Compiled and written by The Israel Education Initiative, a program of Jewish LearningWorks

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Dear Educators,

The Israel Education Initiative, a program of Jewish LearningWorks, is proud to present *Israeli Books in Translation for Children and Youth - An Annotated List*. This list marks the second installment in the ambitious project we launched in 2011: creating the “Classic Israeli Bookshelf.”

The goal of the Classic Israeli Book Shelf program is to enable English speaking students and families to access Israeli children literature, thus forming a life-long bond between North American children and families and their peers in Israel, and, by extension, to Israel.

Many educators, in both Judaic and General studies, expressed a desire to have access to quality Israeli literature that was translated to English and was published. When we embarked on this project to address that need, we were surprised to find that such a list didn’t exist. I am grateful our Arts and Culture Specialist, Vavi Toran, took on the painstaking task of searching for the books, obtaining them, reading them and listing them in a way that we hope you will find user-friendly.

We were surprised to find how many books were already translated and published. Some of the books, such as the story of Itamar Ben Avi (“Rebirth”) or Sara Aharonson (The Gideonites) specifically relate to the Zionist narrative. Others, such as Amos Oz’ “Suddenly in the Depth of the Forest” have a more universal appeal.

All the books on this list could be used in a variety of ways. We sincerely hope that you will find this list useful to your work, and helps to connect you and your students to Israel and to its diverse and rich culture.

This is by no means a complete list of books in translation. We hope to expand it with additions, remarks, feedback and input from educators like you. Most of the books on the list are out of print, but are available in libraries and from online booksellers.

Ilan Vitemberg  
Director, Israel Education Initiative  
Jewish LearningWorks
# Early Childhood & Lower Grades

**Yona Tepper**  
*Passing By*  
**Illustrator:** Gil-Ly Alon Curiel  
Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 2010  

**Grade:** PreK-1  

**Background and Synopsis:**  
Little Yael looks through the railings of her second-story terrace to observe life on the street. Every time an animal, vehicle, or person approaches, she wonders who is coming. As each one passes by, she hears the sound it makes—the dog barking, the car honking its horn, the bicycle bell ringing, etc.—and then speculates about where it is going as it leaves. Finally, someone comes by that she recognizes. It’s her dad, who waves at her and takes her for a walk. The simple, repetitive language reflects a preschooler’s curiosity about the world, and the question-and-answer format invites interaction between readers and listeners. Full spreads alternate between Yael looking down from her balcony and thick-lined close-up illustrations of what she sees. The book features illustrations that include neighborhood signs in Hebrew, providing an introduction to the idea that similarities and differences exist in neighborhoods throughout the world.  

**Author’s Bio:**  
Yona Tepper was born at Kibbutz Dafna in 1941 and studied education and creative drama. She taught for many years and later became school principal. She is currently editor for children and youth at Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House. Tepper has published 44 books for children and youth. She has been awarded many literary prizes and her books have been translated into seven languages.  

**Tags:**  
Curiosity, guessing, exploring  

**Mirik Snir**  
*When I First Held You*  
Kar-Ben Publishing, 2009  

**Grade:** PreK-2
**Background and Synopsis:**
A soothing, rhythmic lullaby from a prolific Israeli author celebrates the beauty, harmony and joy in the natural world as it welcomes a new baby. Illustrated vibrantly and colorfully by Mirik Snir’s daughter, Eleyor Snir.

**Author's Bio:**
Mirik Snir was born in 1948, during the Israeli War of Independence. She was raised and educated in Kibbutz Kfar Giladi, as one of twelve siblings. She is a mother of nine children, a grandmother of fifteen grandchildren, author, poet, and elementary school and special education teacher. Mirik Snir published her first book in 1982. Since then, she has published more than 80 books, all of which are still in print and in demand, having received distinguished reviews.

**Tags:**
Bedtime, new baby, nature, love, beauty, joy

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**Miri Leshem-Pelly**  
**Lon-Lon’s Big Night**
Milk and Honey Press, 2007  
Bi-lingual English-Hebrew

**Grade:** PreK-3

**Background and Synopsis:**
In Israel’s Negev desert, a family of sand foxes lives inside a burrow under the ground. This night, for the first time, Lon-Lon’s parents are taking him out of the burrow. Lon-Lon runs off in excitement, gets lost, and discovers new animals. Some are friendly, some not. Children love the sand fox and the animals he meets — a jerboa, a hedgehog, a bat, an owl, and a hyrax – all unique Israeli desert species.

**Author and illustrator’s Bio:**
Miri Leshem-Pelly is an author and illustrator. She wrote and illustrated 12 children's books and illustrated 14 children books for other writers. Her favorite topics for writing and illustrating are nature and animals.

**Tags:**
Israeli landscape, nature, animals, adventure,

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**Shira Sheri**  
**Jonathan and the Waves**
Milk and Honey Press, 2007  
Bi-lingual English-Hebrew

**Grade:** PreK-3

**Background and Synopsis:**
The Mediterranean coastline of Israel offers long stretches of inviting beaches. Jonathan loves going with his family to play in the sand, but when he wants to join his big sister in the water, he is afraid of the waves. Jonathan’s mother turns to Jewish spirituality for a reassuringly effective solution.

**Tags:** Israeli landscape, nature, adventure, friendship
Eve Tal
A New Boy
Illustrator: Ora Swartz
Milk and Honey Press, 2007
Bi-lingual English-Hebrew

Grade: PreK-3

Background and Synopsis:
Boris is a new immigrant to Israel. The children in his kindergarten talk to him, but Boris turns away. He doesn't yet know Hebrew. The children try to play with him, but he plays only by himself. The children stop trying to be nice to Boris—until one boy's father gets called up for army duty. Feeling sad himself, this boy begins to see Boris in a new light, and all is different when soon a new boy from Ethiopia joins the class.

Tags:
Immigration, friendship, acceptance

A Fish for Mrs. Gardenia
By Yossi Abolafia

Grade: K-3

Background and Synopsis:
Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Gardenia have an unexpressed, but deep affection for one another. When Mr. Bennett catches a fine fish, he invites his friend over for dinner and sets about to ensure that everything is perfect. But before he can get the fish onto the backyard grill, it slips from Mr. Bennett's grasp, through a neighbor's window and into a passing milk can. Further twists and turns in the plot eventually deliver the fish back to a sizzling grill; dinner is a success and the relationship of the old friends blossoms. Children will revel in the antic journey of the fish; Abolafia's softly hued, humorous watercolors make this a sweetly comic romance.

Author and illustrator's Bio:
Yossi Abolafia (born 1945 in Tiberias) is an Israeli writer and illustrator of children's books, as well as a graphic artist, cartoonist, director and screenwriter of animation films. Abolafia was an illustrator for the Israeli newspapers Hadashot and Ma'ariv, and was the head of the animation department in Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, which he helped establish.

Tags:
Intergenerational relationship, humor, love

My Three Uncles
By Yossi Abolafia
Greenwillow Books, New York, 1985

Grade: K-3
**Background and Synopsis:**
“My three uncles are triplets. They look so much alike people can't tell them apart. Even I have trouble knowing who is who.” Abolafia develops this dilemma amusingly, in simple words and little episodes that are always big occasions: a visit to the zoo, a birthday dinner, a day at the beach, and a Halloween party. At each meeting, the little girl narrator, and readers with her, try to get the uncles straight. Each time, there's a new twist to consider. First, Uncle Jeff decides to grow a mustache to set himself apart; but when next seen he has already shaved it off (“it tickled”) but the other two uncles have grown them. The little girl finally learns to tell the uncles apart by observing their behavior. It's a well-taken point, and a fitting solution to a fetchingly posed problem. The storyline is accompanied with playful drawings.

**Author and illustrator’s Bio:**
Yossi Abolafia (born 1945 in Tiberias) is an Israeli writer and illustrator of children's books, as well as a graphic artist, cartoonist, director and screenwriter of animation films. Abolafia was an illustrator for the Israeli newspapers Hadashot and Ma'ariv, and was the head of the animation department in Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, which he helped establish.

