The desire to know the facts doesn’t start at adulthood. Indeed, our very youngest to our oldest enjoy those books that provide information, give us the true story, tell us about the working and wonders of our world and the people in it. This brief list offers you some titles middle schoolers will enjoy when they want some information, please.

*Blizzard!* Jim Murphy. Scholastic, 2000. 136 pp. A riveting account of New York City trying to survive the massive snowstorm of 1888. Murphy has the ability to take a single incident and show the ramifications it had for people, for the city, and for history.

*Blood on the Forehead: What I Know about Writing.* M.E. Kerr. Harper Collins, 1998. 272 pp. This pioneer of young adult literature offers readers insights into how authors get their ideas and craft successful stories. She illustrates her points with excerpts from some of her acclaimed books.

*Bodies from the Bog.* James M. Deem. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998. 44 pp. This book presents a fascinating discussion of the discovery in northern Europe of remarkably preserved bog bodies thousands of years old. The lively text is complemented throughout with illustrations, many of which are quite grotesque photographs of discovered remains.


*Invisible Enemies: Stories of Infectious Diseases.* Jeanette Farrell. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1998. 224 pp. This is an engrossing account of seven deadly diseases (AIDS, bubonic plague, cholera, leprosy, malaria, smallpox, and tuberculosis) that have ravaged humankind through the ages.


*Lives of the Writers: Comedies, Tragedies (and What the Neighbors Thought).* Kathleen Krull. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1994. 96 pp. Twenty humorous, sometimes hilarious, brief portraits of writers like Charlotte Bronte, Charles Dickens, Langston Hughes, and Mark Twain are accompanied by caricature illustrations. The text is entertaining, but also quite informative. Other books in the same format by the same author and illustrator include:


Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance. Jennifer Armstrong. Crown, 1998. 120 pp. A superbly written account of Sir Ernest Shackleton’s ill-fated expedition to the Antarctic aboard the Endurance in 1914. The text is abundantly illustrated with crewmember Frank Hurley’s astonishing photographs chronicling the ordeal. This riveting account of the expedition is particularly well suited for middle school audiences.


Terror of the Spanish Main: Sir Henry Morgan and His Buccaneers. Albert Marrin. Dutton, 1999. 224 pp. A compelling history of New World buccaneers and Sir Henry Morgan, one of their famous leaders, will be of interest to teachers of World History and to English teachers wanting examples of lively expository writing.

The Amazing Potato. Milton Meltzer. Harper Collins, 1992. The fascinating story of the awesome impact this seemingly unassuming vegetable has had upon civilizations and history is certainly an unusual subject for a work of nonfiction. Meltzer, winner of the 2001 Wilder Award for his body of work, proves once again why he is considered a master of the informational genre.


What Are You? Voices of Mixed-Race Young People. Pearl Fuyo Gaskins. Holt, 1999. 192 pp. Gaskins presents a collection of interviews with 80 mixed-race young people discussing, in their own words, the many issues they face like dating, family life, prejudice, and struggles with their identity.

Where Will This Shoe Take You?: A Walk through the History of Footwear. Laurie Lawlor. Walker, 1996. 132 pp. The whats, whens, whys, and hows of footwear from woven bark to Air Jordans is presented in a lively, straightforward narrative complemented throughout by lots of black-and-white illustrations. Teachers might want to use this book as a jumping off point for some intriguing writing.

Ed Sullivan is the library media specialist for White Pine School in Jefferson County, Tennessee, and an adjunct instructor with the University of Tennessee School of Information Sciences. He can be reached at esulliv2@utk.edu.