

Illinois Reading Council



Empowering
Lives
Through
Literacy

Communicator

1100 Beech Street, Building 8, Suite 2
Normal, IL 61761

Phone: 309-454-1341
Fax: 309-454-3512

Email: irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org
Web: www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org

 @IllinoisReadingCouncil

 Twitter @ILReadCouncil #ircreads

 [Instagram.com/ilreadcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/ilreadcouncil)

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*"When you read a classic you do not see
in the book more than you did before.
You see more in YOU than there was before."*

~ Clifton Fadiman

2025 IRC CONFERENCE

**March 13-14, 2025
Springfield, Illinois**



ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL
**LIBERATING
LITERACY**
Embrace Love, Joy, & Empowerment

The Illinois Reading Council is excited to share that registration and housing are open for the

**2025 IRC Conference,
Liberating Literacy:
Embrace Love, Joy, & Empowerment**

on March 13-14, 2025 in Springfield, Illinois.

Download the [2025 Preliminary Program](#) to find out all about the conference and the **featured speakers and presenters** that will be joining us this year.

You will also not want to miss the **Wednesday Welcome Reception**, the **Hear the Authors Read Event**, the **Illinois Reads Author Panels**, and over 200 PD Sessions that are being planned.

Program Proposals to present a session are also being accepted until December 15, 2024.

To find out more, visit www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

2025 IRC CONFERENCE PRELIMINARY PROGRAM



March 13 - 14, 2025
Springfield, Illinois

Download the Preliminary
Program



2025 ILLINOIS READS BOOK LIST

The Illinois Reading Council has just released the list of Illinois Reads books for 2025. Illinois Reads is a statewide program that promotes reading for all Illinois citizens. The program features six books in each of the six different age categories by authors and illustrators who have ties to Illinois. The books range from read-to books for infants to books for adult readers. Bookmarks and posters highlighting the Illinois Reads books will be available in early 2025. Order early as supplies are limited!

Birth-4

- *Can You Dance Like a Peacock?* by Rekha S. Rajan
- *Hide-and-Seek* by Molly Cranch
- *Moms Can Do It All!* by Ted Maass
- *Sleepy: Surprising Ways Animals Snooze* by Jennifer Ward
- *Painting the Sky with Love: A Celebration of Love and Community* by Mary E. Haque

6-8

- *Forget-Me-Not Blue* by Sharelle Byars Moranville
- *I Felt Myself Slipping* by Ray Nadine
- *Kareem Between* by Shifa Saltagi Safadi
- *Rare Birds* by Jeff Miller
- *Stage Fright* by Wendy Parris
- *The Labors of Hercules Beal* by Gary D. Schmidt

- *Play Outside with Me* by Kat Chen

9-12

K-2

- *Bats Beneath the Bridge* by Janet Nolan
- *Love Grows* by Ruth Spiro
- *Somebody Needs to Do Something About That Monster!* by Doug Cenko
- *The Ghost Who Was Afraid of Everything* by Nadia Ahmed
- *The Heartbeat Drum: The Story of Carol Powder, Cree Drummer and Activist* by Deidre Havrelock and illustrated by Aphelandra
- *Umami* by Jacob Grant

- *American Wings: Chicago's Pioneering Black Aviators and the Race for Equality in the Sky* by Sherri L. Smith and Elizabeth Wein
- *Dear Wendy* by Ann Zhao
- *Last On His Feet: Jack Johnson and the Battle of the Century* by Youssef Daoudi and Adrian Matejka
- *This Book Won't Burn* by Samira Ahmed
- *This Night Is Ours* by Ronni Davis
- *We Shall Be Monsters: A Novel* by Alyssa Wees

3-5

- *Cloud Puppy* by Kelly Leigh Miller
- *Detective Sweet Pea: The Case of the Golden Bone* by Sara Varon
- *It Belongs to the World: Frederick Banting and the Discovery of Insulin* by Lisa Katzenberger
- *Legendarios: Wrath of the Rain God* by Karla Arenas Valenti
- *One Cool Duck #1: King of Cool* by Mike Petrik
- *The Great Lakes: Our Freshwater Treasure* by Barb Rosenstock

Adult

- *By Water Beneath the Walls: The Rise of the Navy SEALs* by Benjamin H. Milligan
- *Star Wars Dad Jokes: The Best Worst Jokes and Puns from a Galaxy Far, Far Away* by Kelly Knox and illustrated by Johnny Sampson
- *The Best Lies* by David Ellis
- *The Great Divide: A Novel* by Cristina Henriquez
- *The Wheel of the Year: An Illustrated Guide to Nature's Rhythms* by Fiona Cook
- *Woe: A Housecat's Story of Despair: (A Graphic Novel)* by Lucy Knisley

The Illinois Reads Program will be featured at the annual **2025 IRC Conference** in Springfield, Illinois on March 13-14, 2025. Conference registration is now open for educators, librarians, and others interested in promoting literacy.

