

I'm Bored!

Books about Things to Make & Do

BY THE TIME AUGUST ROLLS AROUND, many parents and kids (not to mention public librarians) are at their wits' end. Families have returned from vacations, many summer camps and classes are over and done, and trips to the pool have lost their novelty—what's a bored kid to do? Plenty, with the right book! Below are a number of titles to give kids (and their adults) a second wind and some fresh ideas for things to make and things to do before the school year starts up again.

—*Jeannette Hulick, Reviewer and Editorial Assistant*



THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The *Bulletin* Dozen is a monthly theme-based booklist available from the *Bulletin's* website. Since we're awfully fond of bakers here at the *Bulletin*, we thought we'd adopt their philosophy of generosity and throw in an extra one or two when we have them to offer—so don't expect an even dozen.

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See the *Bulletin's* website:
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Arnosky, Jim. *Field Trips: Bug Hunting, Animal Tracking, Bird-Watching, Shore Walking*; written and illus. by Jim Arnosky. HarperCollins, 2002. Gr. 3–6

Arnosky provides young wildlife watchers with practical advice about observing bird, animals, and insects in the wild; the numerous, well-labeled drawings of various species, animal tracks, etc. are both attractive and helpful. (BCCB 6/02)

Brallier, Jess. *No Sweat Projects: Thumbs Up Science*; illus. by Bob Staake. Planet Dexter, 2001. Gr. 3–6

Bored kids need look no further than their own hands and the contents of this book to find plenty of entertaining and educational science-related experiments and activities involving-ta da!-the thumb. Be sure to try the “Thumbless Obstacle Course.” (BCCB 1/01)

Carter, David A. *The Elements of Pop-Up: A Pop-Up Book for Aspiring Paper Engineers*; written and illus. by David A. Carter and James Diaz. Little Simon, 1999. Gr. 6–12

Basic and not-so-basic paper engineering techniques are revealed here in thorough detail along with three-dimensional examples of each fold, tab, or wheel element. Less-skilled and more impatient kids may enjoy playing with the 3D examples, while those with more patience and a pile of paper will want to try producing their own pop-up creations. (BCCB 1/00)

Crespo, Claire. *The Secret Life of Food*; illus. with photographs by Eric Staudenmaier. Melcher Media/Hyperion, 2002. Gr. 4–9

Creative cookery abounds in this volume of recipes, from Spaghetti with Eyeballs, to Sheep in Blankets, to a Jell-O Aquarium complete with gummy fish. Clear, full-page photos give guidance as to the finished foods’ appearances, as well as providing ideas for clever presentation. (BCCB 6/02)

Finch, Mary, comp. *Playtime Rhymes for Little People*; illustrated by Clare Beaton. Barefoot, 2001. 6 mos.–3 yrs

A willing adult and this book will go a long way towards chasing away little ones’ boredom—fun-to-say

rhymes and accompanying hand motions (directions are included) are illustrated with photos of pleasantly textured cloth appliques. (BCCB 12/01)

Fletcher, Ralph. *Poetry Matters: Writing a Poem from the Inside Out*. HarperCollins, 2002. Gr. 5 up

Both budding young poets and those who struggle a bit with the creative writing process will find both inspiration and practical ideas for poetry-writing in this browsable and enthusiastic title. (BCCB 6/02)

Krull, Kathleen. *Gonna Sing My Head Off!*; illus. by Allen Garns. Knopf, 1992. 5 yrs up

Round up the kids for an old-fashioned sing-along with this useful title that includes lyrics and simple piano and guitar notation for sixty-two American songs, from “Oh, Susanna” to “Turn, Turn, Turn (To Everything There Is a Season),” and spirituals to cowboy ballads. (BCCB 10/92)

Lankford, Mary D. *Hopscotch Around the World*; illus. by Karen Milone. Morrow, 1992. Gr. 3–5

Clear instructions and illustrations of hopscotch patterns are given for worldwide variations (Bolivian, French, and Trinidadian versions, among others) of this sidewalk game. For a similar look at the game of jacks, try Lankford’s *Jacks Around the World* (illus. by Karen Dugan. Morrow, 1996. Gr. 2–5 BCCB 12/96). (BCCB 6/92)

Nace, Don. *Bowling for Beginners: Simple Steps to Strikes and Spares*; illus. with photographs by Bruce Curtis. Sterling, 2001. Gr. 4–12

For those who think it’s too hot to play outdoors, try heading for the bowling alley with this title, which explains (helpfully illustrated with numerous color photos) basic scoring and skills; more detailed information about the game and tips for more advanced bowlers are also provided. (BCCB 9/01)

Street, Michael. *Lucky 13: Solitaire Games for Kids*; illus. by Alan Tiegreen. SeaStar, 2001. Gr. 4–8

Even kids whose playmates are all on vacation can find summer amusement with a deck of cards and this book—at least forty-eight versions of solitaire, at a variety of

levels of difficulty, are clearly and simply described. Black and red line diagrams show how to lay out the cards properly for each variation. (BCCB 5/01)

Temko, Florence. *Planes and Other Flying Things*. Millbrook, 1996. Gr. 2–6

Kids not up to the challenge of the above-mentioned Elements of Pop-Ups but who still want to play with paper will find plenty to do here, as they follow Temko’s clear directions for eighteen assorted creations capable of flight. (BCCB 1/97)

Wilkes, Angela. *Dazzling Disguises and Clever Costumes*. DK, 1996. Illus. with photographs. Gr. 2–6

Directions for various dramatic accessories (hats, masks, capes, etc.) are given as well as for more complete costumes such as a horse, robot, and knight. While some will require a bit more adult help, most are easy and basic enough for kids to make with minimal assistance, and the large color photographs are a big help. (BCCB 11/96)

Zubrowski, Bernie. *Soda Science: Designing and Testing Soft Drinks*; illus. by Roy Doty. Morrow, 1997. Gr. 3–6

A kid-centered topic, easy to obtain supplies, and sound directions make this a recipe for some tasty, and educational, kitchen fun, either at home or (for those with understanding custodians) at a library summer program. (BCCB 9/97)