**Tags:**
Individuality, uniqueness, family, intergenerational relationship

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**Giora Carmi**
**And Shira Imagined**
The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, New York, Jerusalem, 1988

**Grade:** PreK – 3

**Background and Synopsis:**
As Shira and her parents travel around Israel, her parents remind her of the significance of each site, which she interprets in her own way: when told that busy, modern Tel Aviv was only sand and dust 100 years ago, Shira pictures herself and some toy-like creatures building sandcastles; when she hears that the old fortress, Masada, was the place where the Jews clashed with the Romans, Shira imagines a playful battle. A historical theme is not strictly adhered to; at one point her parents point out the Red Sea, saying, "Just imagine, we'll be looking at thousands of fish and swimming with them." In the final frame, Shira envisions her bedroom back in America, where the cast of her imagination awaits her toys. Black-and-white pictures of modern Israel alternate with the full-color fantasies. The language of the telling is simple and straightforward; this complements the elaborate pictures from Carmi's own fanciful imagination.

**Author and illustrator’s Bio:**
Children's book author and illustrator Giora Carmi (b. 1944) is best known for his illustrations of retellings of classic Jewish folktales, including *The Rooster Prince* and *A Journey to Paradise*, and of original children's tales with a folktale-like flavor, such as *The Little Menorah Who Forgot Chanukah* and many others in Israel and abroad. *And Shira Imagined* is one of three books he authored and illustrated.

**Tags:**
Land and State of Israel, imagination, travel
Yonatan Geffen
Songs Anat Loves Best
Dvir Tel Aviv, Israel 1974

Grade: PreK-3

Background and Synopsis:
Geffen’s first book, Songs Anat Loves Best, was written for his four-year-old sister when he was 21 years old. Later he wrote another book for his sister Stories Anat Loves Best. This book is truly an Israeli classic and still very popular with young readers. The translation, in rhyme, maintained the Israeli flavor.

Author’s Bio:
Geffen (b. 1947) is an Israeli author, poet, songwriter, journalist, and playwright. He was born in Moshav Nahalal, the “Mother of the Moshavim”, established by early pioneers in 1921. He is the father of rock star Aviv Geffen, and is Moshe Dayan's nephew.
Much of Gefen’s success came from his works for children, like the song HaYalda Hachi Yafa BaGan (The Prettiest Girl in Kindergarten) and the book HaKeves HaShisha Asar (the 16th sheep), but he has also written many popular songs, poems, plays and stories for adults. He frequently collaborated with David Broza, rendering Spanish songs into Hebrew. In 2005, he was voted the 72nd-greatest Israeli of all time, in a poll by the Israeli news website Ynet to determine whom the general public considered the 200 Greatest Israelis.

Remarks:
A CD with songs and stories in Hebrew was produced.

Tags:
Poetry, family, children’s daily experiences, friendship

Nira Harel
It’s No Problem
Illustrator: Ora Eytan
Kerstel Books, 1984

Grade: K-3

Background and Synopsis:
Sam is a bit scared of the dark. He can’t understand why his friend Michael is more frightened of Sam’s spotty dog. “You just have to get used to a dog,” he tells Michael, “but the dark is really frightening.” Then one day Sam finds that he’s got used to the dark and it’s no longer a problem for him!
In this amusing book for young readers, Sam and his friends encounter everyday ups and downs, which often turn out to be more interesting and less alarming than they first seemed.

Author’s Bio:
Nira Harel was born in Tel Aviv in 1936. She holds a BA in sociology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and an MA in education from Tel Aviv University. She has taught, worked as journalist and broadcaster, produced study programs for the Ministry of Education, edited a children’s magazine and served as chief editor for children’s books at Am Oved Publishing House. At present, she is editor of a website that encourages children to read. Since 1970, Harel has published nearly 60 for children and a book of feuilletons. She has been awarded many literary prizes. Her books have been published in 11 languages.
Nira Harel
The Key to My Heart
Illustrator: Yossi Abolafia
Kane/Miller, 2003

Grade: K-3

Background and Synopsis:
Harel, author of more than 40 children's books, delivers a simple, quietly paced story about a father and son's search for missing keys. After an afternoon of playing, Jonathan and his dad realize "five keys on a key chain, with a picture of Jonathan" are lost. They set off to find them, retracing the father's steps through an urban Israeli neighborhood that's subtly different (signs are in Hebrew, a man wears a yarmulke) but will still be familiar to young American readers. They encounter a friendly postal worker who stamps Jonathan's hand, Jack the crazy-haired barber, a pizza maker flipping dough, a helpful newsstand owner and other characters. Eschewing drama (the keys await them at home, where Jonathan's teacher has dropped them off, thanks to the boy's picture), Harel plays off emotional themes that children of every nation will latch on to: the strength of community, the love of family and the reassurance of ordinary routine. Abolafia, a top Israeli illustrator, underscores Harel's words with his uncomplicated, inviting line drawings, adding hints of gentle humor (two cats trail Jonathan and his dad on their search). Quietly reassuring about a world that's often topsy-turvy, this book expresses the importance of community.

Author's Bio:
Nira Harel was born in Tel Aviv in 1936. She holds a BA in sociology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and an MA in education from Tel Aviv University. She has taught, worked as journalist and broadcaster, produced study programs for the Ministry of Education, edited a children's magazine and served as chief editor for children’s books at Am Oved Publishing House. At present, she is editor of a website that encourages children to read. Since 1970, Harel has published nearly 60 for children and a book of feuilletons. She has been awarded many literary prizes. Her books have been published in 11 languages.

Illustrator's Bio:
Yossi Abolafia (born 1945 in Tiberias) is an Israeli writer and illustrator of children's books, as well as a graphic artist, cartoonist, director and screenwriter of animation films. Abolafia was an illustrator for the Israeli newspapers Hadashot and Ma'ariv, and was the head of the animation department in Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, which he helped establish.

Remarks:
While the story is universal, the illustrations convey an Israeli atmosphere and some of the streets’ and shops’ signs are in Hebrew.

Tags:
Father-son relationship, family, love, community
**Etgar Keret**  
**Dad Runs Away With The Circus**  
**Illustration: Rutu Modan**  
Candlewisk Press, 2004  

**Grade:** K-3  

**Background and Synopsis:**  
In this imaginative graphic novel, Dad joins the circus, travels around the world, and becomes a star. While the tale is meant to be taken tongue-in-cheek, some children may be concerned by the fact that the father abandons his family to follow his dream. However, the story ends happily with the man returning home. Done in pencil and then digitally layered and colored, the cartoon illustrations bring the narrative to life. From the excitement on the children’s faces when they see their father perform for the first time to the goofy nature of his persona, the pictures perfectly capture the feelings and hopes of the characters. Despite the questionable theme, this is a well-told, quickly paced story that most youngsters will find silly; Dad’s eccentric behaviors will certainly hold their attention.

**Author’s Bio:**  
Keret is an Israeli writer known for his short stories, graphic novels, and scriptwriting for film and television. Keret's books have been translated into fifteen languages. In 1998, his short stories were incorporated into the literature curriculum for Israeli high school students. He lectures at Tel Aviv University Film School. Dad Runs Away with the Circus, his first book for children, he says, "It's about how grownups have dreams, too, and about how life can become a circus if you just let it." Etgar Keret lives in Tel Aviv.

**Illustrator’s Bio:**  
Rutu Modan is a two-time winner of Israel's prestigious Ben-Yitzhak Award for children's book illustration, and she shares the author's sentiments about grownups following their dreams. She is one of Israel's leading illustrators and comic-book graphic-novel artists. Modan’s first full-length graphic novel Exit Wounds, tells the story of a 20-something cab driver working in Tel Aviv. In 2008, a graphic serial composed of 17 chapters, was published on a weekly basis in the New York Times Magazine.

**Tags:**  
Imagination, aspirations, uniqueness, family, intergenerational relationships

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**Meir Shalev**  
**My Father Always Embarrasses Me**  
**Illustrator: Yossi Abolafia**  
English: Chicago, Wellington, 1991  

**Grade:** K-3  

**Background and Synopsis:**  
Mortimer Dunne has a problem. He's proud of his mother—a TV reporter—but his writer father "does nothing—only hammers away at the typewriter and embarrasses his son." Furthermore, Dad dresses inappropriately, snores at PTA meetings, oversleeps when it's time to take his son to school and then—the ultimate embarrassment—wants to kiss him in front of the mortified Mortimer's classmates. This wise and witty tale of role reversal goes even further: when Dad can't find his clothes in the morning, his vexed offspring
says, "I've told you a thousand times, lay out your clothes before you go to bed!" It comes as no surprise that father, not mother, enters a school baking contest—a competition that offers an amazing, scrumptious cake along with some unusual revelations from Dad. Shalev himself has cooked up a fine confection: he uses liberal portions of humor to serve up some splendid points about the intricacies of father-son relationships. The recipe is sweetened with Abolafia's comically homey pictures.

Author's Bio:
Leading author Meir Shalev was born in 1948 in Nahalal, Israel’s first moshav, where he also grew up. He later moved to Jerusalem, where he lives today. After studying psychology at the Hebrew University, Shalev became well known as the producer and moderator of radio and TV programs. He is also a regular columnist in the Israeli press, in particular for Yedioth Ahronoth. His novels have been bestsellers abroad as well as in Israel; he has also written two non-fiction books and five books for children. Shalev has been awarded many prizes including the American National Jewish Book Award for The Pigeon and the Boy (2007). His work has been published abroad in over 20 languages.

Illustrator’s Bio:
Yossi Abolafia (born 1945 in Tiberias) is an Israeli writer and illustrator of children's books, as well as a graphic artist, cartoonist, director and screenwriter of animation films. Abolafia was an illustrator for the Israeli newspapers Hadasot and Ma'ariv, and was the head of the animation department in Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, which he helped establish.

Tags:
Family, parents-children relationship, gender
**Mira Meir**  
Alina a Russian Girl Comes to Israel: A Russian Girl Comes to Israel  
The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1982

**Grade:** 3-5

**Background and Synopsis:**  
The story of Alina is a true story. It deals with one of the most stirring events of our time – the modern-day exodus of the Jewish people from Soviet Russia, where for many years Jews have not been free to live as Jews. Alina, a sensitive nine-year old girl, has just arrived with her family to Israel. She misses the life she left behind. She feels out of place in her new home in Jerusalem and imagines herself ignored by her new classmates. As she adjusts to her Israeli surroundings – a new language, the different games the children play, strange foods and customs – the reader joins her in her discovery of life in Israel and the challenges and joys of new immigrants to any new society.

**Author's Bio:**  
Mira Meir was born in Lodz, Poland, in 1932, and came to Israel as a young child. She has been a member of Kibbutz Nachshon since its establishment in 1950. Meir studied Hebrew language and literature at Tel Aviv University. She has edited books for children and young readers at Sifriat Poalim Publishing House since 1969. Meir has published four collections of poetry, 25 books for children, and a biography.

**Tags:**  
Immigration (Russian), adjusting to a new life, friendship

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**Abraham Regelson**  
The Dolls Journey to Eretz Israel  
Biblio Books, 2005

**Grade:** 3-5

**Background and Synopsis:**  
A fanciful adventure story of a doll family's journey by land, sea and air, on their way from America to be with their mother Sharona in pre-state Israel. Some seventy-five years after the first edition of this well-loved early Hebrew children’s classic appeared in Tel Aviv, here is an English translation by the author’s daughter Sharona, who as a little girl was the original “mother of the dolls”. When her family emigrated from Cleveland to pre-state Israel in 1933, the dolls were left behind with Sharona's friend Phyllis, but they—yearning for their mother's care, her songs, stories and Sabbath table—are determined to follow her across the Atlantic. Steeped in Jewish lore and sentiment, this delightful doll-fantasy is intertwined with the real-life adventures of the author’s journey with his family.

**Author’s Bio:**  
Abraham Regelson, a renowned Hebrew poet, was born in Russia in 1896, and immigrated to the US with his parents in 1905. He studied in the cheder, yeshiva and public schools in New York’s lower East Side. Employed as a librarian and Hebrew teacher in New York and Cleveland Hebrew schools, at the same time he wrote poetry,
essays, articles and legends which were printed in various publications. He moved with his family to early pre-state Israel in 1933, where he was employed on the staff of the Hebrew daily, Davar. There he co-founded the paper’s children’s supplement, where the classic Dolls’ Journey to Eretz-Israel was first published in installments.

Tags:
History (Pre-state Israel), adventure, imagination,

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**Galila Ron-Feder-Amit**  
**The Time Tunnel – Jerusalem Under Siege**  
Modan Publishing House, 2006

**Grade:** 3-6

**Background and Synopsis:**
In Amit's Time Tunnel series, two Israeli kids find their way into a tunnel that sends them back in time to important events in Jewish-Zionist history, such as the battle of Tel-Hai, the 1967 unification of Jerusalem, and the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. This book, Jerusalem Under Siege is about Jerusalem during the Israeli War of Independence.

**Author’s Bio:**
Galila Ron-Feder-Amit was born in Haifa in 1949. She has a degree in biblical studies and Hebrew literature from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. For seven years she was foster-mother to 10 children from broken homes, and she recorded her experiences in a fictional series that was broadcast on radio and adapted for the stage and TV. Ron-Feder-Amit has published six novels for adults and about 250 books for children and youth, many of which have been broadcast, filmed and serialized in children’s and teen magazines. In 2008, she received the World Zionist Organization Award for Lifetime Achievement and Social Involvement.

**Tags:**
History (War of Independence, Jerusalem), adventure, friendship

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**Hagit Allon and Lena Zehavi**  
**The Mystery of the Dead Sea Scrolls**  
Illustrator: Yossi Abolafia  
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 2003

**Grade:** 3-6

**Background and Synopsis:**
A delightful story about Daniel, 11 years old and living in Jerusalem, who aspires to be a detective. When assigned to do a school project on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Daniel discovers there are even bigger mysteries to be solved. His investigation takes him to the Shrine of the Book at The Israel Museum in Jerusalem, where he gets his first clues, then on to Qumran in the Judean Desert, where an archaeologist guides him through the place where the scrolls were found. Yossi Abolafia’s lighthearted illustrations accompany full-color photographs that bring this story to life, as we get to know Daniel, his family, and the people he meets along the way. Young readers will learn about one of the world’s most exciting and important archaeological finds, and will get a feel for life in Israel today, while they enjoy following Daniel’s progress on his “big case.”
Authors’ Bio:
The authors, Hagit Allon and Lena Zehavi, trained as archaeologists and are senior educators at the Israel Museum Youth Wing.

Illustrator’s Bio:
Yossi Abolafia (born 1945 in Tiberias) is an Israeli writer and illustrator of children's books, as well as a graphic artist, cartoonist, director and screenwriter of animation films. Abolafia was an illustrator for the Israeli newspapers Hadashot and Ma’ariv, and was the head of the animation department in Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, which he helped establish.

Tags:
History (Ancient Israel), Archaeology, Adventure,

Nahum Gutman
The Path of Orange Peels: Adventures in the Early Days of Tel Aviv
Dodd, Mead, 1979

Grade: 4-7

Background and Synopsis:
During World War I as the British and Turks struggle for control of Palestine, a Jewish youth becomes unwittingly involved in a dangerous and important mission.

The story, based on historical facts, takes place during the expulsion of Jews from Jaffa and Tel Aviv during WWI by the Ottoman rulers, who were suspicious that the Jewish inhabitants of these two coastal settlements spy or aid the British in overtaking Palestine. Nahum, a 15 year old, moves with his family to temporary huts near Petach Tikva, and hides in the orange groves to escape enlistment to the Turkish Army. There he meets another boy and together they embark on a secret mission that requires them to return to Tel Aviv. They follow the path of orange peels that was left by their friends and eventually succeed in their mission.

Author’s Bio:
The son of an author, Nahum Gutman (1898-1980) was born in Bessarabia and moved to Eretz Yisrael as a child. He grew up in Yaffo, opposite the sand dunes later to become Tel Aviv, and these locales dominate his landscapes. He was one of the first children to live in the new city of Tel Aviv, and this influential childhood experience is recounted in his books A Small City with Few People and Between Sands and Blue Skies.

Gutman began his work as a children's illustrator in the 1920's, and he continued to work in children's literature throughout his career. Gutman was one of the first authors to write for children in Hebrew, and for his contribution to children’s literature, a field which he helped launch, he was awarded the Israel Prize in 1978.

Gutman artistic influences included Henri Rousseau and Matisse and his paintings exhibit a sense of innocence and nostalgia for life in the early days of Tel Aviv. Gutman is also famous for his illustration of Bialik poems and for mosaics he designed in the Shalom Tower in Tel Aviv and elsewhere.

Tags:
History (WWI, Ottoman Rule, Balfur Declaration, early Tel Aviv), adventure, friendship
David Grossman

Duel
Bloomsbury USA Children’s Books, New York, 1998

Grade: 4-7

Background and Synopsis:
David is a twelve-year-old boy living in Jerusalem in 1966. His best friend just happens to be seventy-year-old Heinrich Rosenthal, who lives at the Beit Hakerem Home for the Aged. Their friendship takes an unexpected turn when Mr. Rosenthal receives a threatening letter from the man he once knew as "the bully of Heidelberg University." The letter accuses Mr. Rosenthal of stealing a priceless painting and challenges him to a duel if it is not returned immediately. But Mr. Rosenthal didn’t steal the painting. Who did? Determined to find some answers and prevent the duel, David plays detective and ultimately uncovers the story of two beautiful paintings, one of a woman's eyes and the other of her mouth, given by the artist to the two men who are now willing to kill one another over them. With some brilliant sleuthing and a bit of luck, David manages to pull together the strings of a story that began more than thirty years before, preventing a tragedy by bringing a long-dead memory to back to life.

Author’s Bio:
Leading Israeli novelist David Grossman (b. 1954, Jerusalem) studied philosophy and drama at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and later worked as an editor and broadcaster at Israel Radio. Grossman has written seven novels, a play, a number of short stories and novellas, and a number of books for children and youth. He has also published several books of non-fiction, including interviews with Palestinians and Israeli Arabs. Grossman received many notional and international literary awards. In 2007, his novels The Book of Internal Grammar and See Under: Love were named among the ten most important books since the creation of the State of Israel. His books have been translated into over 25 languages.

Remarks:
Takes place in modern day Jerusalem. Told from a twelve-year old point of view.

Tags:
Intergenerational relationship, history (Pre-war Europe, Pre-state Israel), immigration, love, jealousy

Moshe Shamir

The Fifth Wheel
Illustrator: Shmuel Katz
Benmir Books, Berkeley, California 1961

Grade: 4-8

Background and Synopsis:
The Fifth Wheel is a novel about kibbutz life. Subtly blending humorous and touching events, the book leads its young hero, Kolbo, from one hilarious adventure to another, and leads the reader through the beautiful countryside of northern Israel. In his adventures Kolbo meets scores of typical and colorful characters from all walks of Israeli life.
Author’s Bio:
Moshe Shamir, for many years the acknowledged spokesman for the Sabra generation, was widely acclaimed as one of the greatest Israeli writers. His published works includes novels, plays, and books for young readers, collections of short stories, literary and general essays, and a political autobiography. Shamir served as a member of Kneseet (Israeli Parliament) from 1977 to 1981.

Illustrator’s Bio:
Shmuel Katz, for many years member of kibbutz Gaaton in the West Galilee, was one of the foremost book illustrators in Israel, as well as a successful artist and cartoonist, especially as an interpreter of life and landscape of the country.

Tags:
kibbutz life, adventure, everyday life in Israel’s early and mid years.

Daniella Carmi
Smir and Yonatan
Scholastic, Blue Sky Press, 2002

Grade: 5-8

Background and Synopsis:
Samir is a young Palestinian boy who wishes for anything to happen — a bombing, an accident in the city square, anything — so that he won’t have to go to the Israeli hospital to have surgery on his leg. Nothing occurs, though, and Samir soon finds himself in a hospital bed sharing a room with four other children each of whom has his/her own illnesses and troubles.
It is Yonatan, a boy with his arm in a metal cast and his nose always in an Astronomy book, in particular who captures his interest, speaking to Samir only at night once the other children have fallen asleep. He promises Samir that when Samir has had his surgery he will take him to Mars. How, Samir doesn’t know, but in the quiet of the night the two boys plan a trip to the distant planet.
It is on this wondrous computer-generated trip with Yonatan that Samir begins to understand, and heal from, his brother Fadi’s death. A trip where Samir can look at his world — a world of Palestinians and Israelis, sick people and healthy people — and see how simple it all really is, and how alike everyone really is.

Author’s Bio:
Daniella Carmi was born in Tel Aviv. She studied philosophy and communications at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and writes drama, screenplays and books for adults and children. She has published five books for adults and eight books for children and youth. Her book, Smir and Yonatan, was awarded an Honorable Mention from UNESCO for Children’s and Young People’s Literature in the Service of Tolerance (1997), the Berlin Prize for Best Children’s Book in Translation (1997), the Silver Quill Award (Germany, 1997), the Batchelder Award for Best Translated Book by the American Library Association (2001), and the Italian WIZO Prize (2003). Her books have been translated into 15 languages.

Remarks:
The book is a Winner of the Mildred Batchelder Award

Tags:
Israeli-Palestinian coexistence, friendship, loss
Uriel Ofek, Author and Editor
The Dog Who Flew and Other Favorite Stories From Israel
Sabra Books, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1969

Grade: 5-8

Background and Synopsis:

Editor's Bio:
Ofek was a writer for children and youth, editor, lyricist, poet, translator, and Israeli children's literature scholar.

Remarks:
A collection of short stories

Tags:
History (mostly around the early years of the state), everyday life in Israel

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Uriel Ofek
Smoke Over Golan
A Novel of the 1973 Yom Kippur War
Methuen Publishing Ltd, 1981

Grade: 5-8

Background and Synopsis:
A 10-year-old Israeli boy's adventure near the front during the Yom Kippur War between Israel and Egypt and Syria.
On a farm in Israel near the Syrian border, Eitan attends "the smallest school in the world," in a storeroom where a "girl soldier" who is also a certified teacher has been assigned just to him. Through his teacher Eitan meets the soldiers on a nearby base, and on his own he becomes friendly with a Syrian boy who has crossed the border in pursuit of a wandering skin-and-bones donkey. Then, with Eitan's mother off to town to have a baby, the Yom Kippur War breaks out; his army major father is called up; the evacuation bus fails to appear; and Eitan finds himself surrounded by fighting.

Author's Bio:
Ofek was a writer for children and youth, editor, lyricist, poet, translator Israeli children's literature scholar. Ofek served as a medic in the Palmach Brigades, War of Independence and was in Jordanian captivity, where he spent about nine months. He edited the children's newspaper Ofek for many years. He laid the foundation for the Bibliography of Jewish children's literature, Hebrew and Yiddish, and the global children's literature. Many of his books are based on his
experiences in childhood and youth in Borochov neighborhood in Tel Aviv. Generations of Israeli children and youth have been brought up on his books, which brought history to life. Uriel Ofek died in 1987 at the age of 61.

Tags:
History (Yom Kippur War), coping during war times, vulnerability, courage

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**Uri Orlev**

**Lydia, Queen of Palestine**
*(in Hebrew: Lydia, Queen of Eretz Yisrael)*

Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1993
New York, Puffin (Penguin), 1995

**Grade:** 5-8

**Background and Synopsis:**
In her own words, Lydia is a “terror.” She is also a survivor, escaping to Palestine from Romania during WWII to become a resident of a kibbutz. After reading her account, one might conclude that particular kibbutz was never again the same. . . Ingenious, self-confident, energetic, and bright, Lydia is a force to be reckoned with and a character no one can ignore.

Lydia, a typically self-centered and unusually spirited child caught up in the dissolution of her personal and societal worlds, narrates her story. Her parents separate, divorce, and ultimately remarry—both to people she considers to be her enemies. World War II Romania becomes an increasingly dangerous place for Jews, and Lydia’s mother sends her to a kibbutz in Israel, promising to follow soon. Adjustment to communal life is difficult for an individualist like Lydia, and when her mother neither arrives nor writes, she seeks out her father, already in Israel. Reluctantly, she comes to realize that ”That Woman” to whom he is now married is not really an adversary. When her mother arrives married to the man Lydia had tried to get rid of, she is also able to accept him. This is an honest book peopled with convincing characters whose petty jealousies and concerns occupy them more than the larger events of the world in which they live. Lydia’s experiences are often wryly humorous; she is both inventive and unpredictable, and never boring.

**Author’s Bio:**

Uri Orlev was born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1931 and spent the early years of World War II in the Warsaw Ghetto. His father was captured by the Russians and saw his sons again only in 1954 in Israel; his mother was killed by the Nazis. After being smuggled out of the ghetto and hidden by Polish families, Orlev and his younger brother were sent to Bergen-Belsen. They were freed two years later and immigrated to pre-state Israel. Orlev has published 29 books for children and youth, as well as fiction for adults. His books are listed year after year as favorites of Israeli kids and youth.

**Tags:**
History (pre-Holocaust, pre-state Europe and Israel), youth immigration, Kibbutz life, family, divorce, autonomy, coming of age
**Amos Oz**  
**Soumchi**  
The Toby Press, 2003  

**Grade:** 5-8  

**Background and Synopsis:**  
When Soumchi, an eleven-year-old growing up in British-occupied Jerusalem just after World War II, receives a bicycle as a gift from his Uncle Zemach, he is overjoyed—even if it is a girl’s bicycle. Ignoring the taunts of other boys in his neighborhood, he dreams of riding far away from them, out of the city and across the desert, toward the heart of Africa. But first he wants to show his new prize to his friend Aldo.  
It is when he agrees to swap his bicycle for Aldo’s new train set that Soumchi’s misadventures begin, involving a neighborhood bully, a runaway dog, a lucky pencil sharpener, and a purloined love poem written for his classmate Esthie. He imagines ways out of his predicament—everything from escaping to the Himalayas to kidnapping the King of England.  

In the tradition of such memorable characters as Huckleberry Finn and Holden Caulfield, Amos Oz’s Soumchi is fresh, funny, and always engaging.  

Soumchi has been translated into 12 languages.  

**Author’s Bio:**  
World-renowned author Amos Oz was born in 1939 in Jerusalem, and at the age of 15 went to live on Kibbutz Hulda. He studied philosophy and literature at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and has been a visiting fellow at Oxford University, author-in-residence at the Hebrew University and writer-in-residence at Colorado College. An author of prose for both children and adults, as well as an essayist, he has been widely translated and is internationally acclaimed. Many of his stories are set either on a kibbutz or in Jerusalem, both of which he presents as microcosms of Israeli society. He lives in the southern town of Arad and teaches literature at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev. Among his books: *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (2003), *A Panther in the Basement* (1995), *My Michael* (1968), *In the Land of Israel* (essays on political issues).  

**Tags:**  
History and everyday life in Jerusalem under British Mandate (after WWII), adventure, love

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**Amos Oz**  
**Suddenly in the Depth of the Forest**  
Harcourt Children’s Books, 2011  

**Grade:** 5-8  

**Background and Synopsis:**  
In a gray and gloomy village, all of the animals—from dogs and cats to fish and snails—disappeared years before. No one talks about it and no one knows why, though everyone agrees that the village has been cursed. But when two children see a fish—a tiny one and just for a second—they become determined to unravel the mystery of where the animals have gone. And so they travel into the depths of the forest with that mission in mind, terrified and hopeful about what they may encounter.  
From the internationally bestselling author Amos Oz, this is a hauntingly beautiful multi-layered fable for both children and adults about tolerance, loneliness, denial, and remembrance.
According to the book, Oz based this story on fables he remembers from his childhood told him by his mother, who committed suicide before she reached the age of 40. He believes this was her way to communicate with him. Oz transports his readers back to a childhood world of fairytale artefacts but it is hard to read Suddenly without thinking, too, of the Holocaust and Israel's history. Though no direct allegory of either, it seems to gesture towards them through its themes of shared catastrophe, persecution, banishment and return.

**Author's Bio:**
World-renowned author Amos Oz was born in 1939 in Jerusalem, and at the age of 15 went to live on Kibbutz Hulda. He studied philosophy and literature at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and has been a visiting fellow at Oxford University, author-in- residence at the Hebrew University and writer-in-residence at Colorado College. An author of prose for both children and adults, as well as an essayist, he has been widely translated and is internationally acclaimed. Many of his stories are set either on a kibbutz or in Jerusalem, both of which he presents as microcosms of Israeli society. He has been honored with the French Prix Femina and the 1992 Frankfurt Peace Prize. He lives in the southern town of Arad and teaches literature at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev. Among his books: *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (2003), *A Panther in the Basement* (1995), *My Michael* (1968), *In the Land of Israel* (essays on political issues).

**Tags:**
Fairytale, fable, loneliness, remembrance

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**Nava Semel**

**Becoming Gershona**

Viking Juvenile, 1990 (hardcover)
Puffin, 1992 (paperback)

**Grade:** 5-8

**Background and Synopsis:**
Although more than 10 years have passed since the end of World War II, the Holocaust has left its mark on all the adults in Gershona’s world; everyone, even her new friend Nimrod, has a sad and secret past. A life spent skirting the miseries of others has made Gershona awkward and lonely. But when her long-lost grandfather comes to live in Tel Aviv, Gershona’s life takes a turn for the better. As various family secrets are revealed, the girl comes to understand and accept her place in her family and the world. This is a thoughtful novel of a girl's growing up; its strongest components are Gershona's delicate, precise observations. Readers will enjoy both Gershona’s story and the author's depiction of everyday life in the young state of Israel.

**Author’s bio:**
Nava Semel is an internationally published author, playwright, screenwriter and translator. She is the author of seventeen books of fiction, scripts and opera libretti. She has also worked as a journalist, art critic, TV, radio and music producer. Semel also writes plays and translates for the Hebrew stage. Her works include *Hat of Glass, Becoming Gershona, Flying Lessons, Night Games, The Child Behind the Eyes, And the Rat Laughed, Israileand, Australian Wedding* and *Screwed on Backwards*.

Her works were translated into many languages and published in many countries. Among her numerous awards she is the recipient of The Israeli Prime Minister’s Award for Literature in 1996, The Women Writers of the Mediterranean Award in France 1994 and Women of the Year in Literature of the City of Tel Aviv in 2006.

**Tags:**
Adolescence, coming of age, family, post holocaust, everyday life in early state Israel.
Nava Semel
Flying Lessons
Simon & Schuster (Juv), 1995

Grade: 5-8

Background and Synopsis:
The author weaves dreamlike images and innocent profundity into a coming-of-age tale of great power. In a remote part of Israel, Hadara, the 12-year-old daughter of the "one and only dead mother in the village," decides to learn to fly. While her father works in his citrus grove, Hadara visits Monsieur Maurice Havivel, the village's "one and only" shoemaker. After inflaming Hadara's imagination with tales of the magical circus of flying Jews he once belonged to, Monsieur Maurice agrees to help her learn to fly. No matter how much she practices, however, he tells her that she is not yet ready. But as drought threatens the citrus groves and with them the welfare of the village, Hadara thinks, "If I could fly, I would tie all the clouds to a string and pull them back down with me." Her maiden flight, from her father's tallest tree, culminates in a broken leg and in the life-giving rain but a saddened Monsieur Maurice tells her, "You weren't scared enough to fly for real." Only after Hadara recovers and Monsieur Maurice goes away is his past revealed, although readers knowledgeable about the Holocaust will have intuited much of it already. Sensitive translation preserves the lyricism of Semel's deeply moving work.

Author's bio:
Nava Semel is an internationally published author, playwright, screenwriter and translator. She is the author of seventeen books of fiction, scripts and opera libretti. She has also worked as a journalist, art critic, TV, radio and music producer. Semel also writes plays and translates for the Hebrew stage. Her works include Hat of Glass, Becoming Gershona, Flying Lessons, Night Games, The Child Behind the Eyes, And the Rat Laughed, Israelsland, Australian Wedding and Screamed on Backwards.

Her works were translated into many languages and published in many countries. Among her numerous awards she is the recipient of The Israeli Prime Minister's Award for Literature in 1996, The Women Writers of the Mediterranean Award in France 1994 and Women of the Year in Literature of the City of Tel Aviv in 2006.

Tags:
Adolescence, coming of age, family, post holocaust, everyday life in early state Israel.
Deborah Omer

Path Beneath the Sea
(in Hebrew: Tzolelim Kadima)
A Sabra Book, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1969

Grade: 6-8

Background and Synopsis:
Taboul Cohen was sixteen when he made up his mind to leave his home in Morocco and immigrate to Israel on his own despite his father’s advice. His dream is to become a frogman in the Israeli navy. We follow him through the many trials and tribulations of his journey to becoming an adult: the adjustment to kibbutz life, manual labor, longing for his father and family, life on the streets as a derelict and first steps of army life. Finally he succeeds in becoming a frogman, saves his best friend from a shark attack and participates in the Six Day War.

Author’s Bio:
Deborah Omer was born at Kibbutz Maoz Haim in 1932. She completed her studies in 1952 and became a teacher. In addition to more than 100 books for children and youth that she has written and adapted, she has written plays, radio scripts, a novel for adults and personal columns in several children’s magazines. Omer, one of the most prolific and popular children’s writers in Israel, has received many awards including the Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement (2006).

Tags:
Youth Immigration to Israel, Jewish life in North Africa, coming of age, kibbutz life, autonomy, Israel Army, History (Six Day War)

Deborah Omer

Rebirth: The Story of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and the Modern Hebrew Language

In Hebrew: Ha Bechor L’Beit Avi
Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972

Grade: 6-9

Background and Synopsis:
A biography of the Jewish scholar and his son who were instrumental in reviving Hebrew and establishing it as a living language in pre-state Israel.

Rebirth tells the story of Ben-Tzion, the eldest son of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who revived the Hebrew language. Ben-Tzion was the first child in Jerusalem whose mother tongue was Hebrew and thus was later called "The first Hebrew child". Ben-Tzion later changed his name to Itamar Ben Avi (Ben – son of, AVI - an acronym standing for the Hebrew letters aleph, bet, yod – Eliezer Ben Yehuda).

Life in Jerusalem at the end of the 19th century was difficult for "the first Hebrew child" because his family had to struggle against prejudice, poverty and illness. His father, whose sole passion was to revive the Hebrew language,
was banned by the people of the old village, some thinking he was crazy. He also forbade his children, especially Ben-Tzion, from socializing with other children because he wanted Hebrew to be his native tongue. Nevertheless, his son was able to enjoy a few unique experiences, such as horse riding with the guards, sailing in the sea of Jaffa, and trips in a carriage and even in the "big train" of the old days. The author Devorah Omer wrote this exciting and touching story of “the first Hebrew child” after extensive study and research that included conversations with Ben-Yehuda's family members. It was translated to English, Japanese and Russian.

Author’s Bio:
Devorah Omer was born at Kibbutz Maoz Haim in 1932. She completed her studies in 1952 and became a teacher. In addition to more than 100 books for children and youth that she has written and adapted, she has written plays, radio scripts, a novel for adults and personal columns in several children’s magazines. Omer, one of the most prolific and popular children’s writers in Israel, has received many awards including the Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement (2006).

Tags:
Revival of the Hebrew language, history (Europe and Jerusalem during the late 19th, early 20th), childhood, hardship, family, vision, passion

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Uri Orlev
The Island on Bird Street
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1992

Grade: 6-8 HS

Background and Synopsis:
Alex is an 11-year-old Jewish boy living in Warsaw Ghetto in German-occupied Poland during World War II with his father and their friend, Boruch. German soldiers come into the Ghetto and send people onto trains to be taken away. Alex and his father get separated, and soon Alex has to learn how to survive in the empty ghetto by himself. As it turns out the ghetto is not entirely empty, and that is where he comes across various people, from neighbors to robbers, some of whom even try to help him. He finds himself in an abandoned, bombed out building on Bird Street where he seeks refuge. The only thing he has to pass the time away with is his pet mouse Snow, the novel Robinson Crusoe and other books, and a small window overlooking the town. He has to hunt for food on his own and still stay hidden from soldiers. It is a great test for Alex to see if he can make it through tough conditions, and also wait for the arrival of his father.

Author’s Bio:
Uri Orlev was born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1931 and spent the early years of World War II in the Warsaw Ghetto. His father was captured by the Russians and saw his sons again only in 1954 in Israel; his mother was killed by the Nazis. After being smuggled out of the ghetto and hidden by Polish families, Orlev and his younger brother were sent to Bergen-Belsen. They were freed two years later and immigrated to pre-state Israel. Orlev has published 29 books for children and youth, as well as fiction for adults. His books are listed year after year as favorites of Israeli kids and youth. The author received the 1996 Hans Christian Andersen Award for children’s literature, largely for this book, which was translated into numerous languages and adapted into a play and a film.

Remarks:
In 1997, The Island on Bird Street was made into a feature film starring Jordan Kiziuk, Patrick Bergin and Jack Warden and directed by Søren Kragh-Jacobsen.
Tags:
History (Ghetto life during WWII), struggle, survival, autonomy

Uri Orlev
The Lady with the Hat
Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 1995

Grade: 6-8 HS

Background and Synopsis:
Yulek, a seventeen-year-old Holocaust survivor, finds himself tragically alone at war’s end. Hoping to begin again, he makes his way to Palestine, where he meets a sad and beautiful Jewish girl named Theresa. Saved from the Nazis by Catholic nuns, Theresa, like Yulek, is uncertain about her place in the postwar world. Together they struggle to rediscover the joy of living. Meanwhile, a mysterious English woman sets out on her own search for the long-lost nephew that she has spotted in a newspaper photo of Jewish refugees. Perhaps by finding him, she will also find some long-hidden part of herself.

Author’s Bio:
Uri Orlev was born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1931 and spent the early years of World War II in the Warsaw Ghetto. His father was captured by the Russians and saw his sons again only in 1954 in Israel; his mother was killed by the Nazis. After being smuggled out of the ghetto and hidden by Polish families, Orlev and his younger brother were sent to Bergen-Belsen. They were freed two years later and immigrated to pre-state Israel. Orlev has published 29 books for children and youth, as well as fiction for adults. His books are listed year after year as favorites of Israeli kids and youth.

Tags:
History (Pre-Holocaust, Pre-state Europe and Israel), Youth immigration, survival, autonomy, coming of age

Uri Orlev
The Man from the Other Side
Houghton Mifflin Company Boston, 2003

Grade: 6-8 HS

Background and Synopsis:
Living on the outskirts of the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II, fourteen-year-old Marek and his grandparents shelter a Jewish man in the days before the Jewish uprising. Marek has never thought about the Jews who live in the Warsaw Ghetto near his home—until he helps his stepfather smuggle food and guns through the sewer to sell there. Even then, he does not truly understand what it means to be isolated, persecuted, and faced with almost certain death at the hands of the Nazis. Then Marek meets a Jewish man on the run—and, in helping him, is thrust into the middle of the Jews’ last-ditch attempt to save their lives.

Author’s Bio:
Uri Orlev was born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1931 and spent the early years of World War II in the Warsaw Ghetto. His father was captured by the Russians and saw his sons again only in 1954 in Israel; his mother was killed by the Nazis. After being smuggled out of the ghetto and hidden by Polish families, Orlev and his younger brother were sent to Bergen-Belsen. They were freed two years later and immigrated to pre-state Israel. Orlev has published 29
books for children and youth, as well as fiction for adults. His books are listed year after year as favorites of Israeli kids and youth.

**Tags:**
History (Pre-Holocaust, Pre-state Europe and Israel), Youth immigration, survival, autonomy, coming of age

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**Uri Orlev**  
**Run, Boy, Run**  
Houghton Mifflin Company Boston, 2003

**Grade:** 6-8 HS  

**Background and Synopsis:**  
Run, Boy, Run is the extraordinary account of one boy’s survival of the Holocaust. Srulik is only eight years old when he finds himself all alone in the Warsaw ghetto. He escapes into the countryside where he spends the ensuing years hiding in the forest, dependent on the sympathies and generosity of the poor farmers in the surrounding area. Despite the seemingly insurmountable odds, several chases, captures, attempted executions, and even the loss of his arm, Srulik miraculously survives.

