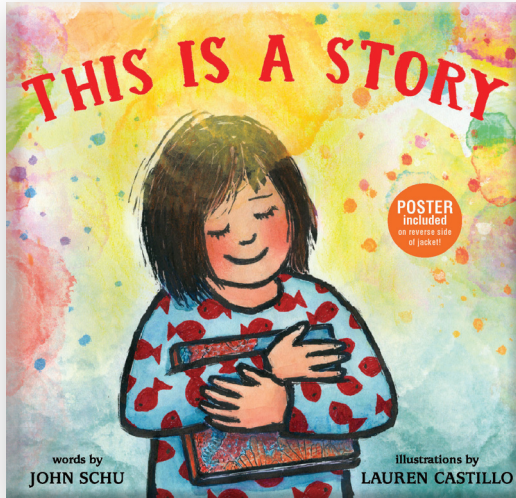


words by
John Schu

illustrations by
Lauren Castillo



ABOUT THE BOOK

With a seahorse kite in hand, a child heads out with Dad to the library. On the way, they stop at a park, joining lots of people, some of whom are flying kites, too. At the library, a person toting a big pile of books hands over a story on a favorite subject: the seahorse. All around, there are readers poring over books, each with their own questions, ideas to explore, hopes for the future, and imaginations ready to spark. With a warm, lyrical text and tenderly expressive illustrations, John Schu and Lauren Castillo invite us to imagine the myriad ways that books can foster connection and understanding—and how they can empower children, through their own passions, to transform the world.

This guide is designed to help you and your students celebrate discovering stories that they connect with and sharing them with others.

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Also available as an e-book



ABOUT JOHN SCHU

John Schu is the author of *This Is a School*, illustrated by Veronica Miller Jamison. He is also a children's librarian at Bookelicious and a part-time lecturer at Rutgers University. He was previously the Ambassador of School Libraries for Scholastic Book Fairs and has worked as a classroom teacher and school librarian. He travels all over the world visiting schools and meeting with students, teachers, and administrators as he advocates for the people and things he cares about most: kids, books, schools, and the libraries—and librarians—that connect them. John Schu lives in Naperville, Illinois. You can find his popular blog, *Watch. Connect. Read.*, at www.JohnSchu.com and follow him @MrSchuReads.



ABOUT LAUREN CASTILLO

Lauren Castillo is the award-winning illustrator of many books for children, including Kirkus Prize finalist *Imagine* by Juan Felipe Herrera, *Happy Like Soccer* by Maribeth Boelts, and *Yard Sale* by Eve Bunting. She is the author-illustrator of the Caldecott Honor Book *Nana in the City*. Lauren Castillo dreams and draws in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. You can find her online at www.laurencastillo.com and on social media @studiocastillo.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these questions to engage your students with the book before, during, and after reading.

1. Why do you think the librarian gives the child a book about seahorses?
2. What do you think the young reader knows about her brother that helps her decide to check out *City Cat* for him to read? How can this help you recommend books to other readers?
3. What are some of your favorite stories?
4. What makes a great story?
5. What is your earliest reading memory?
6. Who are the people in your life who have helped you connect with stories?
7. What are some things that you have learned from books?
8. What books do you think our classroom or library needs?
9. What are some questions that books have made you wonder about?
10. How can books spark a reader's imagination?
11. How can reading make your heart grow?
12. How would you describe your favorite reading spot?



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



Design Your Own Library

The library in *This Is a Story* is filled with many wonderful books, some titles that your readers may have even recognized. For this activity, have your students design their dream library. Encourage them to dream big and have fun creating these special places. Point out how the library in *This Is a Story* has many wonderful books on display, and urge them to do the same in the spaces they create.

Book Talks

When we fall in love with a story, we can't help but want to share it with others with the hope that they will decide to read the book themselves. Have students create a poster about a book that touched their heart. They can either draw the cover of the book or draw a favorite scene. Have students write one to three sentences about what made the book special to them.

To-Read Lists

Readers often get stuck when trying to decide what to read next. In this activity, students will create a list of books they want to read. Give students time to browse the classroom or school library to find books to add to their to-read list. When students select a book for their list, they can re-create the book's spine using the template in this guide. These to-read lists will become works of art that readers can go back to the next time they can't decide what to read.

Book Lists

For this activity, readers will create a list of titles based on the types of books they most enjoy reading. Examples of possible themes include books that make you laugh, favorite graphic novels, best series, and books you can't stop reading. Once readers have decided on the books for their themed list, have them include the theme with their name on the top book of the template from this guide, then decorate the spine for each book. Make sure they have access to the books on their lists so they can refer to them when drawing the spines. Create a classroom display so readers can share their book lists with their peers.

Letter to a Reading Mentor

Have your readers create a list of books that they love. Ask them to share with a partner how they were introduced to the book—for example, from a teacher read aloud, a public library, or a gift from a family member. Then encourage them to write a letter to the person who introduced them to a beloved book. This could be a family member, former teacher, librarian, or friend. Suggest that they include why the book is important to them and a recommendation of a book they think the reading mentor might enjoy. After they have written their letters, help them mail or deliver the letters to their reading mentors.



This guide was prepared by Colby Sharp, elementary teacher, cofounder of *Nerdy Book Club*, and cohost of *The Yarn*.

BOOK TALKS



_____ recommends

This book is special to me because:

BOOKS I WANT TO READ

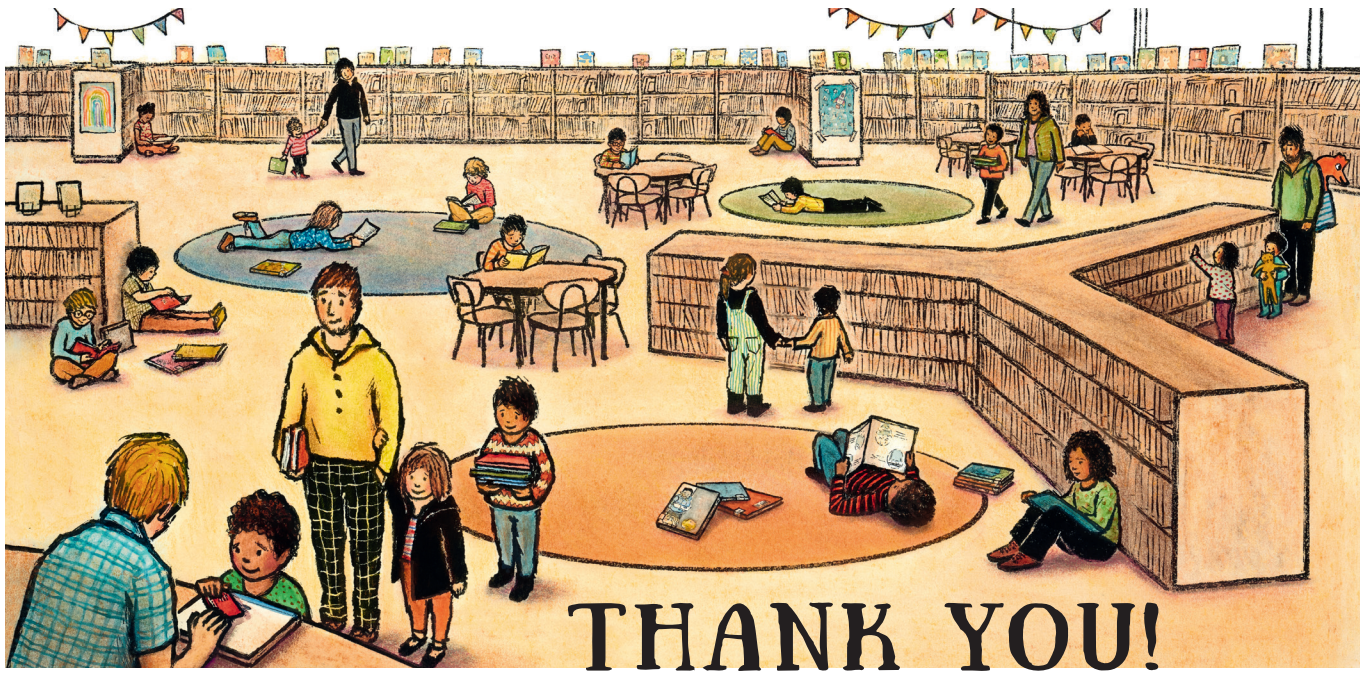
A series of ten empty rectangular boxes of varying heights and orientations, intended for writing book titles. The boxes are arranged in a row, with some being taller than others and some being tilted. The boxes are outlined in black and are currently empty.

BOOK LISTS

On the top book, write your name and the theme or topic of your list. Then write the titles and authors' names from your list on the remaining books. Copy the spines or create your own designs!

A stack of four blank rectangular boxes, intended for writing book titles and authors' names. The boxes are arranged in a descending staircase pattern from top to bottom. Each box is a simple outline with rounded corners and no text or markings inside.

LETTER TO A READING MENTOR



DEAR _____,

SINCERELY, _____