

“Necessary Non-fiction for the Nourishment of Knowledge”  
Grant update from the classroom of Kimberly West  
Merriwether Middle School 2017-2018 School Year

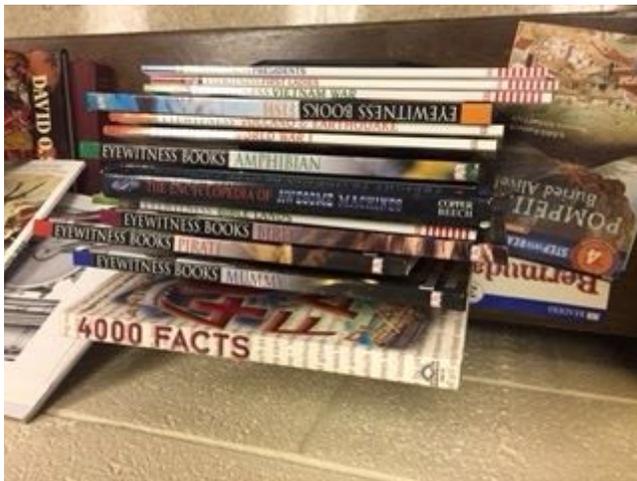
As outlined in the grant proposal I submitted, half of the awarded funds were spent at the beginning of the school year in order to have a wide variety of non-fiction offerings for my students. Following the winter break, the remainder of the funds were spent purchasing books based on student input regarding topics.

Students participated in a Book Buffet. I gave a brief overview of the books by genre and publisher, then the books were passed around small groups for a quick preview and discussion. Students were to jot down the titles of the books that grabbed their initial attention and rank their choices from first through third. Because of the volume of books I was able to purchase, all students were assigned their first choice! Our daily Bell Ringer assignment is for students to read their books for ten minutes. They are to record in their journals at least five new pieces of information they learned. Once students have read their book, they will complete a One-Page report. The ultimate goal is to have students finish and report on several non-fiction books. The most popular books are the series entitled *Horrible Histories* by Terry Deary. History told with loads of humor has appealed to many of my students. The second most popular books are the *Eyewitness* series by DK Publishing. The books are full of color photos and detailed captions.

The burning question is, of course, how do I know that my students are benefitting from this experience? In general, my students have improved their reading levels by at least two grades just in this school term. Students are demonstrating greater endurance for reading long informational texts, improved comprehension, and better vocabulary use within written assignments and class discussions. To quote one of my students, “These books make me like reading again!” I would say that this purchase was worthwhile and most beneficial for my students.



Assortment of biographies and autobiographies now in my classroom library.



The nonfiction section of my classroom library.



Boys from one of my classes participating in the Book Buffet.