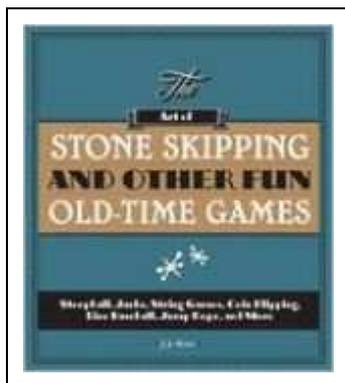


DIY Summer Fun | Crafts, Games, and More!

By Joy Fleishhacker

on June 4, 2013

From puppet-making to paper folding, stickball to scrapbooking, magic tricks to duct-tape delights, these books showcase an array of tantalizing activities that will keep kids occupied—and reading—throughout the summer. In addition to offering an outlet for creativity, the titles also provide practice for reading skills, measuring and working with numbers, decoding and interpreting diagrams and symbols, and troubleshooting problems—along with a confidence-building message that persistence and hard work pay off. Feature these volumes on summer reading lists to reinforce skills and ignite imaginations. The titles also make excellent resources for adults leading summer school programs, camps, library programs, scout troops, year-round clubs, and other groups.

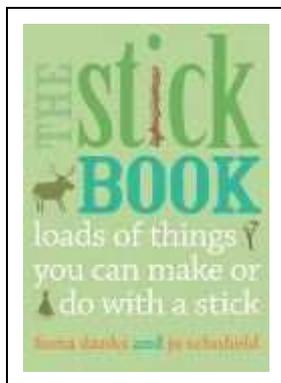


Games Galore

It's impossible for kids to get bored when J.J. Ferrer's *The Art of Stone Skipping and Other Fun Old-Time Games*

(Imagine/Charlesbridge, 2013; Gr 3-6) is on hand. This treasure trove of things to do is jam-packed with everything from Sock Ball to Simon Says, Jump Rope to Jacks, Giant Steps to Ghost in the Graveyard. Children will also find basic intros to card games, yo-yo tricks, string games, juggling, and more. Encompassing endeavors appropriate for partner pairs or large groups, solitary amusements and simple crafts, indoor and outdoor pastimes, brain challengers and road-trip while-awayers, the activities are

presented with easy-to-follow instructions, helpful tips, and try-'em-out variations. Lively sketches, fun facts, and historical tidbits are scattered throughout, and the inviting layout will keep kids turning pages to seek out more ideas.



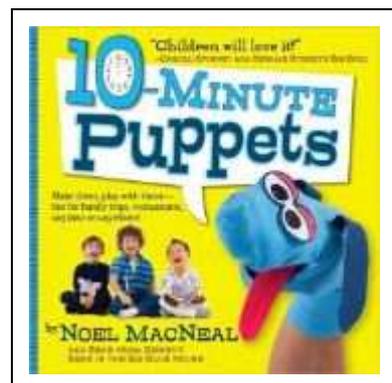
Nature's Wonderments

As Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield point out in *The Stick Book* (Frances Lincoln, 2012; Gr 2-6), these time-proven playthings can be almost anything—"...a sword with which to fight off fierce dragons in the forest, a tracking stick to help you creep after secretive creatures, a wand to cast magic spells or a broomstick to transport you to other worlds." Simple descriptions introduce stick-based activities, games, and crafts, all enchantingly illustrated with vibrant full-color photos of kids outdoors and in action. Coded for level of difficulty, the projects range from the very simple (make stick characters out of clay and found objects) to the more challenging (build a mini raft), and

several activities are tailor-made for tickling imaginations (make a story-telling stick, or assemble a storyboard collage to represent a favorite book). Used as a starting point, these creative ideas can be adapted to suit various environments, from classroom to schoolyard to park.

Puppet Palooza

Always enjoyable to make, puppets have the added benefit of encouraging imagination, creativity, and self-expression through performance and dramatic play. In *10-Minute Puppets* (Workman, 2010; Gr 2-5), professional puppeteer Noel MacNeal combines crystal-clear directions with an anyone-can-do-it approach to introduce 30 projects. Featured here are simple finger puppets, critters concocted out of socks and gloves, cutouts manipulated by sticks, shadow puppets, quick paper puppets, and a variety of easy-to-make theaters.