**Author’s Bio:**  
Uri Orlev was born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1931 and spent the early years of World War II in the Warsaw Ghetto. His father was captured by the Russians and saw his sons again only in 1954 in Israel; his mother was killed by the Nazis. After being smuggled out of the ghetto and hidden by Polish families, Orlev and his younger brother were sent to Bergen-Belsen. They were freed two years later and immigrated to pre-state Israel. Orlev has published 29 books for children and youth, as well as fiction for adults. His books are listed year after year as favorites of Israeli kids and youth.

**Remarks:**  
Recipient of the Batchelder Award

**Tags:**  
History (Pre-Holocaust, Pre-state Europe and Israel), Youth immigration, survival, autonomy, coming of age

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**Benjamin Tene**  
**In the Shade of the Chestnut Tree**  
Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981

**Grade:** 6-8  

**Background and Synopsis:**  
At the end of WWII the author returned to Warsaw, his birthplace, to find his home and his friends. But, the Jewish Quarter is in total ruins and he is unable to locate the street and the house of his childhood. Among the ruins he finds the remains of a solitary chestnut tree, the one that grew in his yard, and under which he and his friends used to play. To his amazement he sees that the charred stump of the tree was blooming. “The old, afflicted tree had become alive again in new youth. It was then I decided to tell about that childhood of ours. Our exploits of long ago. Our laughter and our tears. A story about a group of Jewish children in a strange, alien world.” The stories, set in Warsaw of the 1930’s, paint a panorama of human, family, Jewish-Christian, boy-girl relationships and everyday Jewish life of pre-Holocaust Europe.
Author's Bio:
Tene (1914-1999) was born in Warsaw and studied in a traditional Jewish school (cheder) and Hebrew High School. He immigrated to Israel in 1937 and joined a kibbutz. In 1947 he went to Poland as an emissary on a mission to save kids who were living in Christian convents. The trip to Poland became an inspiration to numerous poems and books. He was an editor of Mishmar La’yeladim the youth publication of the kibbutz movement daily Al Ha’mishmar and translated many books from Polish to Hebrew.

Remarks:
Can be read as short stories.

Tags:
Pre and post Holocaust in Europe, everyday Jewish life in pre-war Warsaw, relationships, family, friendship.

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Gila Almagor

Under the Domim Tree

Simon & Shuster, New York, 1995

Grade: 7-12

Background and Synopsis:
Almagor, a celebrated Israeli actress, draws on her own adolescence for this absorbing, deeply moving novel set in an Israeli "youth village" in 1953. Most of the other young people at Udim are orphans of the Holocaust; Aviya, the narrator, still has her mother, but she is so traumatized by unstated wartime experiences that she cannot care for her daughter. Despite their unimaginably painful pasts, Aviya and her friends are sturdy and optimistic—e ven in the face of shocking new developments. Timid, withdrawn Yola becomes a type of conduit for everyone’s innermost longings after her father is discovered in Warsaw; when he dies from overexcitement before their reunion, Yola summons up unexpected resources of grace and courage. Mira, the only hostile girl in the group, receives the community’s wholehearted support when she denies the claims of two Auschwitz survivors who say they are her parents. Sensitive related in Aviya’s fresh voice, the extreme nature of these events seems fully believable. It is impossible to come away from this novel without added insight into the impact of war-and admiration for those who endure its horrors. Told from child/youth point of view.

Author's Bio:
Gila Almagor, one of Israel’s leading actresses, was born in pre-state Israel in 1939, four months after the death of her father, and grew up in various children’s institutions. She has been a professional actress since the age of 17. At age 25, after studying in New York for two years, she started performing in Israel’s top theaters. She has also starred in some 40 movies as well as numerous TV programs, has hosted her own radio show for many years, and is actively involved in voluntary work with children suffering from cancer. Under the Domim Tree is an autobiographical account of her youth.

Remarks:
The novel was made into a film released in 1994. Gila Almagor plays the role of Henya, her own mother.

Tags:
Holocaust, Immigration, absorption, family
Gila Almagor
The Summer of Aviya

Grade: 8-12

Background and Synopsis:
Aviya's Summer is set in the summer of 1951, in the newly established state of Israel. The story chronicles the life of ten-year-old Aviya, whose warm, loving, and fiercely independent mother, is tortured by periodic mental breakdowns. Henya's psychological and emotional scars stem from her horrid experience during the Holocaust, and from the loss of her husband during the war. Henya was once considered to be a beautiful and courageous partisan fighter, yet now she is constantly mocked by native Israelis for her erratic behavior. She walks the thin line between sanity and madness, attempting to forge a life for herself and her daughter in the new realities of Israel.

Aviya is a bright girl with a vivid imagination, yet she is mocked by her peers. Her relationship with her mother is complex, at times affectionate, but also fragile. Aviya fantasizes that if she could only find her father, all her mother’s problems would cease and her family would be whole again. Aviya's wild imagination regarding her quest to find her father leads to the climax of the story. The story ends with Aviya coming to terms with the realities of her life and reaching a maturity beyond her years. Told from child/youth point of view.

Author's Bio:
Gila Almagor, one of Israel’s leading actresses, was born in pre-state Israel in 1939, four months after the death of her father, and grew up in various children’s institutions. She has been a professional actress since the age of 17. At age 25, after studying in New York for two years, she started performing in Israel's top theaters. She has also starred in some 40 movies as well as numerous TV programs, has hosted her own radio show for many years, and is actively involved in voluntary work with children suffering from cancer. The Summer of Aviya is an autobiographical account of her childhood.

Remarks:
The novel was made into a film released in 1988. Gila Almagor plays the role of Henya, her own mother.

Tags:
Holocaust, Immigration, absorption, family

Devorah Omer
The Gideonites
(in Hebrew: Sarah, Nili’s Heroine)
New York, Funk & Wagnalls, 1968

Grade: 8-12

Background and Synopsis:
The Middle East at the turn of the 20th century was a vastly different region from what it is today. Dominating the entire area was a Turkish Empire, a system that ruled with brute force as its guiding light. Conditions in small Jewish agricultural settlements were difficult. Many Jews hoped that the outbreak of World War I in 1914, in which Turkey allied itself with Germany, would bring about a change in the administration of Palestine. A group of young and dedicated people decided that to achieve this aim, they would have to act. As children, this little group often played at games in which they took on the names of Biblical heroes. As grown-ups they abandoned the games and
played for real—as spies for the British forces stationed in nearby Egypt for whom the capture of Palestine was of great importance.

The young volunteer espionage agents, among them Sarah Aaronson and Abshalom Feinberg, helped the Allies force the Turks out of Palestine, and they also laid the early foundation stones of present day State of Israel. The Gideonites is a thrilling account of a true story.

**Author’s Bio:**
Devorah Omer was born at Kibbutz Maoz Haim in 1932. She completed her studies in 1952 and became a teacher. In addition to more than 100 books for children and youth that she has written and adapted, she has written plays, radio scripts, a novel for adults and personal columns in several children’s magazines. Omer, one of the most prolific and popular children’s writers in Israel, has received many awards including the Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement (2006).

**Tags:**
History (Ottoman Empire, Pre-State Israel)
Courage, friendship, personal sacrifice, love

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**David Grossman**
**Someone to Run With**
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004
Picador, 2005
Published in Hebrew, 2001

**Grade:** 10-12

**Background and Synopsis:**
Someone to Run With is the most popular work to date from "a writer who has been, for nearly two decades, one of the most original and talented . . . anywhere" (The New York Times Book Review), a bestseller hailed by the Israeli press for its mixture of fairy-tale magic, emotional sensitivity, and gritty realism. The novel explores the life of Israeli street kids—whom Grossman interviewed extensively for the novel—and the anxieties of family life in a society racked by self-doubt. Most of all, it evokes the adventure of adolescence and the discovery of love, as Tamar and Assaf, pushed beyond the limits of childhood by their quests, find themselves, and each other. Takes place in present day Israel.

**Author’s Bio:**
Leading Israeli novelist David Grossman (b. 1954, Jerusalem) studied philosophy and drama at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and later worked as an editor and broadcaster at Israel Radio. Grossman has written seven novels, a play, a number of short stories and novellas, and a number of books for children and youth. He has also published several books of non-fiction, including interviews with Palestinians and Israeli Arabs. Grossman received many notional and international literary awards including: the Sapir Prize (2001), the Bialik Prize (2004), the Koret Jewish Book Award (USA, 2006). In 2007, his novels *The Book of Internal Grammar* and *See Under: Love* were named among the ten most important books since the creation of the State of Israel. His books have been translated into over 25 languages.

