

## Lower Grade Review

Polacco, P. *The Art of Miss Chew*. (2012) New York: Penguin.

Trisha loves to draw and is excited about starting school . . . until she realizes the only time she will have art is once a week and not even in a real art room, just “art on a cart.” Art is an area in which Trisha excels. She is smart; however due to a reading disability, she often fails tests even though she would know the information. One day her teacher finds one of Trisha’s drawings and recommends her for a special art class. Trisha loves the class and school is going great since Mr. Donovan, her teacher, gives her extra time to complete all tests. However, Mr. Donovan is called away to Ireland when his father dies and the substitute, who does not appreciate the value of art class and does not provide extended time for Trisha to complete her tests, threatens Trisha’s continued enrollment in the special art class.

The publisher states the book is for ages 5 and up; however students in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades were enthralled with the book. After reading the book, two 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes and one 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class erupted in spontaneous applause; the remaining classes sat in silence and then started stating “Wow, that’s a good book” and similar phrases. This is a great book to teach tolerance and to remind teachers to look for the special talents each child possesses.

AR reading level: 3.6. Recommended.

Book Cover image from [http://www.patriciapolacco.com/books/art\\_of\\_miss\\_chew/index.htm](http://www.patriciapolacco.com/books/art_of_miss_chew/index.htm)

## Middle Grade Review

Ursu, A. *Breadcrumbs*. (2011) New York: Walden Pond Press.

Hazel and Jack are best friends, in fact Jack is Hazel’s only friend. One day Jack suddenly stops talking to Hazel; she sees other changes in him, as well. Then, Jack disappears and Hazel decides she must find him. One of Jack’s new friends tells Hazel he saw Jack go into the woods. Hazel heads into the woods and soon discovers she is unprepared for the strange animals, people and places she meets. In the woods nothing is as it seems and Hazel does not know who or what to trust. Having no trail to follow, Hazel heads north to confront the Snow Queen about Jack’s disappearance. There are several inferences to fairy tales during Hazel’s trek through the woods. This story could be considered a modern fairytale or a fantasy.

Reminiscent to *Falling In* by Frances O’Roark Dowell. Publisher lists the reading level at ages 8 and up;

AR reading level 4.8. Recommended.

Book cover art from [http://www.aneursu.com/books/bk\\_breadcrumbs.html](http://www.aneursu.com/books/bk_breadcrumbs.html)

## Elementary Non-Fiction Review

Sullivan, J. (2012). *What’s in Your Soda? What’s In Your Fast Food?* New York: PowerKids Press, The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc.

Other titles in the series:

*What's in Your Hamburger?*

*What's in Your Pizza?*

*What's in Your Chicken Nugget?*

*What's in Your Hot Dog?*

*What's in Your Macaroni and Cheese?*

This series of books discusses the history of the specified fast foods and the nutrients or lack thereof in each of the foods. The consequences of unhealthy food choices, as well as healthful alternatives, are discussed. Reading nutritional labels is recommended. As a non-fiction book, the following characteristics are included in each book: table of contents, glossary, index, photographs, sidebars, bold face words, and "Fast Facts".

PowerKids Press maintains an up-to-date website at <http://powerkidslinks.com/food/> to find related information.

The series has an interest level of 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade. AR levels range from 4.5 – 5.3.

Recommended.

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[http://www.rosenpublishing.com/index.php?page=shop.product\\_details&flypage=flypage.tpl&product\\_id=121866&category\\_id=773&option=com\\_virtuemart&Itemid=1](http://www.rosenpublishing.com/index.php?page=shop.product_details&flypage=flypage.tpl&product_id=121866&category_id=773&option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=1)