The 2025 Illinois Reads Program will also be featured at the **Illinois Reads Book Festival** on April 26, 2025 in Jacksonville, Illinois. Readers throughout Illinois are invited to this free event.

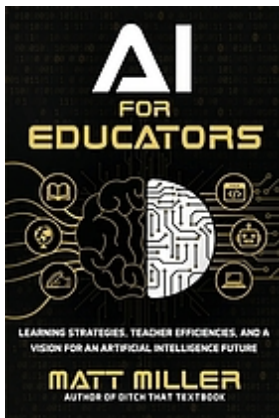
Visit www.illinoisreads.org to find out about more about each book and other upcoming Illinois Reads events.

#WhatIAmReading



I am reading [AI for Educators: Learning Strategies, Teacher Efficiencies, and a Vision for an Artificial Intelligence Future](#) by Matt Miller.

~ Julie Hoffman, IRC Past President



This book is a quick read, which is perfect for me now that I'm busy with all the back-to-school everything that I am trying to juggle. The book is easy to understand, even if you're not very techy. It is filled with tips and ideas to help us navigate this new world. Matt Miller addresses the concerns a lot of educators have about AI in education, shares strategies to help us talk with our students about using AI responsibly, and provides great ideas to start using AI to elevate instruction and student learning.

I am reading [Demon of Unrest](#) by Erik Larson.

~ Diana Wilkie, IRC Treasurer



Erik Larson, the author of *Devil in the White City*, tells the masterful nonfiction story of the chaotic six months between Lincoln's tight election and the surrender of Fort Sumter. So many things I did not understand about this time in history. The fight over slavery and the money that comes with it was already brewing. Lincoln thought the south was stronger pro-union and that when he took office they would be rational and things would calm down. Another thing I hadn't thought about...Lincoln's journey to move from Springfield to DC. Early in the journey, Lincoln gave memorable speeches but then later Detective Pinkerton helped move him secretly into the city. That brought mixed emotions from the people. Larson brings the story to life by including historical figures, both famous and obscure, to tie all the details together. Sometimes he includes interesting information just because he found it! Some of the notables are Major Robert Anderson, Fort Sumter's commander who was a slave owner but still protected the fort

because he was loyal to America's union; Edmund Ruffin, a vain secessionist; William Seward, an advisor to Lincoln; and Mary Chestnut, a wealthy planter who kept an invaluable diary. Larson researched this time period thoroughly. In fact, there are 50 pages of notes and bibliography!

IRC is reading the books from the Fall 2024 IRC Book Clubs.

~ Stephanie Benson, IRC Book Club Chair



Join educators from all over the state in the online **Fall 2024 IRC Book Club**! Choose one, two, or all three books! Read, reflect on, and respond to [The Playful Classroom: The Power of Play for All Ages](#) by Jed Dearybury and Julie P. Jones and/or [Get Free: Antibiases Literacy Instruction for Stronger Readers, Writers, and Thinkers](#) by Tricia Ebarvia and/or [Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals: Inclusive Teaching in the Linguistically Diverse Classroom](#) by Danling Fu, Xenia Hadjioannou, and Xiaodi Zhou. Beginning **October 20**, educators will participate in online discussions for the next seven-weeks. With **The Playful Classroom**, participants will learn how and why they should bring play into the classroom to make learning meaningful, relevant, and fun. With **Get Free**, participants will explore a framework that can help implement transformative and anti-bias literacy instruction where students better understand themselves, others, and the world. With **Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals**, participants will examine the development, evolution, and current realities of

educating emergent bilinguals and where the future of emergent bilingual education lies in an inclusive translanguaging pedagogy.



Ficheros As a Way to Teach Foundational Reading Skills in Spanish by Elvira Pichardo, Lewis University

Teaching for biliteracy and bilingualism includes a flexible and dynamic approach to literacy and language that honors Spanish and places value on growing and honoring the bilingualism of our students. Foundational Reading Skills, including word work, must be developed with emergent bilingual students' languaging, cultural knowledge, and biliteracy in mind and focusing on research that centers bilingualism and biliteracy (Escamilla et al., 2014).

