

Nonfiction Booktalking Tips and Examples

- Virtually any form of nonfiction can be booktalked except “narrative” nonfiction (e.g., *The Perfect Storm*, *In Cold Blood*, etc.).
- The techniques are very similar to fiction booktalking, but today’s nonfiction is usually beautifully illustrated and the pictures offer a graphic “hook” to catch teens’ attention.
- Thus, use transparencies or PowerPoint whenever possible.
- Nonfiction booktalking offers the opportunity to talk about subjects of intense interest to teens (e.g., *The Body Art Book*, *Man-Eating Bugs: The Art and Science of Eating Insects*, Kurt Cobain: Journals, etc.).
- Good sources for book ideas include YALSA’s Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers list, the annual ALEX Award titles, and the Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults (check out the 2007 nominations in the “I’m Not Making This Up” category, available at the YALSA website) .
- Subjects that are especially good for booktalking: biography/autobiography, history, adventure, pop culture, the gross.

Some Examples

Ahmedi, Farah with Tamim Ansari. *The Other Side of the Sky*. Simon Spotlight

Alexander, Caroline. *The Endurance: Shackleton’s Legendary Antarctic Expedition*. Knopf

Bodanis, David. *The Secret Family: Twenty-Four Hours inside the Mysterious Worlds of Our Minds and Bodies*. Simon & Schuster

Bragg, Rick. *All Over But the Shoutin’*. Pantheon

Breashears, David. *High Exposure: An Enduring Passion for Everest and Unforgiving Places*. Simon & Schuster

Carroll, Rebecca. *Sugar in the Raw: Voices of Young Black Girls in America*. Crown

Codell, Esme Raji. *Educating Esme: Diary of a Teacher’s First Year*. Algonquin

Crutcher, Chris. *King of the Mild Frontier*. Greenwillow

Davis, James. *Skateboarding Is Not a Crime: 50 Years of Street Culture*. Firefly Books

Dominick, Andre. *Needles*. Scribner

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Holt

Fleischman, John. *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story about Brain Science*. Houghton
Gantos, Jack. *A Hole in My Life*. Farrar, Straus
Greenlaw, Linda. *The Hungry Ocean: A Swordboat Captain's Journey*. Hyperion
Hart, Elva Trevino. *Barefoot Heart: Stories of a Migrant Child*. Bilingual Press
Junger, Sebastian. *The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men against the Sea*. Norton
Kercheval, Jesse Lee. *Space*. Algonquin
Krakauer, Jon. *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster*. Villard
Nelson, Peter. *Left for Dead: A Young Man's Search for Justice for the USS Indianapolis*.
Random House
Roach, Mary. *Stiff: the Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*. Norton
Runyon, Brent. *The Burn Journals*. Vintage
Santiago, Esmeralda. *Almost a Woman*. Perseus (see also her *When I Was Puerto Rican*)
Sebold, Alice. *Lucky*. Back Bay (The story behind *The Lucky Bones*)
Thomas, Velma Maia. *Lest We Forget: The Passage from Africa to Slavery and Emancipation*.
Crown