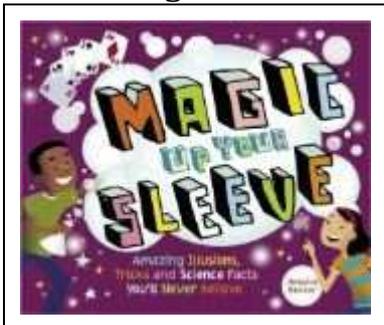
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quick paper puppets, and a variety of easy-to-make theaters.

Full-color photos of kids and their creations are sprinkled throughout, the instructions include helpful drawings, and the book ends with suggestions for putting together and performing shows. With projects appropriate for preschool through elementary-age students, as well as suggestions for more elaborate detailing, this book can be used to accommodate a broad range of ages and abilities.

More experienced crafters will be enchanted by Diana Schoenbrun's *Puppet Play* (Andrews McMeel, 2011; Gr 3-7), which presents 20 adorable characters made with recycled and reused mittens, towels, socks, and other items. Spanning from a superhero monkey to a wacky wizard, each project includes a difficulty rating, crisp full-color photos, and thorough step-by-step directions.

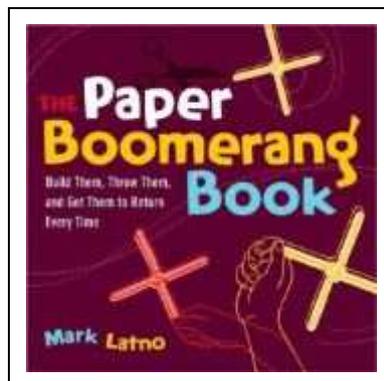
Scintillating Science



Helaine Becker's *Magic Up Your Sleeve* (Maple Tree, 2010; Gr 3-6) blends directions for audience-wowing magic tricks with brief explanations of the scientific facts behind each and every show-stopping ta-da. Utilizing common household items, the offerings include cognitive and optical illusions, examples of math "magic," and wonders based on physics and chemistry concepts. Other spreads focus on the history of magic, famous practitioners, and tips for putting on the perfect performance.

The breezy narrative tone and colorful digital cartoons keep the content light and the science easy to swallow. Invite students to polish up their magic wands, boggle their friends' minds with their presentations, and use online and print resources to further investigate what makes seemingly impossible feats possible.

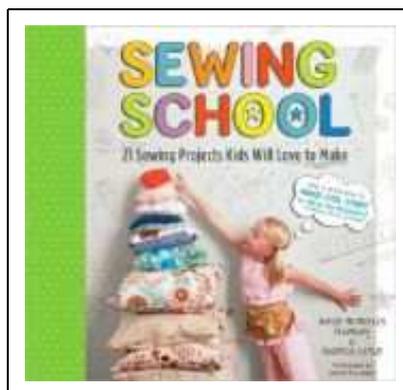
Mark Latno's *The Paper Boomerang Book* (Chicago Review, 2010; Gr 5 Up) highlights devices that are "...a cinch to make, graceful in flight, and fun to fly." A brief history is followed by clear step-by-step directions for making a "trainer" boomerang, instructions for holding and throwing it correctly, and tips for fine-tuning and troubleshooting (one model can be used indoors). Once the nuts and bolts are mastered, kids can test the effectiveness of various design tweaks and materials to perfect their boomerang's aeronautics, and hone their skills with tricks and fancy throws. The text includes helpful photos and diagrams.



Educators and their students can delve into the chapter on boomerang theory and the physics of flight, follow up the author's suggestions for experimentation ("Throw, Observe, Modify"), or further explore the history of these ancient tools and/or their current-day use in sports competitions (start with the United States Boomerang Association).

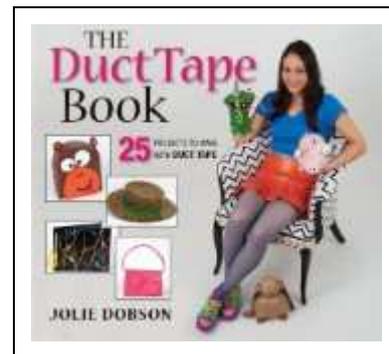
Sewing, Sticking, and Scrapbooking

In *Sewing School* (Storey, 2010; Gr 2-8), Amie Petronis Plumley and Andria Lisle place the emphasis on establishing skills, building confidence, and inspiring creativity rather than on achieving perfection. After covering the basics (threading a needle, simple stitches, etc.), the authors present an array of sewing projects, including perfect-for-cuddling pillows and animal "Stuffies," tote bags and wallets, and personality-expressing wearable items. Each step is accompanied by a clear photo. Snapshots of charmingly less-than-perfect child-created projects are sprinkled throughout along with tips to help youngsters make each item their own. An introduction written for adults offers up helpful ideas for



sprinkled throughout along with tips to help youngsters make each item their own. An introduction written for adults offers up helpful ideas for sewing with a group, and the required pattern pieces can be stored in a sturdy envelope provided at book's end.

Featuring a stylish hot-pink handbag, cute-as-can-be piggy bank, ready-to-personalize smart phone holder, and more, Jolie Dobson's *The Duct Tape Book* (Firefly, 2012; Gr 5 Up) presents 25 projects made from this versatile adhesive, which is available in a rainbow of colors and attractive patterns. Throughout, detailed instructions are supported with diagrams that help clarify each procedure. Full-color photos of finished products make these cleverly envisioned items all the more appealing, and kids will be able to apply the duct-tape-manipulating basics they learn to their own designs. Have youngsters search the internet for duct tape art and fashion sites to further investigate this fresh and fun form of self-expression.

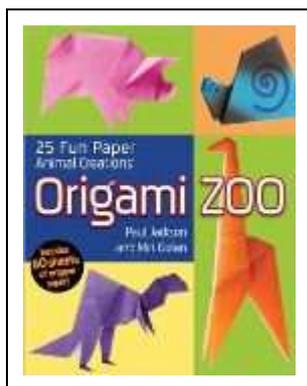


Candice F. Ransom's *Scrapbooking Just for You!* (Sterling, 2010; Gr 4 Up) introduces the fundamentals of this popular pastime, highlighting various techniques, providing useful layout tips, and discussing important design elements. The author's tone is cheerful, as she encourages kids to personalize and add meaning to their creations with journaling, play with colors and textures, and just enjoy being creative. Attractively illustrated with sample scrapbook pages, the book invites browsing and will get kids itching to make their own works of art, and a section of projects including picture frames, mini

albums, and more, will get them started.

Paper Pursuits: Make It or Fold It

Perfect for teens, Arnold E. Grummer's *Trash-to-Treasure Papermaking* (Storey, 2011; Gr 6 Up) opens with a section about papermaking history, processes, and tools and then launches into the step-by-step process for transforming newspaper, wrappers, sales circulars, magazines, envelopes and other scraps into beautiful and unique finished products. Once they understand the essentials, kids can experiment with other techniques including pulp layering and painting, texturing, paper casting into shapes, and much more. A section of gift- (or craft-fair) worthy projects includes cards, mobiles, spinwheels, notebooks, ornaments, and other handsome objects, all presented with easy-to-follow directions and photos. Suggestions for variations appear throughout, encouraging crafters to be creative and adventurous.



Beginning with clear explanations of common techniques, Paul Jackson and Miri Golan's *Origami Zoo* (2011; Gr 1-6) presents 25 fun-to-fold creations. The projects are organized from the "very simple" (a beginner-appropriate mouse, penguin, and more) to an "advanced" 43-step dinosaur that will challenge even experienced origami aficionados. Full-color photos introduce each elegant critter, and the lucid directions and large-size diagrams are accessibly laid out on clean white backgrounds, making each fold easy to comprehend and replicate. A packet of 60 sheets of origami paper in deep jewel tones is included to help group leaders get started.

Taking a similar approach, Jackson's *Origami Toys: That Tumble, Fly, and Spin* (2010, both Gibbs Smith) provides instructions for creating interactive toys including a barking dog, wing-flopping bird, catapult, and glider. Consider making a connection between art and

Taking a similar approach, Jackson's *Origami Toys: That Tumble, Fly, and Spin* (2010, both Gibbs Smith) provides instructions for creating interactive toys including a barking dog, wing-flapping bird, catapult, and glider. Consider making a connection between art and literature by sharing Tom Angleberger's entertaining *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda* (Amulet, 2010), Nathaniel Lachenmeyer's thoughtful *The Origami Master* (Albert Whitman, 2008), Kristine O'Connell George's charming *Fold Me a Poem* (Harcourt, 2005), or Molly Bang's magical *The Paper Crane* (Greenwillow, 1985).