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In Review

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In Review

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In Review

Edward J. Dwyer

Baby-Sitters Series

Ann M. Martin

Scholastic (\$2.21 per book)

The **Baby-Sitters Club** series from Scholastic is enormously popular with pre-teen girls, as is the complementary series for younger girls titled **Baby-Sitters: Little Sister**. Author Ann Martin weaves believable stories around likable and easily identifiable characters. The Baby-Sitters are the latter-day equivalent of Nancy Drew and Trixie Beldon. Inviting the Baby-Sitters into the classroom seems like a good idea. Girls like to read, collect, and/or trade Baby-Sitter books. Perhaps initiating Baby-Sitter reading clubs in school would promote independent reading and be most enjoyable for all involved. There are even closet Baby-Sitter fans among boys, one of whom was so fascinated with the monetary aspects he undertook plans to organize his own club of male baby sitters.

If ever there were a "can't miss" book series for elementary (and probably middle-school) girls, it's this one. At slightly more than two dollars apiece when ordered directly from Scholastic, Baby-Sitter books are a bargain, as well as a means to bring delight to many girls. Call 800-325-6149 for ordering information.

Achievers

Sports Achievers

Price: \$3.95-\$4.95 Paperback;

\$8.95 Hard cover

Lerner Books

The **Achievers** series presents highly readable accounts of people who achieved success in a variety of areas. Among the achievers are Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, Neil Armstrong, Oprah Winfrey, and Chuck Yeager. Author Roxane Chadwick's powerful story of Anne Morrow Lindbergh would prove inspirational to anyone, especially middle-school age girls. Chadwick carefully chronicled the early years of Anne's life, skillfully inviting the reader to share Anne's triumphs and trials as she grew into one of the great women of the 20th Century. This book would also make a great read-aloud. An added bonus is the attention paid to air routes flown by Anne and Charles Lindbergh. Such accounts can give life and energy to geography and social studies lessons.

The companion **Sports Achievers** series is also lively and well written. The authors present well focused stories demonstrating the necessary combination of talent and determination required for success in sports. For example, author Nathan Aaseng takes the reader through the often tough childhood and later

difficulties of New York Mets pitcher, Dwight Gooden. Similarly, author Thomas Raber presents an exciting account of the oft-times difficult rise to stardom of quarterback Joe Montana. Raber described gently but realistically how Montana had to deal with painful career-threatening injuries, as well as problems early in his career dealing mainly with moving from being a high school sports hero to college and professional level sports where challenges to meet success were so much greater for him. Others presented in the **Sports Achievers** series are Bo Jackson, Mary Lou Retton, Florence Griffith Joyner,

and Michael Jordan.

The **Achievers** and **Sports Achievers** series, in addition to being well-written, have a clear, well designed format and excellent photographs. The appeal of the **Sports Achievers** series for boys is likely to be strong. These are the kinds of books boys like to read and like others to see them reading. The books seem most appropriate for fifth through eighth graders but would likely appeal to competent younger readers. Also, younger children would likely enjoy having stories in the **Achievers** series read to them. Lerner Books can be reached at 800-328-4929.

Edward J. Dwyer is a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at East Tennessee State University. He has taught grades 4 and 6 in Massachusetts and grades 7 and 8 in Alaska.

Reading Aloud

The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.

From **Becoming a Nation of Readers**, Richard C. Anderson, Elfrieda H. Hiebert, Judith A. Scott, and Ian A. G. Wilkinson. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1985.