



# A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature (9th Edition)

By *Rebecca J. Lukens, Jacquelin J. Smith, Cynthia Miller Coffel*

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## **Editorial Review**

### From the Back Cover

This highly regarded resource gives future teachers, practicing teachers, librarians, and parents numerous examples of quality children's literature to help them select the best books for the classroom, library, or home. The *Handbook* analyzes children's books that the authors recommend as positive examples of the literary elements, formats, and genres that are the focus in the field of children's literature. The children's books are noteworthy titles, from classics to favorites to those just published, all selected because they are thought-provoking, important, or motivating choices. The authors suggest that readers examine the *Handbook* and then apply the literary concepts to additional reading from today's ever-expanding selection of children's books.

This Ninth Edition includes some outstanding new features, among them:

- **Chapter 2, *Issues and Fundamental Change in Children's Literature***, shares research on effects of the digital age on children's books, ways children interact with wordless picturebooks, graphic and verse novels, blended genres and postmodern picturebooks.
- **Inquiry Points in every chapter engage and motivate** readers to examine important concepts, clarify literary understandings, and become actively involved with critically examining children's books.
- **Textsets of children's books**, frequently annotated and grouped by theme, topic, genre, or perspective, are included in every chapter. These sets of related books deepen readers' understandings of the chapter content and help them learn how to construct text sets for their own professional needs.
- **Many more current, culturally varied, and just-published children's books are discussed throughout** each chapter; a bibliography of the recommended children's books appears at the end of each chapter.
- **Chapter 14, *Literature and Readers***, discusses the benefits of interactions between books and readers. It expands the section, "A Lifetime of Reading" to include creating communities of readers by reading aloud, using textsets, and encouraging talk between readers.

### About the Author

**Rebecca J. Lukens** graduated with honors from Concordia College in Minnesota, earned an M.A. from Syracuse University, and next worked on the editorial staff of a children's encyclopedia in New York. After a year on the faculty of St. Olaf College followed by her marriage, she taught at New York State College, Albany, and later at Ohio University, Chillicothe. After publication of a few children's stories, Miami University Department of English hired Lukens to teach Children's Literature—not "Kiddy Lit"—as well as technical and expository writing.

The first edition of *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature* was published by Scott Foresman in 1976, and *A Critical Handbook of Literature for Young Adults* by Harper Collins in 1994. Lukens also co-edited a

literature anthology, *Woman: An Affirmation*, published by D. C. Heath in 1979. Her latest publication, *It's Been Great*, is a memoir dedicated "to my children and theirs."

Lukens's retirement teaching has been with Miami University's Institute for Learning in Retirement; her favorite class she called "Laughter for Health and Sanity."

**Jacquelin J. Smith** is a career educator whose experience spans grades 2—8 through pre-service teaching. Children's Literature has been a passion throughout her career, from literacy learning to connections across the curriculum. She has shared many cross-curricular teaching and learning strategies for science, social studies and math with children's books at numerous professional conferences and in publications with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. A lifelong learner and Children's Literature instructor at the University of Northern Iowa, her studies continually confirm both her appreciation for and belief in the power of critically examining children's literature.

**Cynthia Miller Coffel** is the author of *Thinking Themselves Free: Research on the Literacy of Teen Mothers*. Her research in children's and young adult literature has appeared in journals such as *The ALAN Review*, *Reader*, and *QSE*. Her work won the Jeffrey E. Smith award for nonfiction from *The Missouri Review* in 2007, and her literary essays have twice been listed among the notable essays of the year in *The Best American Essays* series. Her PhD in literacy education is from the University of Iowa.

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