One way to develop bilingual foundational skills is through the use of [Ficheros](#). Ficheros uses a holistic approach to Spanish literacy that develops four areas: oracy, reading, writing, and metalanguage. Following a Literacy Squared model includes an emphasis on direct, explicit, and collaborative instruction for students learning biliteracy in English-Spanish bilingual and dual language programs. Ficheros include examples of activities and word work using authentic Spanish teaching methods such as the use of silabas and palabras en familia in reading passages, oracy building activities where the students discuss readings and their classroom environment, writing activities focused on Spanish orthography, opportunities to discuss and compare two languages, and students working collaboratively and in whole group to make meaning and build comprehension using authentic Spanish text. Ficheros are a great resource

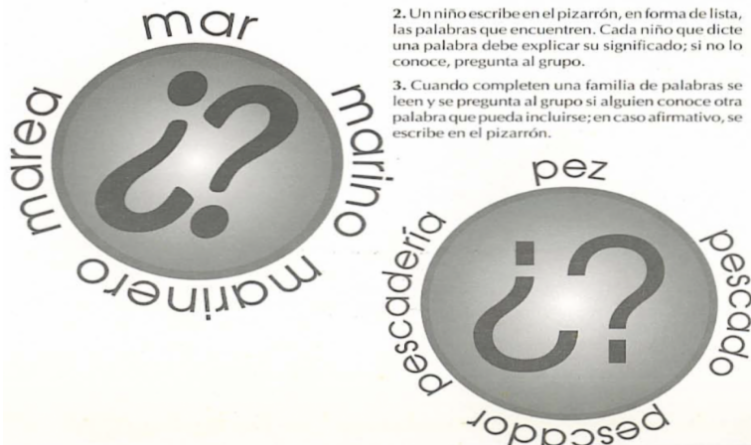
Example of word work using a second grade fichero:

Palabras en familia

Material

Tarjetas con las palabras *zapato* y *sal*, y sus derivadas (una palabra en cada tarjeta).

- Que los alumnos descubran la estabilidad ortográfica de las palabras derivadas.



1. El maestro organiza al grupo en equipos y les entrega las tarjetas con las palabras derivadas que se van a trabajar y algunas palabras de otra clase. Muestra a los niños una tarjeta con la palabra *zapato* y pide que busquen, entre las tarjetas que les entregó por equipo, las palabras que se parecen a ésta.

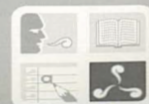
2. Un niño escribe en el pizarrón, en forma de lista, las palabras que encuentren. Cada niño que dicte una palabra debe explicar su significado; si no lo conoce, pregunta al grupo.

3. Cuando completen una familia de palabras se leen y se pregunta al grupo si alguien conoce otra palabra que pueda incluirse; en caso afirmativo, se escribe en el pizarrón.

4. Se repite este procedimiento con la palabra *sal*.

5. El maestro pregunta por la similitud en la escritura de las palabras de una familia. Probablemente los niños concluyan que todas esas palabras se derivan de la palabra *zapato*, que mantienen una relación de significado y que se escriben con *z*. En caso de que los niños no observen tales relaciones, el maestro orienta los comentarios con preguntas como las siguientes: "¿Qué es una *zapatería*? ¿Y una *zapatera*? ¿A qué se refiere *zapateado*? ¿A qué objeto se refieren? Y en su escritura, ¿en qué se parecen todas estas palabras?"

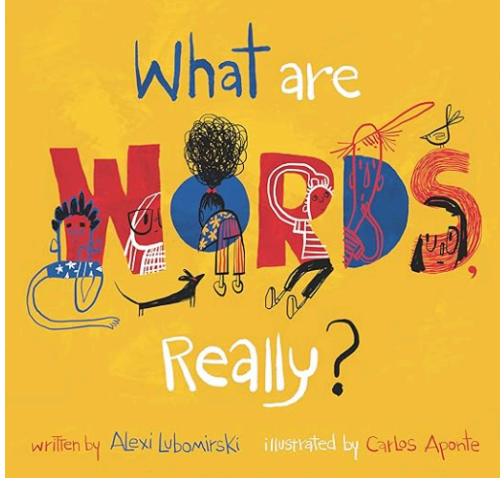
El maestro propicia la reflexión sobre la ortografía similar en todas las palabras de una familia. Esta situación didáctica también puede utilizarse para analizar palabras que presenten otra dificultad ortográfica.



