**OLA Best Bets Top Ten List for 2005**
Selected by the OLA Canadian Materials Committee: Dinah Gough, Patrick Gracey, Sandy Laird, Laura Reed, Cecily Reid and Jane Salmon.

**Picture Books**

Downie, Mary Alice. *A Pioneer ABC*. Illustrated by Mary Jane Gerber.
Tundra Books

History comes to life in this uniquely Canadian alphabet book, as we share the seasons with Zeb and his family. Gerber’s arresting scenes of everyday life and Downie’s thorough background notes give us an authentic glimpse into the pioneer world.

Fitzhenry & Whiteside

Sleepovers are Ben’s biggest worry and Sarah Ellis captures Ben’s inner turmoil. Combined with LaFave’s delightful illustrations, readers will enjoy how he comes up with a solution and learns to become a “sleepover-nighter.”

Fitz-Gibbon, Sally. *On Uncle John’s Farm*. Illustrated by Brian Deines.
Fitzhenry & Whiteside

In this exquisitely illustrated book, a young girl spends an enchanting day visiting squirming kittens, riding a tractor and hiding in hay bales. A feast for the senses.

Scholastic

Sophie knew there was a sea monster under her bed, no matter what her parents said. Once she was brave enough to look for herself, she found not only a monster but also a best friend.

Tundra

A range of simple concepts are strikingly introduced with bold, primary colours. Size, shape, direction and more are introduced with rhyme, economy and humour. Easy to understand and appealing, it’s a must for preschoolers.

Khan, Rukhsana. *Silly Chicken*. Illustrated by Yunmee Kyong.
Viking Press

Rani is jealous, she wants her mother’s love and attention, but she is sure that her mother loves Bibi, their chicken, more. That is until Bibi is gone and Rani falls for a chicken of her own.
Kovalski, Maryann. **Omar on Board.**
Fitzhenry & Whiteside

Omar loves the pond in winter but now that it’s summer, he finds that swimming and diving are not as easy as moving on the ice. Omar overcomes his trouble to help a friend in need in this amusing story about conquering your fears.

Milich, Zoran. **City 123**
Kids Can Press

People say Math is everywhere and this book certainly makes the case. The photographs all mix symbols, quantities and series with deft spontaneity.

Ohi, Ruth. **Me and My Sister**
Annick Press

A fond look at two preschool sisters learning to get along. A catchy rhyme accompanies vivid bright illustrations. It's not just for big sisters.

Thomson, Sarah. **Imagine a Day.** Illustrated by Rob Gonsalves.
Atheneum

Alternate planes and surreal logic conspire to produce plenty of spatial tricks, and the odd parallel universe. You'll never be sure you've quite closed it.

**Fiction**

Aker, Don. **One on One**
Harper Collins

Jared plays basketball like a pro. If he doesn't get through grade 8 math though, he's off the team. Geek Girl becomes his new tutor.

Curtis, Christopher Paul. **Mr. Chickee’s Funny Money**
Random House

When old Mr. Chickee gives Steven a quadrillion dollar bill, Steven, and his best friends Russell and Zoopy, find themselves in the middle of a hilarious mystery involving a talking dictionary, James Brown, the FBI, and the Snoopeze 9000.
Fitch, Sheree. **The Gravesavers**
Doubleday

In the wake of a family tragedy, Minn is sent to spend the summer with her grandmother. Almost as soon as she arrives she is caught up in a mystery that reaches back more than century to another tragedy.

Grant, Vicki. **Quid Pro Quo.**
Orca

Using legal terms as chapter headings, the author’s fast-moving novel about a resourceful thirteen year old searching for his kidnapped mother is funny and original. Using knowledge of the law learned from having to attend his single mom’s class lectures, Cyril painstakingly interprets clues and deciphers leads. Vivid strong characters, self-deprecating humour and comic situations lighten a serious plight and concern for social issues.

Martini, Clem. **The Plague.**
Kids Can Press

In the second book of the Crow Chronicles, Kyp and Kim must deal with a new disaster, a mysterious plague that has killed most of the crow clan. More heartache follows when Kim is captured by humans and Kyp, against all odds, gathers together a ragtag team and sets out to rescue Kim. A high-paced adventure.

Nickel, Barbara. **Hannah Waters and the Daughter of Johann Sebastian Bach.**
Penguin Canada

In this moving and haunting novel, two girls reach across time to give each other strength, confidence and guidance. Linked by the glorious melody of Bach’s Double Violin Concerto and ultimately Bach’s own violin, Catharina and Hannah come to terms with awkwardness and aching loss. The author’s skilful interweaving of their lives is rich in characterization and detail. Lyrical, descriptive and multi-layered, the book is poignant and enriching. Not to be missed.

