellent Interdisciplinary Exploration Unit:** [www.maryamato.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Invisible-Lines-IEU-rev.pdf](http://www.maryamato.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Invisible-Lines-IEU-rev.pdf)
3. **Science:** Take a nature walk and then create your own Kingdom of Fungi notebook. Follow up with research about your favorite local mushrooms. Find a microscope and look deeply into your mushrooms.
4. **Geography and Culture:** Learn about mushrooms around the world. Use a map to locate the mushrooms; place a card showing facts about the mushroom and a picture or drawing of the mushroom at the point in the world where it grows. Find out how different cultures viewed and/or used mushrooms.
5. **Art:** Use clay, pipe cleaners, screws, or wood to create mushroom sculptures. Alternatively, allow kids to design their own shoes. Do some research about Nike or another shoe company and find out how you might submit an idea for a new shoe design!
6. **Cooking:** Invite students to class to make dishes using mushrooms. Share the recipes online or create a class cookbook. Include facts about the mushrooms on each recipe page.
7. **Jokes:** Telling a good joke is a skill that is useful throughout your life. Have students select their favorite joke that is appropriate for school. Have students share their jokes when there are a few extra minutes in a class period or at the end of each class.
8. **Voicethread:** [**https://voicethread.com/?#q.b3205200.i16999001**](https://voicethread.com/?#q.b3205200.i16999001)

***Out of My Mind*** by Sharon Draper. Eleven-year old Melody is strapped to a pink wheelchair because she has cerebral palsy. Everyone assumes that she has the mind of a preschooler until she finally finds her voice with her new Medi-Talker. Beautifully written, this is a story about being brave enough to speak up, recognizing the love of family, and finding acceptance.

1. **Sharon Draper’s comprehensive Study Guide and Activity Suggestions:** sharondraper.com/bookdetail-guides.asp?id=35
2. **Descriptive Paper:** Sharon Draper’s language is beautiful. Read some of your favorite passages to students. Ask them to write a paper using sensory imagery.
3. **Research Paper:** Learn more about cerebral palsy or how language develops in people. Write a paper and share the highlights with your class through a Power Point.
4. **Quiz Show:** Create your own trivia competition. Have students select the topic areas and, most importantly, decide the right way to sort every child onto a team. Make sure students reflect upon and discuss their skills and abilities. Rather than just allowing factual answers, brainstorm other ways and activities for students to share their knowledge. Will some activities involve drawing? Acting? Singing? Building? Celebrate the strengths of each child by creating a unique and fun classroom activity.
5. **Legal Research:** Learn about the rights of students with disabilities in the school setting.
6. **Voicethread:** [**https://voicethread.com/?#q.b3205200.i16999001**](https://voicethread.com/?#q.b3205200.i16999001)

***Wild Things*** by Clay Carmichael. Eleven -year old Zoe has been consistently let down by the adult’s in her world. Upon the death of her mother, she goes to live with her reclusive and gruff uncle who was formerly a sculptor. Zoe must learn to trust others in order to find her place in her family.

* 1. **Clay Carmichael’s Study Guide**: [www.claycarmichael.com/StudyGuideQuestions.htm](http://www.claycarmichael.com/StudyGuideQuestions.htm)
  2. **Artist Research and Art Project**: Zoe’s uncle Henry is a talented sculptor. Allow students to research their favorite artist. Have them re-create a piece of art. Make sure to provide information about a variety of artists to students, including sculptors. As a culminating project, have students dress up as their artist and share information. Alternatively, have students create a PowerPoint about their artist.
  3. **Family History Project:** Even though Zoe is not close with either of her parents, she is constantly reminded that she behaves like her family or looks like them. Have students create detailed family trees going back 3 or more generations. Have them trace hair and eye color and family height through the generations. Ask family members to share interesting family stories. Use these stories to generate short stories and isolate interesting family tendencies. Allow students to publish their stories online.
  4. **Humane Society Visit**: Zoe says that animal love is purer than human love. Take time to help the animals in your community by learn about volunteer opportunities at your local humane society. If possible, go as a class.
  5. **Voicethread:** [**https://voicethread.com/?#q.b3205200.i16999001**](https://voicethread.com/?#q.b3205200.i16999001)