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I will do my booktalk on the following books:

Gaiman, Neil. *Anansi Boys*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005.
ISBN: 006051518X. \$26.95. Gr. 9+. 337p.

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. New York: Scholastic Books,
1998. ISBN: 0590353403. \$22.99. Gr. 4+. 320p.

Westerfeld, Scott. *Uglies*. New York: Simon Pulse, 2005.
ISBN: 0689865384. \$7.99. Gr. 7+. 488p.

The theme of my booktalk will be what happens when things turn out to not be what they seem. For example, think about things that you learned in your history and science classes in elementary school. When you get to middle school and high school, you begin to learn a little more about history, science, and that Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy aren't real.

This can often turn your life—and how you view the world—upside down. Each of these books develops this theme in slightly different ways, but the theme of learning something new about the world (and the characters learning something new about themselves) is clear in all of the books

In *Anansi Boys*, Fat Charlie is forced to reevaluate his life after his father dies and he finds out that, one, Charlie has a brother that he never knew about, and two, Charlie's father is Anansi, the trickster god. Charlie leads a pretty normal life in London, but everything changes after his father's death, and life as he knew it turns out to not be all that there is in the world. It's definitely a fanciful book with a wild plot that should appeal to a varied audience. For this book, I will mention that the audiobook is great to listen to because it puts you inside of the action; the actors' accents really make the story.

Harry Potter has no idea that he has any sort of magical ability until his eleventh birthday, when he is paid a visit from Hagrid, an employee of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. As you can imagine, this turned Harry's life upside down. But by going to Hogwarts, Harry begins to learn the truth about his family and himself and, like Fat Charlie, learns about a world that he did not know existed. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is the first book in the wildly successful Harry Potter series. I will bring up the fact that there are movies made of the books and that the last book in the seven-part series will be out in July. This may appeal to students who have not read the Harry Potter series as well as students who want to reread the books before *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* is published. I know that I'm planning on rereading them! I'll also mention the audiobooks for these stories because they are wonderful too.

Uglies has a main female character, Tally Youngblood, which may pique the interest of the girls in the audience. The plot of the book, however, should appeal to both genders. Wouldn't it be great to live in a world where, on your 16th birthday, you became pretty? Before that time, you live with the Ugliers, but after your operation, where you can choose exactly how you will look, you move to New Pretty Town, where you never have to worry about anything again. Tally thinks that it's a pretty great thing, and she cannot wait the few weeks before her 16th birthday, especially since her best friend Peris has already been made into a Pretty. But then Tally meets Shay, who has a totally different view of what being a Pretty means. Why doesn't Shay want to be a Pretty? Will Tally change her mind about going through with the operation? I will mention that this is a three-part series, with *Pretties* and *Specials* being the titles of the subsequent books.

I chose these three books because I really enjoyed reading all of them and I think that they will appeal to a middle school or high school audience. There is a range of reading levels reflected in these three selections, with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* being the easiest, *Uglies* being an intermediate choice—perfect for middle school students—and *Anansi Boys* reaching for those students with a slightly higher reading level and interest in a book that may really make them think.

Even though it seems that everyone has read the Harry Potter series, that isn't the case. By booktalking the first book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, it may persuade students who haven't read the books to pick it up, especially if they've enjoyed the movies. It may also remind students who have read the series to pick them up again as a sort of refresher before the final book comes out this summer.

With most of the teen magazines and media directed to teens portraying super-skinny, super-pretty models, it would be hard to find a teenage girl—or even boy—who has not wished that they could change the way that they looked, so I think that they could relate with Tally Youngblood, the main character in *Uglies*. The book is full of conflict, and there is a definite adventure element in it. I think that a lot of people like reading series, and all of the books in the *Uglies* trilogy works very well with each other, so the fact that it, along with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, is part of a series, will add increased interest.

Neil Gaiman is a favorite author of mine, and I've been waiting to use one of his books. *Anansi Boys* is such a unique book, and Gaiman's writing style makes it very easy to read. It's quite unlike many other books that I've read, but it definitely fits the theme that I have decided to use.

All of these books fall into the fantasy / science-fiction genre, but I don't think that I will make too much of that fact because those labels seem to turn some people away from the books. The fact that most of the characters in the books are human will also help their appeal.