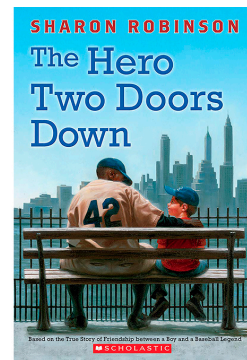
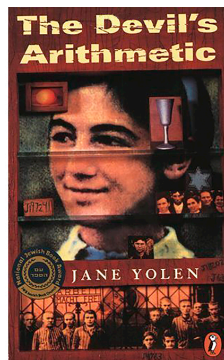
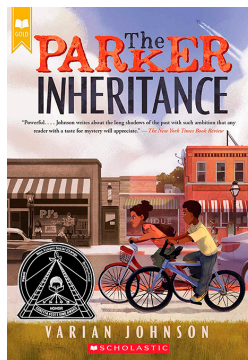
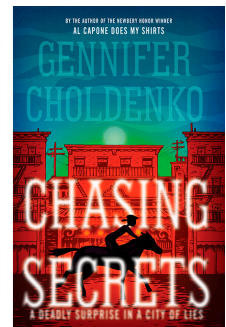
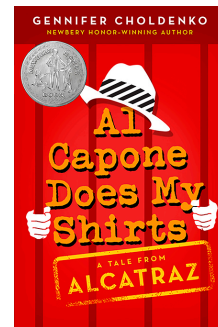


Gennifer Choldenko

9 Ways to Get Kids Excited about Historical Fiction

1. **Read the first chapter out loud, without announcing the book as “historical fiction.”** A story that reaches out and grabs you becomes a book you can’t put down. As a fifth grader, I counted many historical fiction novels among my all-time favorite books, but it never occurred to me they were historical fiction. The books I loved were compelling stories about characters I adored.
2. **Tell “kid-friendly” stories about the history behind the books. If you are introducing kids to the Tales from Alcatraz series beginning with *Al Capone Does My Shirts* and you begin by telling true stories of the escape attempts on Alcatraz, kids will become interested.** I guarantee it.
3. **Act and reenact.** Not all kids are hams, but a surprising number of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders want to act out a skit, read a scene, participate in a book-related improvisation like the improvisation for *Chasing Secrets*.
4. **Find books that are a mix of contemporary and historical fiction.** For example: *The Parker Inheritance* by Varian Johnson, *The Devil’s Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen.



5. **Book talk by interest not by historical timeframe.** War stories, love stories, elephant stories, dog stories, baseball stories. Strong historical fiction is not “about” history. History is simply the setting for the story. Hand *The Hero Two Doors Down* by Sharon Robinson to a kid who is interested in baseball, for example.

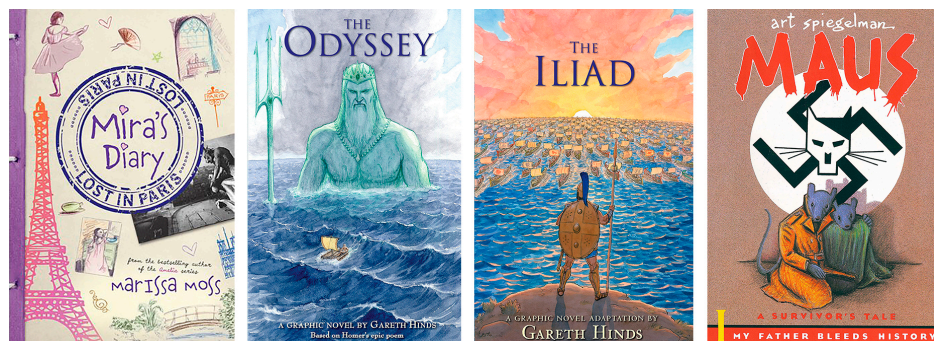
6. **Consider some of our most beloved novels.** They weren't historical fiction when they were written but they are historical fiction now. *A Little Princess* and *A Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett.



7. **Think in kid time.** The 1990's is ancient history to kids born in 2008, which means that a book like *The Front Desk* is historic fiction.
8. **Think fantasy.** Take advantage of the natural kinship between historical fiction and fantasy. *Catherine, Called Birdy* by Karen Cushman is pure historical fiction but it feels almost like fantasy. *Echo* by Pam Muñoz Ryan is a mix of historic fiction and fantasy as is *The Inquisitor's Tale* by Adam Gidwitz, *The Magic Treehouse* by Mary Pope Osborne.



9. **Check out graphic novels.** *Mira's Diary Series* by Marissa Moss. *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* adapted by Gareth Hinds, *Maus* by Art Spiegelman.



Gennifer Choldenko, Newbery Honor winning author of *Al Capone Does My Shirts*, *Al Capone Shines My Shoes*, *Al Capone Does My Homework*, *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve*, *Chasing Secrets*, and *Orphan Eleven*, coming in 2020