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## Theme

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### K-2

Hest, Amy. *The Dog Who Belonged to No One*. New York: Harry N. Abrams inc. 2008. "Once there was a small dog with crooked ears, he belonged to no one. And once there was a wisp of a girl named Lia." In this beautifully told and illustrated story, two lonely characters find each other in the most unlikely place. The theme of this beautiful tale fits seamlessly in our sense of place unit, with lessons of finding ourselves in each other through true friendship.

Breathed, Berkeley. *Pete & Pickles*. New York: Philomel Books, 2008. Pete, a perfectly practical pig, has his life intruded upon by Pickles, a runaway circus elephant that needs a friend. The two set off on countless adventures, from brunch in Tahiti, to floating down the canals of Venice. Just as Pete starts to tire of Pickles spontaneity, a near tragedy shows Pete what Pickles really adds to his life. With a reoccurring theme of facing change Breathed intertwines humor and emotion to create a tale of lasting friendship and love.

### 3-4

Mass, Wendy. *11 Birthdays*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2008. After celebrating their first nine same-day birthdays together, Amanda and Leo, have a fallen out on their tenth and have not spoken to each other for the last year. As they prepare to celebrate their eleventh birthdays separately, peculiar things begin to happen as the day of their birthday begins to repeat itself over and over again. They soon renew their friendship and begin to experiment by making different choices throughout the day, partly for the thrill of acting without long-term consequences and partly from their fear of never escaping this mysterious time trap. This story is filled with the theme of friendship and teamwork!

Park, Linda Sue. *Keeping Score*. New York: Clarion Books, 2008. It's 1951 in Brooklyn and the baseball season is half over. Nine year old Maggie forges an unlikely friendship with Jim, a local fireman, who teaches her the art of scoring baseball games. When Jim is drafted and consequently traumatized in the Korean War, Maggie hopes that she and their shared love of baseball can bring him back to his old self. With themes of persistence and determination this well researched book will intrigue boys and girls alike.

### 5-6

Hahn, Mary Downing. *All the Lovely Bad Ones*. New York: Clarion Books, 2008.

Travis and his sister Corey love to make mischief, so a summer at their grandmothers haunted Vermont Inn holds much promise. As the two "Bad Ones" begin to do some haunting of their own their thoughtless games awaken ghosts. They are told by the guests that putting the ghosts back to sleep will not be easy. Only Travis and Corey can lie to rest the ghosts they have stirred. While this book is an obvious fit for a mystery theme it also brings to light the relationship between a brother and a sister.

Erdrich, Louise. *The Porcupine Year*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008. The third entry in the Birchbark House series follows Omakayas and her family as they are forced to move away from her homeland. Themes of survival, change and sacrifice are intertwined through the family's hardships including a rough winter, violent raids, and Omakayas' coming of age.