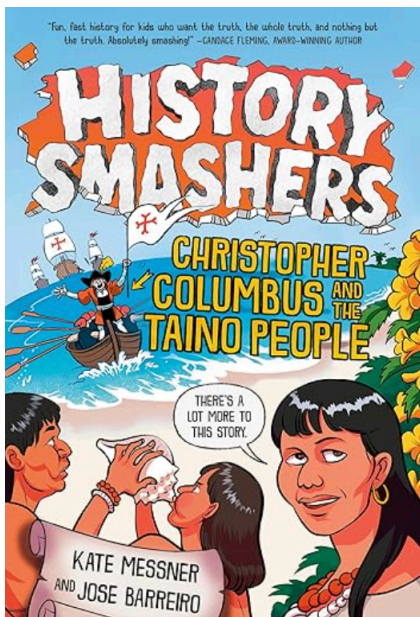
Family Literacy Bookshelf By Barb Ashton

As we say good-bye to summer with its sunny warm days, we welcome autumn with cooler and crisper air. This month's calendar reminds us that it's bullying and hazing prevention month, school safety, fire prevention, and family history month. There's also Columbus Day or Indigenous Peoples' Day and Halloween, plus the final days of the national campaign for the election of our country's president and other government leaders.

During this campaign cycle many derogatory and insulting words have been used by various political candidates for public office. A wonderful book to help you and your families address this topic with your students/children is [What Are Words, Really?](#) by Alexi Lubomirski. This book urges the reader to think about the words you use verbally and the power or impact these words might have on someone. Told in rhymed verse the author wants the reader to think about two words: HATE and LOVE. While one word "can cause harm, be hateful and cruel, the other can be kind, loving and uplifting." The message of this book is "to think before speaking, and words do



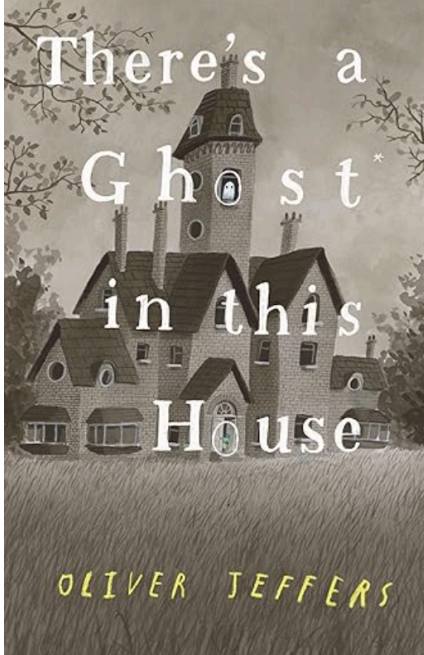
matter.” Through the use of bold colors and various font styles, the illustrations depict the characters in positive and negative scenes that enhance the message of the book. During these volatile times *What Are Words Really?* opens the door to discussion and would be an asset to all libraries.



There are many myths associated with Christopher Columbus as an explorer, and the discovery of America. To get the latest research about Columbus read [*History Smashers: Christopher Columbus and the Taino People*](#) by Kate Messner and Jose Barreiro. In this latest edition to the History Smasher Series, the authors smash many of the myths/facts about Columbus, the explorer, that have been recorded in history books and various other media over the years. As we've learned, Columbus had 3 ships – the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria. He wanted to find a new westward route to Asia. He made 4 different voyages but what is wrong is that Columbus never discovered America. His voyages took him to the islands of the Caribbean and the coast of South America. When Columbus and his crew landed they met the Taino People, a highly civilized and intelligent Indigenous people who had been living on the islands for thousands of years. The remaining chapters of the book focus on the life of the Taino people from Columbus to their life today. *History Smashers: Christopher Columbus and the Taino People* is an easy read with

sidebars that give additional information, along with humorous drawings, comics, photos, maps, scrolls, etc., that engage the reader. The back of the book contains an author note, an extensive bibliography and websites for further reading. The timeline highlights the major events of the story which also makes a nice summary of the book. The author also addresses President Joe Biden signing the national proclamation that October 12 is now Indigenous Peoples' Day.

To get you in the Halloween spirit, read [*There's a Ghost In This House*](#) by Oliver Jeffers. This is the story of a little girl who lives in a big, old haunted house. She spends her time looking for a ghost but has never seen one. She invites the reader “to follow her and tell her if you see one.” There are many ghosts in the house once the reader steps inside and begins the journey with the little girl. By turning the transparent pages the ghosts appear behind the sofa, jumping on the bed, rattling their chains in the hallway, and even in the attic. She wonders what they look like because they're very hard to see; the reader can see the ghosts but the little girl can't. *There Is a Ghost in This House* is enhanced by mixed media illustrations that encourage an interactive reading experience for early primary and primary



age students, along with a bit of humor. You can view this book on YouTube. It is also on the Monarch Book List for 2025.