**Remarks:**
The novel was made into a film in 2006

**Tags:**
Adolescence, drugs, family, friendship
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Book/Publisher</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Tags</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abolafia, Yossi</td>
<td>A Fish for Mrs. Gardenia Greenwillow Books, New York, 1988</td>
<td>K-3</td>
<td>Inter generational relationship, humor, love</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allon, Hagit And Zehavi, Lena</td>
<td>The Mystery of the Dead Sea Scrolls The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 2003</td>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>History (Ancient Israel), Archaeology, Adventure</td>
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<td>Almagor, Gila</td>
<td>The Summer of Aviya Collins, London, 1991</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>Holocaust, Immigration, absorption, family</td>
<td>A film was produced in 1988</td>
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<tr>
<td>Almagor, Gila</td>
<td>Under the Domim Tree New York, Simon &amp; Schuster, 1995</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>Holocaust, Immigration, absorption, family</td>
<td>A film was produced in 1994</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carmi, Daniella</td>
<td>Samir and Yonathan Scholastic, Blue Sky Press, 2002</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>Israeli-Palestinian coexistence, friendship, loss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geffen, Yonatan</td>
<td>Songs Anat Loves Best Dvir Tel Aviv, Israel 1974</td>
<td>K-3</td>
<td>Poetry, family, children’s daily experiences, friendship</td>
<td>A CD with songs and stories in Hebrew was produced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Book/Publisher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grossman, David</td>
<td>Duel Bloomsbury USA Children’s Books, New York, 1998</td>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>Inter generational relationship, history (Pre-war Europe, Pre-state Israel), immigration, love, jealousy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grossman, David</td>
<td>Someone to Run With Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004 Picador, 2005 Published in Hebrew, 2001</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>Adolescence, drugs, family, friendship</td>
<td>A film was produced in 2006</td>
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<td>Gutman, Nahum</td>
<td>The Path of Orange Peels: Adventures in the Early Days of Tel Aviv Dodd, Mead, 1979</td>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>History (WWI, Ottoman Rule, Balfur Declaration, early Tel Aviv), adventure, friendship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harel, Nira Illustrator: Eytan, Ora</td>
<td>It’s No Problem Kerstel Books, 1984</td>
<td>K-3</td>
<td>Overcoming fears and anxiety, friendship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harel, Nira Illustrator: Abolafia, Yossi</td>
<td>The Key to My Heart Kane/Miller, 2003</td>
<td>K-3</td>
<td>Father-son relationship, family, love, community</td>
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<td>Keret, Etgar Illustrator: Modan, Rutu</td>
<td>Dad Runs Away With The Circus Candlewisk Press, 2004</td>
<td>K-3</td>
<td>Imagination, aspirations, uniqueness, family, inter generational relationships</td>
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<td>Leshem-Pelly, Miri</td>
<td>Lon-Lon’s Big Night Milk and Honey Press, 2007</td>
<td>PreK-3</td>
<td>Israeli landscape, nature, animals, adventure,</td>
<td>Bi-lingual English-Hebrew</td>
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<td>Meir, Mira</td>
<td>Alina a Russian Girl Comes to Israel: A Russian Girl Comes to Israel The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1982</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Immigration (Russian), adjusting to a new life, friendship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Book/Publisher</td>
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| Ofek, Uriel| Smoke Over Golan  
A Novel of the 1973 Yom Kippur War  
Methuen Publishing Ltd, 1981 | 5-8   | History (Yom Kippur War), coping during war times, vulnerability, courage |                      |
| Ofek, Uriel| The Dog Who Flew and Other Favorite Stories From Israel  
Sabra Books, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1969 | 5-8   | History and everyday life in Israel                                  | Short Stories        |
| Omer, Devorah | Path Beneath the Sea  
(in Hebrew: Tzolelim Kadima)  
A Sabra Book, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1969 | 6-8   | Youth Immigration to Israel, Jewish life in North Africa, coming of age, kibbutz life, autonomy, Israel Army, History (Six Day War) |                      |
| Omer, Devorah | Rebirth: The Story of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda  
and the Modern Hebrew Language  
Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972 | 6-9   | Revival of Hebrew language, History (Europe and Jerusalem late 19th, early 20th), hardship, family, vision |                      |
| Omer, Devorah | The Gideonites  
(in Hebrew: Sarah, Nili’s Heroine)  
New York, Funk & Wagnalls, 1968 | 8-12  | History (Ottoman Empire, Pre-State Israel), Courage, friendship, personal sacrifice, love |                      |
| Orlev, Ori   | Lydia, Queen of Palestine  
(in Hebrew: Lydia, Queen of Eretz Yisrael)  
Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1993  
New York, Puffin (Penguin), 1995 | 5-8   | History (pre-Holocaust, pre-state Europe and Israel), youth immigration, Kibbutz life, family, divorce, autonomy, coming of age |                      |
<table>
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<tr>
<td>Orlev, Uri</td>
<td>Run, Boy, Run</td>
<td>6-8 HS</td>
<td>History (Pre-Holocaust, Pre-state Israel), Youth immigration, survival, autonomy, coming of age</td>
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<td>Orlev, Uri</td>
<td>The Island on Bird Street</td>
<td>6-8 HS</td>
<td>History (Ghetto life during WWII), struggle, survival, autonomy</td>
<td>A film was produced in 1997</td>
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<td>Orlev, Uri</td>
<td>The Lady with the Hat</td>
<td>6-8 HS</td>
<td>History (Pre-Holocaust, Pre-state Israel), Youth immigration, survival, autonomy, coming of age</td>
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<td>Orlev, Uri</td>
<td>The Man from the Other Side</td>
<td>6-8 HS</td>
<td>History (Pre-Holocaust, Pre-state Israel), Youth immigration, survival, autonomy, coming of age</td>
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<td>Oz, Amos</td>
<td>Soumchi</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>History and everyday life in Jerusalem under British Mandate (after WWII), adventure, love</td>
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<td>Oz, Amos</td>
<td>Suddenly in the Depth of the Forest</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>Fairytaile, fable, loneliness, remembrance</td>
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<td>Regelson, Abraham</td>
<td>The Dolls Journey to Eretz Israel</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>History (Pre-state Israel), adventure, imagination</td>
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<td>Semel, Nava</td>
<td>Becoming Gershona Viking Juvenile, 1990 (hardcover) Puffin, 1992 (paperback)</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>Adolescence, coming of age, family, post holocaust, everyday life in early state Israel</td>
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<td>Semel, Nava</td>
<td>Flying Lessons Simon &amp; Schuster (Juv), 1995</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>Adolescence, coming of age, family, post holocaust, everyday life in early state Israel</td>
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<td>Shamir, Moshe</td>
<td>The Fifth Wheel Benmir Books, Berkeley, California 1961</td>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>kibbutz life, adventure, everyday life in Israel’s early and mid years</td>
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<td>Sheri, Shira</td>
<td>Jonathan and the Waves Milk and Honey Press, 2007</td>
<td>PreK-3</td>
<td>Israeli landscape, nature, adventure, friendship</td>
<td>Bi-lingual English-Hebrew</td>
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<td>Snir, Mirik</td>
<td>When I First Held You Kar-Ben Publishing, 2009</td>
<td>PreK-2</td>
<td>Bedtime, new baby, nature, love, beauty, joy</td>
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<td>Tal, Eve</td>
<td>A New Boy Milk and Honey Press, 2007</td>
<td>PreK-3</td>
<td>Immigration, friendship, acceptance</td>
<td>Bi-lingual English-Hebrew</td>
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<td>Tene, Benjamin</td>
<td>In the shade of the chestnut tree</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Pre and post Holocaust in Europe, everyday Jewish life in pre-war Warsaw, relationships, family, friendship.</td>
<td>Can be read as short stories</td>
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<td>Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981</td>
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<td>Tepper, Yona</td>
<td>Passing By Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 2010</td>
<td>PreK-1</td>
<td>Curiosity, guessing, exploring</td>
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