Oppel, Kenneth. **Skybreaker**
HarperCollins

In this superb sequel to the Governor General’s Award-winning *Airborn*, rival teams race through dangerously high altitudes to salvage a long lost airship with a terrifying secret aboard.

Porter, Pamela. **Crazy Man**
Groundwood

When a family is left fatherless, a neighbor jokes they should take on someone from the "crazy house" to do the farmwork. They do.
Sutherland, Robert. **Greysteel’s Ghost**
HarperCollins

Gavin’s plans for a hiking holiday with his Scottish cousin Fiona are derailed when Fiona’s father is hospitalized by a deliberate hit-and-run and the cousins are embroiled into a terrifying political conspiracy.

Watts, Irene N. **Flower: a novel.**
Tundra Books

When Katie learns that her stepmother is having a baby, she is hurt and angry, especially when she is told that she must spend the summer with her grandparents in Halifax. The discovery of a ghost in her attic bedroom, however, forces Katie to look to the past and uncover some unexpected information that dramatically changes the way she sees her family.

**Great Fiction for Young Adults**
(This is not an official category and these titles were read as part of our committee and deemed to be more suitable for young adults. However, we loved these books so much we had to mention them!)

Bennett, Holly. **Bonemender.**
Orca

Gabrielle is a bonemender, a healer, who is not content to simply be a royal princess. She falls in love with an elf but can their love survive war and intrigue? A gripping tale of romance, battle and mystery.

Hunter, Bernice Thurman. **The Girls They Left Behind.**
Fitzhenry & Whiteside

During World War II a spirited teenage girl waits for the boys in her life to come home and finds ways to contribute to the war effort. She enjoys the independence of her new working life.

Tullson, Diane. **Red Sea.**
Orca

Libby is sailing with her stepfather and mother when they are attacked by pirates. With her stepfather dead and her mother gravely wounded, can Libby pilot the boat to a safe shore? A gripping survival story.
Non-Fiction

Becker, Helaine. *Are You Psychic? The Official Guide for Kids*  
Maple Tree Press

Becker presents a wide range of psychic phenomena, their history, as well as famous hoaxes and tricks. You can even test your dog for these valuable skills!

Caldwell, Michaela. *The Girls’ Yoga Book: Stretch Your Body, Open Your Mind and Have Fun*  
Maple Tree Press

Brightly coloured drawings and a lively text create an introduction to yoga that is visually appealing and instructive. Suggestions on how to incorporate yoga into everyday life, yoga “M’ohm’ents” (background) and “Girl talk” (comments from “yogini’s”) are interspersed with clear drawings of poses and sequences. The book sparkles with energy.

Etue, Elizabeth. *Hayley Wickenheiser: Born to Play*  
Kids Can Press

“Girls don’t play hockey!” Anyone who reads this entertaining biography of one of Canada’s best hockey players will never say that again. Wickenheiser was born to play, and she has the Olympic gold medal to prove it.

Hughes, Susan. *Coming to Canada: Building a Life in a New Land.*  
Maple Tree Press

Each chapter in this sensitively, clearly written, well-researched book concentrates on immigrants from various countries and their contributions to Canada, including the earliest arrivals to Canada via land bridge. The inclusion of topics such as Africville, Quarantine Island and more provide added depth. Archival photographs add further interest.

Kelsey, Elin. *Strange New Species: Astonishing Discoveries of Life on Earth*  
Maple Tree Press

A scientist who uses pillowcases to collect species, monkeys that fit in your hand, bacteria in your mouth and weird creatures from the deeps are part of this fascinating book that will amaze all ages. Many Canadian scientists are featured. You won’t be able to put this colourful book down.
Despite little education and an early life of poverty, Harry Houdini succeeded in becoming one of the most famous magicians in the world. Always mysterious, Houdini rarely let people know him. Using photos, film clips, letters, and a helpful “Mini-Houdini”, Elizabeth MacLeod reveals the resourceful and inventive master of magic.

Arthur Slade showcases 15 monsters with “fiendish” wit and “revolting” humour. In each interview he records the facts, the lies, and the gossip. The black and white illustrations by Derek Mah complement the creepy yet teasing atmosphere created by Slade. Readers will be laughing and squirming at the same time.

Slavin combines historical facts and fun illustrations to show how a wide variety of items are made, everything from kitty litter to toothpaste, from fortune cookies to running shoes.

This is the sad but ultimately hope-filled story of the young man who touched hearts around the world with his cross-Canada run to raise funds for cancer research.

Through a combination of compassion, humour, black and white photos and simple facts this book presents a positive, heart-warming view of how one family handles cancer.