Looking Ahead

October 5: World Teacher Day

October 10: Illinois Great Apple Crunch Day – Check out this [Guide of Activities](#)

October 14: Columbus Day

October 16: National Dictionary Day

October 20: National Day of Writing

October 24: United Nations Day

October 23-31: Red Ribbon Week

October 31: Halloween



Don't forget to take advantage of some upcoming PD opportunities planned throughout Illinois.

- **October 1, 2024: MID-State Reading Council** will host the Shifting the Balance Book Club from 4:30 to 5:30 pm at Gill Street Restaurant, 3002B Gill Street, Bloomington, Illinois.
- **October 2, 2024: IRC Webinar on AI in the Literacy Classroom: Friend or Foe?** with

- **October 8, 2024: West Suburban Reading Council** will host The Comprehensive Literacy Plan Update and Practical Ideas for Instruction Part 2 with Laura Beltchenko from 5:00 to 8:00 pm at St. Giles Gleason Building, McDonough Hall, 2nd Floor, 1101 North Columbian Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois.
- **October 10, 2024: Northern Illinois Reading Council** will host Ramped Up Read Alouds with Maria Walther from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the Pizza Villa, 824 W Lincoln Hwy, DeKalb, Illinois.
- **October 12, 2024: Lewis and Clark Reading Council** will host Barreling through Books from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at Global Brew Tap House, 2329 Plum Street, Ste 600, Edwardsville, Illinois.
- **October 15, 2024: Central Illinois Reading Council** will host the You'll Want A Pizza This Book from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at Sorrento's Pizzeria, 614 Broadway Street, Lincoln, Illinois.
- **October 15, 2024: Will County Reading Council** will host Unlocking the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan-Part I Oracy & Phonemic Awareness from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom.
- **October 16, 2024: Central Illinois Reading Council** will host the You'll Want A Pizza This Book from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Gallina's Pizza, 432 E. Monroe, Springfield, Illinois.
- **October 17, 2024: Southern Illinois Reading Council** will host Isn't it Ironic? Nurturing Humanity Through Digital Literacy and AI Workshop with Cindi Koudelka from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at Pagliai's Pizza, 509 S. Illinois Ave, Carbondale, Illinois.
- **October 20, 2024: Fall 2024 IRC Book Club** begins with choice of books: *The Playful Classroom: The Power of Play for All Ages* by Jed Dearybury and Julie P. Jones and/or *Get Free: Antibias Literacy Instruction for Stronger Readers, Writers, and Thinkers* by Tricia Ebarvia and/or *Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals: Inclusive Teaching in the Linguistically Diverse Classroom* by Danling Fu, Xenia Hadjioannou, and Xiaodi Zhou.
- **October 25, 2024: Secondary Reading League (SRL)** will host Why Do I Have To Read This? Strategies That Help Students Remove Their Masks Of Disengagement with Cris Tovani from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Tinley Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Drive, Tinley Park, Illinois.
- **October 26, 2024: Sauk Valley Reading Council** will participate in the Dixon Community

Trunk or Treat in Downtown Dixon, Illinois. Come see us there!

- **November 1, 2024: IRC** is accepting submissions for the following awards and grants:
 - **[IRC Service Award](#)**: This award will recognize an outstanding IRC Leader for time, commitment, and service to the Illinois Reading Council.
 - **[IRC Hall of Fame Award](#)**: This award recognizes significant contributions to reading and reading education.
 - **[Barack Obama Library Award](#)**: This award is a classroom library valued at \$1,000 that is given to a teacher of 5th to 8th grade students each year.
 - **[Family Literacy Award](#)**: This award recognizes an IRC member who promotes and supports parent involvement in children's reading.
 - **[Jerry Johns Reading Educator of the Year Award](#)**: This award will recognize an outstanding teacher who makes significant contributions in promoting literacy among students, colleagues, and school communities.

To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](#).

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit articles at any time to irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

#WhatIAmReading: Share a book that you are reading, in 3 to 4 sentences.

IRC Highlight Reels: Share snapshots of successes in your classrooms in 100 to 300 words. Remember no success is too big or too small to share and pictures welcomed!

Other Literacy Topics:

- Why We Need to Read Banned Books
- Tips for Teaching Writing
- Board Games that Teach Literacy Skills
- Trauma Informed Practices
- And any other literacy topics that interests you!

Thank you for helping to inspire your fellow educators! Posts will be shared on social media too!

QUICK LINKS

Visit the IRC Website

Full IRC Events Calendar

Latest on the IRC Conference

Available IRC Awards and Grants

Bring IRC PD to your School District

Learn more about the Illinois Reads Program

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to the Illinois Reading Council by email at irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org or by phone at 309-454-1341.

See what's also happening on our social media sites:

