

NNSTOY Social Justice Book List

AUGUST 2017

Edited by Katherine Bassett,
Brett Bigham, and Laurie Calvert

Contributors: Revathi Balakrisnan, Katherine Bassett, Brett Bigham, Nate Bowling,
Chad Miller, Shanna Peebles, John Tierney, Monica Washington, Abdul Wright and
more than 60 State and National Teachers of the Year and Finalists



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NNSTOY
TEACHERS LEADING

Acknowledgments

Our Partners

Our partner in this work, the University of Phoenix. The incredible faculty and administration at the University of Phoenix believe strongly in the importance of education equity in preparing our nation’s children to take their place as contributing citizens. They fight tirelessly for this through their teacher preparation programs, professional learning offerings, and special projects such as the one in which NNSTOY is engaged with the University and the National Action Network.

Our Editors

Ms. Laurie Calvert, Co-Editor, who spent countless hours in assembling this list from suggestions by our members.

Mr. Brett Bigham, who served as Co-Editor, and turned his talents to firming up the format of the entries and made sure that they were attributed correctly to authors, illustrators, and NNSTOY member nominations.

Our Section Authors

We are most grateful to those NNSTOY members who took on the task of writing, in a few short sentences, the introductions to the various genres of books included in this list. Their time and talents are greatly appreciated.

Our Contributors

With most sincere thanks, we recognize the 60 plus contributors to this booklist, each of whom took seriously the task of nominating books that they use to teach social justice skills and concepts to students. Without them, there would be no booklist.

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Introduction

Katherine Bassett



It is most exciting to introduce the first in a series of booklists drawn from recommendations by State and National Teachers of the Year and Finalists for State Teacher of the Year.

We are living in interesting times, with issues of fairness, equity, equality and social justice often conflated as our nation faces new and ongoing challenges concerning the rights of all of the people who live here. At NNSTOY, our mission is to provide every student whose life we touch with a high-quality education and to advocate for the rights of every child to such an education. We take this charge most seriously.

School is a place where many issues facing our nation rise to the forefront. As teachers, how do we best prepare our students to face and discuss social justice concerns? For many of us, books offer a solid place to start.

As a child of two civil rights leaders, I was raised with a strong consciousness of issues of social justice. I was also raised in an environment surrounded by books and eventually became a school librarian. The running joke in my house was that, if you couldn't find me, I would be in a closet or behind a sofa with my head buried in a book. Books opened my eyes to new worlds—and to problems and solutions to them.

I attended the World's Fair in New York City with my family as a child and at the New York Public Library I randomly selected Eleanor Estes' *The Hundred Dresses*. I refused to leave the exhibit until my parents promised that they would help me find this book in my own public library so that I could finish it. *The*

Hundred Dresses opened my eyes to the world of prejudice and discrimination meted out by children. Through it, I learned a vocabulary I would later use in teaching Holocaust education, words like victim, survivor, perpetrator and bystander.

As teachers, we use books to start conversations, spark ideas, present challenges and brainstorm solutions. We provide this booklist as a resource for educators, parents, community members and policy makers interested in reaching young people on issues of social justice. It is divided into five sections: early learning (pre-K – 3rd grade), elementary reading and chapter books (grades 4-6), young adult literature (grades 7-9), secondary/adult literature, and texts to help teachers create equitable learning environments.

We trust that you will find it useful and appreciate your utilization of this resource.

With warm regards,

Katherine Bassett
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Network of State Teachers of the Year

Introduction

Angie Williams, Ed.D.



I applaud the National Network of State Teachers of the Year for taking the initiative to compile the list of books that relate to different perspectives of children living and going to school in the U.S.

It is important to share stories that are inclusive and broad that reflect the diversity of our students, country, and our own multiethnic societal fabric.

As a society, we thrive when we understand, accept, and celebrate our differences. Therefore it's my hope that children grow up to understand there are diverse viewpoints and backgrounds while also not diminishing their own unique identities.

I hope this list inspires children to be who they are unapologetically all while promoting kindness, activism, justice, and rights for all.

All My Best,

It is important we help our children understand the diversity and what it means to belong, no matter one's background. It is also essential to provide stories that relate to their own experience as a young Americans.

Angie Williams, Ed.D.
Dean of Multicultural Affairs & Diversity
University of Phoenix

We must learn from the experiences of those in the past who faced discrimination, prejudice and other unjust treatment provide a powerful testimony to students today, in order not to repeat the tragedies and build a more just and inclusive world.

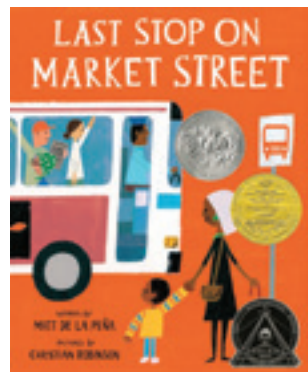


Early Learning

“The picture books of childhood are one of our most early shared cultural experiences. We are brought together with Green Eggs, Magic Pebbles, Giving Trees and Mike Mulligan’s Steam Shovels. When these picture books have cultural lessons our entire society shares the experience. We all know Ferdinand who would not fight and the Sneetches who judged so harshly. How many of us have sat and pondered that fence in The Other Side and wondered when it was finally torn down? The lessons learned in those early picture books last a lifetime and make us who we are as a nation.”



BRETT BIGHAM
2014 Oregon State
Teacher of the Year



Last Stop on Market Street

Matt de la Peña, Illustrated by Christian Robinson

DIFFERENCES

“He wondered how his Nana found beautiful where he never even thought to look.” An African-American grandmother helps her grandson notice and appreciate the differences and similarities in the lives and hearts of people in their city.

★ Fiction



AWARDS

2016 Newberry Medal
2016 Caldecott Honor Book
2016 Coretta Scott King
Illustrator Honor Book



Each Kindness

Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E.B. Lewis

CLASSISM

Classism affects a group of young girls who learn the power of small acts of kindness after it is too late.

★ Fiction



AWARDS

Jane Addams
Children’s Book Award



Those Shoes

Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by Noah Z. Jones

CLASSISM

A story of the struggle between wants and needs and the power of friendship and sacrifice as children see the greater value in the human heart and people above a pair of “those shoes.”

★ Fiction



The Name Jar

Written and illustrated by Yangsook Choi

IMMIGRATION RACISM

Classism and racism are addressed in the moving story of Unhei, who has just moved from Korea. She is anxious about what American kids will think of her and what will happen when nobody can even pronounce her name?

★ Fiction



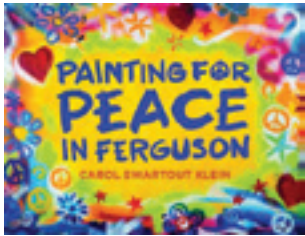
Strictly No Elephants

Lisa Mantchev, illustrated by Taeun Yoo

INCLUSION

A wonderful lesson about inclusion and acceptance is learned when a boy and his pet are excluded from the neighborhood Pet Club.

★ Fiction



Painting for Peace in Ferguson

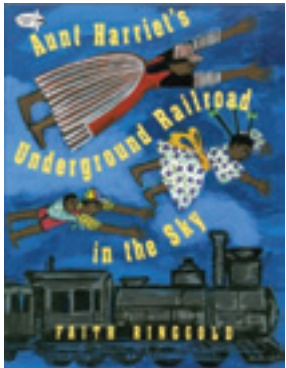
Carol Swartout Klein

RACISM

This book tells the story of Ferguson, Missouri, and the local artists who came together to rebuild and beautify their community after racial riots left businesses and homes with broken windows and doors.



Nonfiction



Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky

Written and illustrated by Faith Ringgold

SLAVERY RACISM

A young girl is guided by Harriet Tubman on the journey of slaves seeking freedom through the Underground Railroad in this picture book fantasy.



Fiction



AWARDS

Jane Addams
Children's Book Award



The Great Migration: An American Story

Written and illustrated by Jacob Lawrence

RACISM

In 1941 Jacob Lawrence painted 60 paintings with captions that represented the Great Migration of African-American communities leaving the Southern states. Published in 1993 the artwork creates a bridge between today's students and families who struggled in 1920's America.



Nonfiction



Baseball Saved Us

Ken Mochizuki, illustrated by Don Lee

JAPANESE INTERNMENT XENOPHOBIA

The story of the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II is told through the eyes of a young boy who, with his father, builds a baseball diamond in the camp in which his family is being held, to raise spirits and regain dignity.



Fiction



Here We Go: A Poetry Friday Power Book

Sylvia Vardell and Janet Wong

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Amazing poets! Love them! This book focuses on activism and how we can change our world.



Poetry



Young Martin's Promise

Walter Dean Myers

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT RACISM

A biography of a young Martin Luther King Jr. and his life growing up in Atlanta, Georgia.



Nonfiction



For the Right to Learn: Malala Yousafzai's Story

Rebecca Langston-George, illustrated by Janna Bock

HUMAN RIGHTS SEXISM EDUCATION

A wonderful picture book biography of Malala Yousafzai and her struggle for equal education.

Nonfiction



Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey

Margriet Ruurs, art by Nizar Ali Badr

REFUGEES IMMIGRATION

This book is written in both Arabic and English—and I'm thinking of the impact that has on the children in my school who have never even seen their language in print in an American library or classroom.

Fiction



Freedom Over Me

Ashley Bryan

RACISM SLAVERY

All around AMAZING! Author Ashley Bryan uses historical records of slave auctions and plantation documents as the basis for this story about the value of a human being.

Narrative Poetry

AWARDS

Newberry Honor
Coretta Scott King Honor
Coretta Scott King
Illustrator Honor



The Family Book

Written and illustrated by Todd Parr

GENDER LGBT FAMILY

I love this book. It helps kids understand that all our families can be unique, treasured, and loved.

Fiction



Yo! Yes?

Written and illustrated by Chris Raschka

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT RACISM

It's a very simple and sweet story about a budding friendship between an African American boy and a white boy, told with very few words and beautiful, vibrant illustrations

Fiction

AWARDS

Caldecott Medal



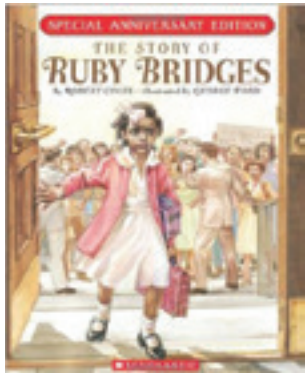
The Other Side

Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E.B. Lewis

RACISM

This is a great book to introduce the topics of segregation, tolerance, and interpersonal relationships. The watercolor illustrations are beautiful.

Fiction



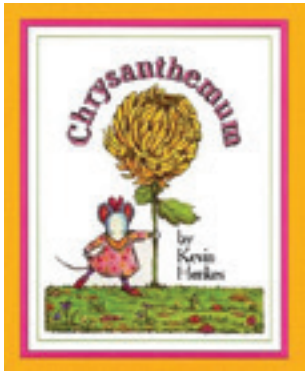
The Story of Ruby Bridges

Robert Coles, illustrated by George Ford

RACISM CIVIL RIGHTS

I like sharing this book because it's great to teach civil rights in simpler terms. It's a story about 6 year-old Ruby Bridges who was selected by the courts to attend an all white school during the Civil Rights Movement.

☆ Fiction



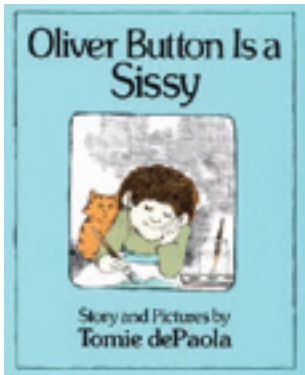
Chrysanthemum

Written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes

BULLYING

I recommend this book because it takes place in a school and addresses bullying, self-esteem, and acceptance of people who are "different."

☆ Fiction



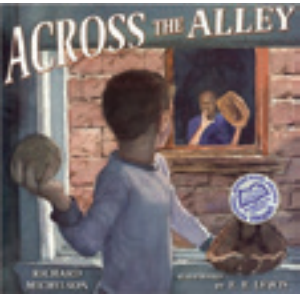
Oliver Button is a Sissy

Written and illustrated by Tomie dePaola

LGBT BULLYING

This is a good book to discuss bullying, stereotypical gender issues, and acceptance in the classroom.

☆ Fiction



Across the Alley

Richard Michelson, illustrated by E.B. Lewis

ANTISEMITISM RACISM

I like this book because it brings two different cultures together. The main characters are an African American boy and a Jewish boy and the book encourages friendship regardless of race.

☆ Fiction



And Tango Makes Three

Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell illustrated by Henry Cole

OTHERING LGBT FAMILY

A delightful book about the enduring love of two male penguins who want a family of their own, and work hard at creating one. Although different, their family is definitely special.

☆ Fiction



A Peacock Among Pigeons

Tyler Curry, illustrated by Clarione Gutierrez

OTHERING LGBT DIFFERENCES

This book is listed as an outstanding children's book touching on LGBT themes but it is much more than that; it is about acceptance, courage and compassion.

☆ Fiction



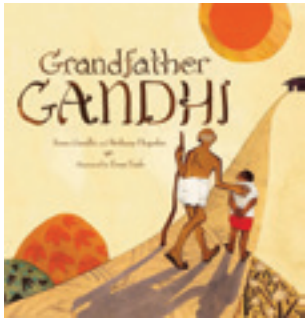
One Green Apple

Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ted Lewin

IMMIGRATION RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Eve Bunting works her gentle magic in this story of a Muslim immigrant and her experience coming to the United States. I love using this book which helps to share a contemporary Arab experience with young readers.

☆ Fiction



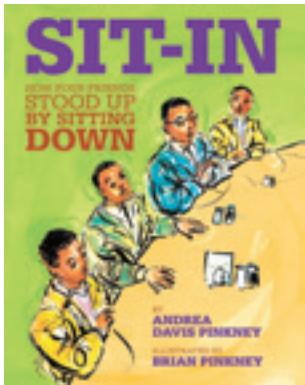
Grandfather Gandhi

Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus, illustrated by Evan Turk

RACISM CULTURAL DIVISION

Arun shares his struggles with anger and wonders how he would ever live up to his grandfather, the Mahatma.

📖 Nonfiction



Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down

Jane Adams, illustrated by Brian Pinkney

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT RACISM

A great recollection about four college students sitting in at the Woolworth's lunch counter. This is a true story about how people treated them and how they reacted, starting a movement.

📖 Nonfiction



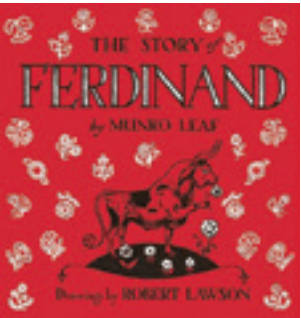
The Black Book of Colors

Menina Cottin, illustrated by Rosana Faria

DISABILITY STEREOTYPES

This book in English and Braille gives insight into how language can combine with the senses to create an experience to help readers understand the world of those who cannot see.

📖 Nonfiction



The Story of Ferdinand

Munro Leaf, illustrated by Robert Lawson

BEING YOURSELF

There is a reason this book outsold Gone With the Wind in 1938—everyone who reads it recognizes themselves in Ferdinand—the biggest bull on the farm who wants to pick flowers instead of bullfight, and in doing so earns respect for simply being himself.

☆ Fiction



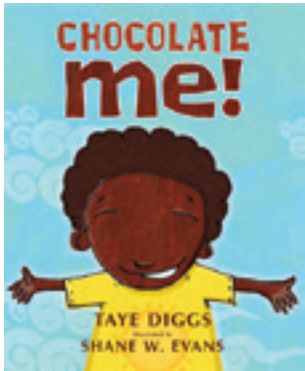
The Crayon Box That Talked

Shane DeRolf

RACE

Students learn that they need each other no matter what they look like, what gender they are, what language they speak or economic status they come from.

☆ Fiction



Chocolate Me

Taye Diggs, illustrated by Shane W. Evans

DISCRIMINATION

A book that helps small children understand how people of color could potentially feel in spaces where no one looks like them. It teaches us to accept differences.

☆ Fiction



Heather Has Two Mommies

Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Diana Souza

FAMILY STRUCTURE LGBT

Groundbreaking when it came out, this book helps small children begin to understand that families come in all types.

☆ Fiction



A is for Activist

Written and illustrated by Innosanto Nagara

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

This book starts the conversation about our responsibility to be active in and responsive to issues of justice in our communities.

☆ Fiction



One of a Kind, Like Me/Unico Como Yo

Laurin Mayeno, illustrated by Robert Liu-Trujillo

GENDER LGBT

This is a unique book that looks at gender stereotypes through the eyes of a youngster named Danny who wants to be a princess in the school parade and his family that loves and supports him.

☆ Fiction



Lillian's Right to Vote

Jonah Winter, illustrated by Shane W. Evans

RACISM VOTING RIGHTS

Another picture book great for all kids. This book is about Lillian recollecting about her ancestor's experiences earning the right to vote.

☆ Fiction



The Sneetches and Other Stories

Written and illustrated by Dr. Seuss

OTHERING PREJUDICE ANTISEMITISM

This book is about our continuing need to make a group “other” by way of some small difference. It also speaks to the economic impulses that underlie these divisions and why someone would want to keep us divided against ourselves.

☆ Fiction

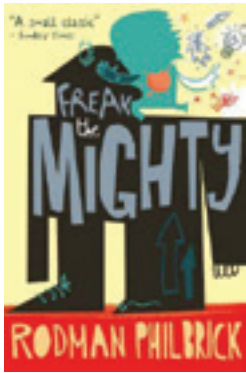
Elementary

Grades 4 – 6

“There has never been a more urgent time than now to teach and practice cultural awareness. The following books for upper elementary students will expose them to social injustices in the form of racism, religious or political intolerance, make them examine their own beliefs and values and help them build better relationships in a diverse environment. Teach each book in the context of the current events of that region and you have a comprehensive fiction and non-fiction ELA unit that will make learning enjoyable.”



REVATHI
BALAKRISHNAN
2016 Texas State
Teacher of the Year



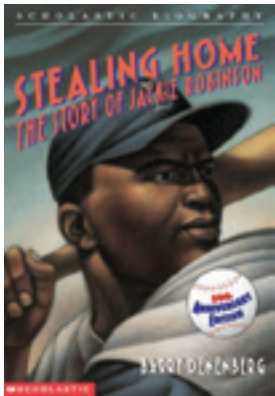
Freak the Mighty

Rodman Philbrick

BEING DIFFERENT DISABILITY STEREOTYPES

An emotional story that follows the friendship of two students who struggle to fit in. Together, they provide each other the strength and courage to take on the world.

★ Fiction



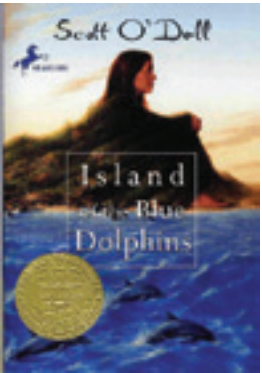
Stealing Home: The Story of Jackie Robinson

Barry Denenberg

RACISM

This biography about Jackie Robinson provides students with an important lesson on the courage it takes to face racism.

📖 Nonfiction



Island of the Blue Dolphins

Scott O'Dell

PREJUDICE GENDER ROLES

Based on the haunting true story of a 19th century Native American girl abandoned for 18 years on an island and how she must ignore gender roles and prejudices in order to survive.

★ Fiction

🏆 AWARDS

Newberry Medal



Talkin' About Bessie: The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman

Nikki Grimes, illustrated by E.B. Lewis

RACISM SEXISM POVERTY

Classism and racism are addressed in the moving story of Unhei, who has just moved from Korea. She is anxious about what American kids will think of her and what will happen when nobody can even pronounce her name?

★ Fiction

🏆 AWARDS

Coretta Scott King illustrator Award
Coretta Scott King Author Honor



Rules

Cynthia Lord

DISABILITY STEREOTYPES

This book shares the relationship of a sister who creates “rules” that she thinks will assist her autistic brother. A great choice for helping students accept the uniqueness that we all bring to the classroom and life.

★ Fiction

🏆 AWARDS

Newberry Honor



George

Alex Gino

GENDER IDENTITY STEROTYPES

Everyone thinks George is a boy but George knows different in this important book that addresses the issues around being transgender.

☆ Fiction



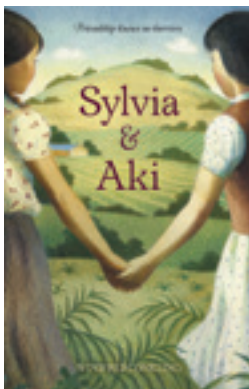
Gracefully Grayson

Ami Polonsky

GENDER IDENTITY STEROTYPES

A heartwarming novel that follows the life of Grayson, a young transgender teenager who has dreams of playing the female lead in the school play.

☆ Fiction



Sylvia & Aki

Winifred Conkling

RACISM WAR SEGREGATION INTERNMENT

The lives of two girls intertwine in this novel about the injustice of racism, segregation and the Japanese internment camps of WWII.

☆ Fiction



A Little Piece of Ground

Elizabeth Laird and Sonia Nimr

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE WAR

The story of a boy who grows up in the Gaza strip amongst the fight between Israel and Palestine. It shares the story of ordinary people who are caught in the middle of the conflict.

☆ Fiction



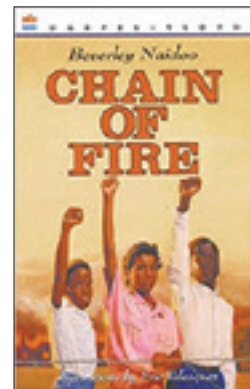
Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution

Ji-Li Jiang

OTHERING CLASSISM INTOLERANCE

Ji-Li Jiang talks about her days during the cultural revolution in China and about the choices she had to make as her family faced their darkest times.

📖 Nonfiction



Chain of Fire

Beverley Naidoo

RACISM APARTHEID

A moving story about South Africa and how the natives had to endure the atrocities of apartheid.

☆ Fiction



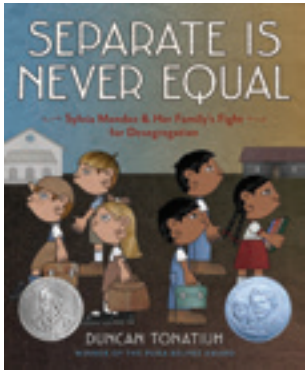
Rain Reign

Ann M. Martin

DISABILITY STEREOTYPES

Rose, the narrator, shares her special relationship with her dog, her life dealing with Asperger’s Syndrome, and the struggle to make the right decision even when it is painful.

★ Fiction



Separate Is Never Equal

Written and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh

RACISM SEGREGATION

The 1947 California court ruling is the setting for this thoughtful book that addresses school segregation.

★ Nonfiction



Number the Stars

Lois Lowry

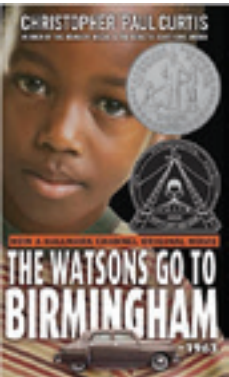
ANTISEMITISM

Learn about the heroic efforts of ordinary people who risked everything to protect Jewish families during the Holocaust. This book challenges every reader to think about what they would do if they too were witness to extraordinary injustice.

★ Fiction

★ AWARDS

Newberry Medal



The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963

Christopher Paul Curtis

RACISM

A coming of age story that is heartfelt, passionate, and brings fiction and non-fiction together to set the stage for a story that will stay with the reader and remind them that civil rights are not always available to all.

★ Fiction

★ AWARDS

Newberry Honor
Coretta Scott King Honor Award



Maniac Magee

Jerry Spinelli

RACISM

Through the lens of a child this book examines a small town’s division between the black community and the white community and teaches about the ignorance that comes with racism.

★ Fiction

★ AWARDS

Newberry Medal



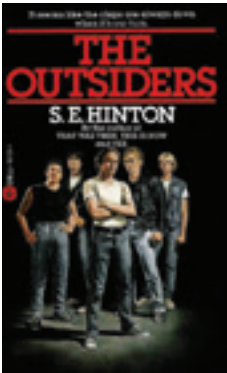
Iggy's House

Judy Blume

RACISM STEREOTYPES

Everyone knows Judy Blume, but this book about a black family moving into an all white neighborhood has been lost in the shuffle, but it shouldn't have been. It gently raises all kinds of questions for my students, like “If children have racist parents, when do they become responsible for their own actions?”

★ Fiction



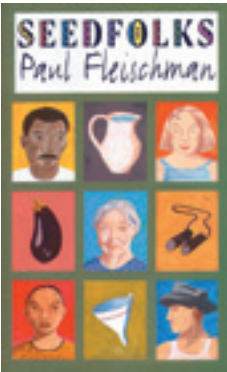
The Outsiders

S. E. Hinton

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

The fight for equity in society is depicted through the unraveling of the stories of two sets of teens: Those with money and those without.

☆ Fiction



Seedfolks

Paul Fleischman, illustrated by Judy Pedersen

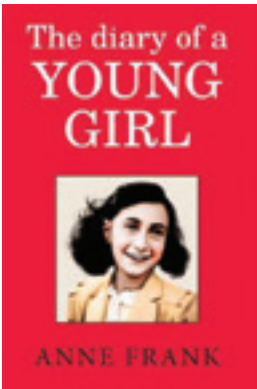
RELIGION / ETHNICITY

Centered around an urban garden, this short book of vignettes threaded together helps show that although people are different, a common goal and place can bring us all together to turn something ugly into something beautiful and filled with promise.

☆ Fiction

AWARDS

Jane Addams Children's Honor Book



The Diary of a Young Girl

Anne Frank

RACISM RELIGION

One of mankind's darkest hours as seen through the eyes of a doomed yet hope-filled girl.

📖 Nonfiction



El Deafo

CeCe Bell

DISABILITY STEREOTYPES

This 2015 Newbery Honor Book is the autobiography of Cece Bell and how her new hearing aid brought her a world of sound but at the cost of isolation from people at her new school.

📖 Nonfiction

AWARDS

Newberry Medal



Out of My Mind

Sharon Draper

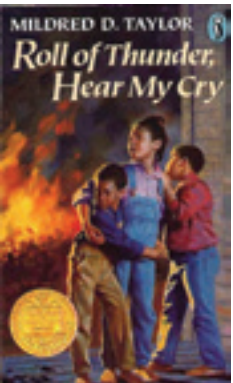
DISABILITY STEREOTYPES

Disability is rarely discussed and is largely misunderstood. This book challenges students to think about disability in meaningful ways.

☆ Fiction

AWARDS

NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

Mildred D. Taylor

RACISM

This book is special because the author used a strong young female character to narrate the oppression of her family during the Great Depression.

☆ Fiction

AWARDS

Newberry Medal



The Hundred Dresses

Eleanor Estes

CLASSISM

A poignant story about the dangers of prejudice and discrimination told through a story of an immigrant student who is taunted by her female classmates.

☆ Fiction

AWARDS

Newberry Honor



Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust

Eve Bunting, illustrated by Stephen Gammell

ANTISEMITISM PREJUDICE

This picture book is an allegory of the Holocaust but helps us think about standing up for what's right and questioning what we see around us.

☆ Fiction



Molly's Pilgrim

Barbara Cohen, illustrated by Daniel M. Duffy

XENOPHOBIA

Molly is a an immigrant student in a class that has been asked to make Pilgrims as part of a Thanksgiving project. Molly's mother helps to redefine the term "Pilgrim" for students and her teacher through her creation.

☆ Fiction



I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from the Terezin Concentration Camp, 1942-1944

Edited by Hana Volavkova

ANTISEMITISM

An impactful collection of art and poetry by Jewish children who lived and perished in Terezin. It presents a picture of their strength and creativity in the face of horrific adversity.

☆ Nonfiction



Crenshaw

K.A. Applegate

CLASSISM POVERTY HOMELESSNESS

Jackson is a young boy who is struggling with his parents' unemployment, financial setbacks, and living with the fear of having to move back into the family minivan. He confides his fears to his imaginary cat, Crenshaw.

☆ Fiction



Full Cicada Moon

Marilyn Hilton

RACISM

Beautifully written in verse, the book tells the story of a young girl, half-black, half-Japanese, and her courageous spirit as she deals with racism in 1969.

☆ Fiction



Granddaddy’s Gift

Margaree Mitchell, illustrated by Larry Johnson

RACISM

This is a story of the segregated South and a grandfather teaching how to stand up for equality in school and in voting rights. It is a powerful statement about the Jim Crow South.

 Nonfiction



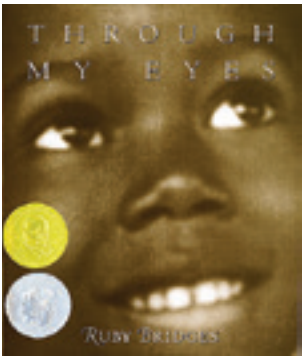
And the People Could Fly: American Black Folktales

Virginia Hamilton, illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon

RACISM SLAVERY

Through a series of African-American folktales, lessons abound about slavery, the spirit of the enslaved, and the constant human search for freedom.

 Nonfiction



Through My Eyes

Ruby Bridges

RACISM

Ruby Bridges tells her story of the discrimination she faced and helped to overcome as she attended a white school as a 6-year old child.

 Nonfiction

 AWARDS

Jane Addams Children’s Book Award
NAACP Image Award



Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story

Ken Mochizuki, illustrated by Don Lee

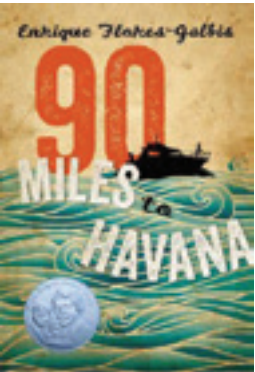
RACISM RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION ANTISEMITISM

Chihune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat in Lithuania, uses his authority to gain passage for Jews to escape the Holocaust, actions which ultimately caused him and his family to be disgraced.

 Nonfiction

 AWARDS

Jane Addams Children’s Honor Book



90 Miles to Havana

Written and illustrated by Enrique Flores-Galbis

REFUGEES CLASSISM OTHERING

Enrique Flores-Galbis uses his own life experiences in this tale of Julián and his brothers who are airlifted from Cuba, only to face a difficult life in a camp for exiled children in Miami.

 Fiction



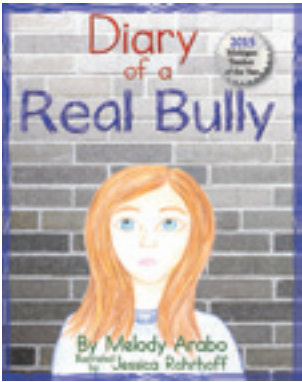
The Hiding Place

Corrie Ten Boom with John and Elizabeth Sherrill

ANTISEMITISM STEREOTYPES

This is the harrowing autobiography of Corrie Ten Boom and how her family opened their home up to their Jewish friends to hide them from the Nazis, but they are found out and sent to the concentration camps themselves.

 Nonfiction



Diary of a Real Bully

Melody Arabo, Illustrated by Jessica Rohrhoff

BULLYING

An insightful book that follows the diary of a young girl as she realizes she is a bully, acknowledges the pain she has caused, and dedicates herself to being a better person.

☆ Fiction



TESTIMONIAL

“Literature’s best work as social justice is to provide the “shock of recognition” that Melville describes when you see your experience reflected back to you in another’s words. Literature lets us know that others survive, especially those who are like us. These books are narratives of hope to help us process our lives.”

SHANNA PEEPLES
2015 US National Teacher of the Year

Middle School Grades 7 – 9

“Novels like “Ninth Ward” explore being displaced during Hurricane Katrina, and highlights the challenges of the characters dealing with race and class. “To Kill a Mockingbird”, a novel central to the fabric of American Literature, examines race, class, integrity, and development of perspective through the eyes of a young girl that defies female stereotypes in the South during the 1930’s. Empowering literature and diverse, global perspectives that explore cultural appreciation, belonging, oppression, trauma, racism makes these must read Young Adult novels.”



ABDUL WRIGHT
2016 Minnesota
State Teacher of
the Year



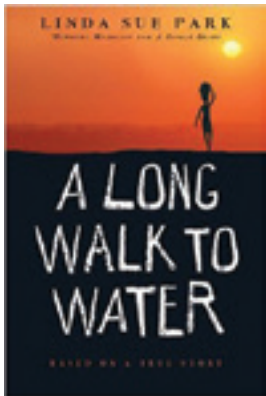
Ninth Ward

Jewell Parker Rhodes

RACE CLASS

This book focuses on residents of the Ninth Ward during Hurricane Katrina. The characters are compelling and issues of class and race are central to the story.

☆ Fiction



A Long Walk to Water

Linda Sue Park

REFUGEES IMMIGRATION WAR

A Long Walk to Water is based on a true story about coping with the challenges of surviving in Sudan. The book helps students understand the struggles of teens growing up in other areas of the world.

☆ Fiction



It's Kind of a Funny Story

Ned Vizzini

OTHERING SUICIDE MENTAL ILLNESS FITTING IN

A very capable student, admitted into a prestigious program, succumbs to pressure and goes into a psychiatric unit. There he meets others dealing with issues related to drug use, eating disorders and depression.

☆ Fiction



Brown Girl Dreaming

Jacqueline Woodson

RACISM

Written in verse, Jacqueline Wooden describes a life divided between the North and the South, learning about the civil rights movement and discovering a passion for writing stories.

📖 ✍️ Nonfiction, Poetry

AWARDS

Newberry Honor
Coretta Scott King Book Award
NAACP Image Award
National Book Award



Uglies Series

Scott Westerfeld

INCLUSION

Uglies, Pretties, Specials, Extras. The Uglies takes place in a society where beauty and uniformity are everything and those who don't fit in are either forced to change or choose to flee.

☆ Fiction



A Child Called “It”

Dave Pelzer

CHILD ABUSE

Young Dave’s world is torn apart as his mother sinks into abusive behavior and he must figure out a way to survive in a home where harm lurks around every corner.

Autobiography



Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary

Walter Dean Myers

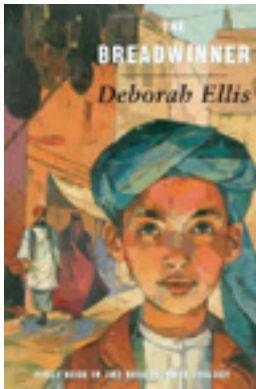
RACISM CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

An engaging and informative read for students about a leader in the Civil Rights Movement. This book exposes young people to Malcolm X’s views, which were often in contrast to those of Dr. King.

Nonfiction

AWARDS

Coretta Scott King Honor Book



The Breadwinner Trilogy

Deborah Ellis

SEXISM GENDER BIAS REFUGEES

This trilogy covers a wide range of issues including sexism, the cost of war, the experiences of refugees, and the courage it takes for a young girl and her family to survive in these extreme circumstances.

Fiction



Maus: A Survivor’s Tale

Written and illustrated by Art Spiegelman

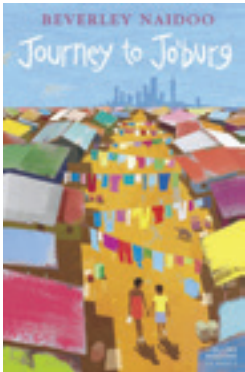
ANTISEMITISM

This accessible graphic novel powerfully tackles one of the 20th Century’s most gruesome events; the Holocaust.

Fiction, Graphic Novel

AWARDS

National Book Critics Circle Award for Biography



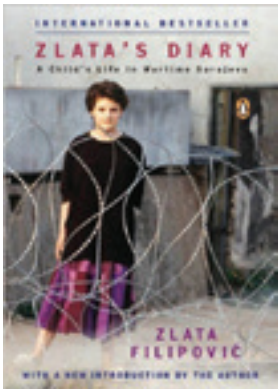
Journey to Jo’Burg: A South African Story

Beverley Naidoo, illustrated by Eric Velasquez

RACISM APARTHEID

The racist system of Apartheid plays a major role in this story of a young sister and brother who must make their way to Johannesburg in order to save their dying sister.

Fiction



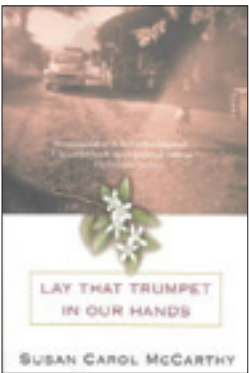
Zlata’s Diary: A Child’s Life in Wartime Sarajevo

Zlata Filipović

RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL INTOLERANCE

As her city of Sarajevo is destroyed around her, Zlata contemplates the horrors of war and the cruelty of religious and cultural intolerance.

Nonfiction



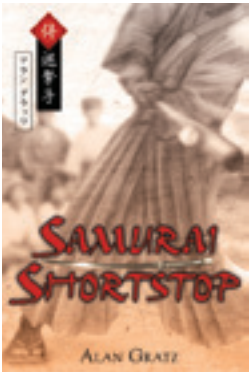
Lay That Trumpet In Our Hands

Susan Carol McCarthy

RACISM CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

An engaging story about a 12 year old girl growing up in rural Florida as she struggles to understand the death of her friend at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan.

Nonfiction



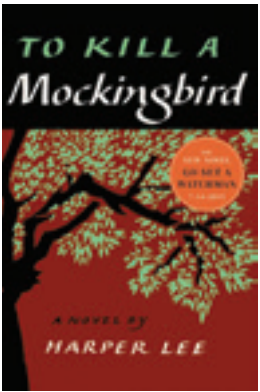
Samurai Shortstop

Alan Gratz

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The story of Toyo, a young man dealing with social status and the massive changes in culture Japan faced in the late 19th century.

Fiction



To Kill a Mockingbird

Harper Lee

RACISM CLASSISM

This American classic is a gently accessible, yet powerful story for teens to understand the role of justice in a small town society grappling with racism.

Fiction



Monster

Walter Dean Myers

RACISM POVERTY

Steve Harmon lands in jail and fills his time writing diaries and a screenplay that tell the story of his poverty-filled life and how racism has impacted the world around him.

Fiction

AWARDS

Coretta Scott King Honor Book
National Book Award Finalist
Michael L. Printz Award



Wonder

R.J. Palacio

DISABILITY STEREOTYPES OTHERING

This intriguing and gentle book explores how the main character, who has facial deformities, moves from being home-schooled to being in a public school. It explores the reactions of those around him because he is different and at the same times allows the reader to consider the meaning of hope, compassion, and empathy in a sometimes unforgiving world.

Fiction



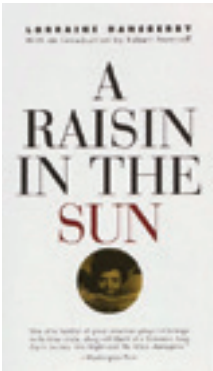
Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March

Lynda Blackmon Lowery, retold by Elspeth Leacock and Susan Buckley, illustrated by PJ Loughran

RACISM CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

An outstanding book about 15-year old Lynda Blackmon Lowery who was the youngest person to participate in the Selma to Montgomery march alongside Martin Luther King Jr and the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement.

Nonfiction



A Raisin in the Sun

Lorraine Hansberry

RACISM CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

In 1959 this groundbreaking play was a great exploration of how to respond to discrimination by retaining your pride as an African-American family buys a house in an all-white neighborhood.

★ Fiction, Play

AWARDS

Tony Award Nominee Best Play
New York Drama
Critics Circle Best Play



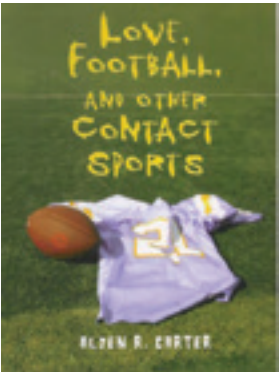
Every Day

David Levithan

GENDER

Imagine waking up in a different body every day and having to explain to your girlfriend who you are. This is a great novel to examine the concepts of gender.

★ Fiction



Satyagraha — a short story from Love, Football, and Other Contact Sports

Alden R. Carter

OTHERING BULLYING

A fantastic short story that highlights how non-violence can be used as a way to resist bullying for a young man from India attending an American school.

📖 Nonfiction



Eleanor and Park

Rainbow Rowell

BULLYING ABUSE OTHERING

Eleanor's home is full of abuse and fear but when she meets Park she finds hope and learns to deal with the difficult situations she faces.

★ Fiction

AWARDS

Michael L. Printz Honor Book



Boxers and Saints

Gene Luen Wang

CLASSISM TERRORISM RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE POVERTY

This graphic novel shows two versions of the same history and is a great way to look at the complex process of examining bias and how history gets told.

★ Fiction, Graphic Novels

AWARDS

Los Angeles Times Book Prize
National Book Award Finalist



March — 3-Book Series

John Lewis and Andrew Aydin, illustrated by Nate Powell

RACISM CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

This graphic novel trilogy details Congressman John Lewis's involvement in the Civil Rights movement in a way that immediately grips readers of all ages. It brings the full ugliness of racism and true beauty of nonviolent resistance to life.

📖 Nonfiction, Graphic Memoir

AWARDS

Coretta Scott King Book Award
National Book Award
Michael L. Printz Award
Robert F. Kennedy Book Award
Special Recognition



Inside Out & Back Again

Thanhha Lai

IMMIGRATION REFUGEES

Hà and her family, forced to flee Vietnam as Saigon falls, begins life as an immigrant in Alabama. Written in verse, this story helps us to better understand the challenges immigrant children face when they enter our classrooms.

☆ Fiction



Newberry Award
National Book Award



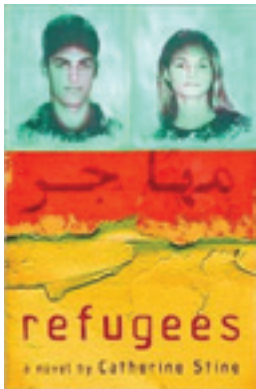
La Linea

Ann Jaramillo

IMMIGRATION STEREOTYPING

This novel brings the plight of migrant and immigrant families to life through the story of its 15 year-old main character. Highly recommended for those who are seeking to understand the immigration debate on a micro level through a family's experience.

☆ Fiction



Refugees

Catherine Stine

POVERTY XENOPHOBIA IMMIGRATION

Set in the days preceding 9/11 and the weeks and months after, this book explores cultural values and empathy through two main characters, an Afghani teenage boy and a young girl who fled her California foster home.

☆ Fiction



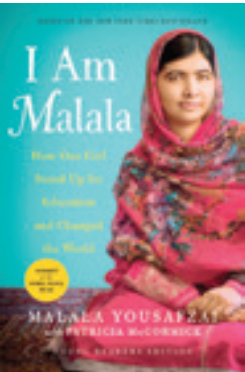
If You Come Softly

Jacqueline Woodson

CLASSISM RACISM RELIGION

This is a poetic, beautiful, emotional testament to the complexities interracial couples face in society and black males face with law enforcement.

☆ Fiction



I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up For Education and Changed The World

Young Readers Edition — Malala Yousafzai & Patricia McCormick

HUMAN RIGHTS SEXISM EDUCATION

Malala's voice is a powerful one advocating for girls' education, peace, and human rights. She doesn't position herself as a victim, but as a warrior for education.

📖 Nonfiction



The Firefly Letters: A Suffragette's Journey to Cuba

Margarita Engle

SEXISM ECONOMIC INJUSTICE

Slavery, women's rights, and economic inequality are experienced through the true-life experience of Swedish suffragist Fredrika Bremer, who became aware of all of these issues during her visit to Cuba.

📖 Nonfiction



Esperanza Rising

Pam Muñoz Ryan

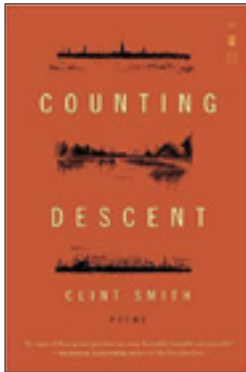
IMMIGRATION ECONOMIC INJUSTICE

After a young girl and her mother flee tragedy in Mexico, they must adapt to life in a labor camp in California. One of my favorite books to read with students.

☆ Fiction

AWARDS

Jane Addams Children's Book Award



Counting Descent

Clint Smith

RACISM PREJUDICE STEREOTYPES

This book of poems allows students to explore issues of prejudice that people face. Some of the most powerful poems in this collection explore stereotypes that black males encounter at the hands of police, cab drivers, and school systems. Other poems celebrate love, family and the emotions that connect all people. Also good for high school.

📖 Poetry

AWARDS

2017 Black Caucus of the American Library Association Literary Award



Follow the Blackbirds

Gwen Nell Westerman

COLONIALISM PREJUDICE POVERTY NATIVE AMERICAN ISSUES

Westerman's book of poems captures post-colonial issues faced by the Dakota people including loss of language, land, and ways of life. Some poems even weave in fragments of the Dakota language to show the importance of cultural roots.

📖 Poetry



All American Boys

Jason Reynolds, Brendan Kiely

RACISM POLICE BRUTALITY

Rashad is clean cut, in ROTC, and he is African-American whose life changes when he stops at a convenience store to buy a snack. He trips over a woman in the store, and a white police officer assumes he is robbing her. He is brutally beaten and arrested. In this dual narrative, Quinn, a white student and family friend of the police officer, is torn between his loyalty to his friend, and his questions about the brutal beating and arrest.

📖 Drama

AWARDS

Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book

Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children's Literature

TESTIMONIAL



“Books, perhaps more than any other form of media, have the power to transform minds and perspectives. We'll never make real progress as a society unless we're able to broaden our horizons—that's the real power of books.”

NATHAN BOWLING

2016 Washington Teacher of the Year

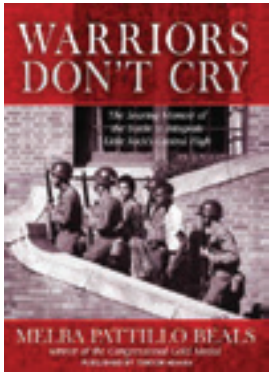
High School

Grades 10 – 12

“Literature such as *Black Boy* or *The Color Purple* opens the door to so many meaningful discussions with students. The titles in this section are not just rich in historical detail about this country, but they also serve as a tool to help students see the importance of empathy for the plight of others. Equally as important, literature allows students to see their own stories and concerns validated through amazing fiction and prose.”



MONICA WASHINGTON
2014 Texas State Teacher of the Year



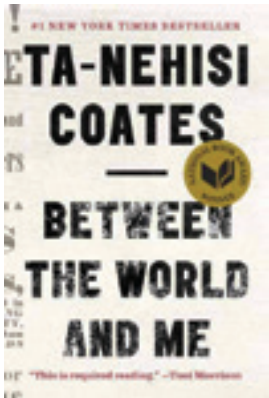
Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High

Melba Pattillo Beals

RACISM IMMIGRATION

As one of the Little Rock Nine, Melba describes in painful detail exactly how difficult and heartbreaking it was for her and her classmates to be the first black students to attend Little Rock High School.

Nonfiction



Between the World and Me

Ta-Nehisi Coates

RACISM

Written as a series of letters to his son, Coates directly confronts race in America and the impact structural racism plays in our history and modern society.

Nonfiction



AWARDS

National Book Award



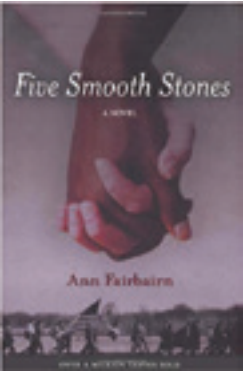
Thirteen Reasons Why

Jay Asher

SEXUAL VIOLENCE OTHERING SUICIDE

A girl leaves behind thirteen tapes that explain why bullying and sexual violence have lead to her suicide in this gripping novel.

Fiction



Five Smooth Stones

Ann Fairbairn

RACISM PREJUDICE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

David Champlin worked his way out of poverty to become a successful man, only to find he might lose everything if he becomes a leader during the Civil Rights Movement

Fiction



The Tattoo (in English and in Creole English)

Chris McKinney

RACISM CLASSISM SEXISM

We teach this book largely because it serves as a social critique of Hawai'i that provides us a very rich and relevant stimulus for our children to consider and grapple with issues concerning racism, genderism, sexism, classism, education, and militarism, just to name a few.

Fiction



Americanah

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

RACISM IMMIGRATION

With a remarkably blunt and powerful voice, this book tells the story of a young Nigerian woman who emigrates to the United States to attend college.

☆ Fiction

AWARDS

National Book Critics Circle Award



Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption

Bryan Stevenson

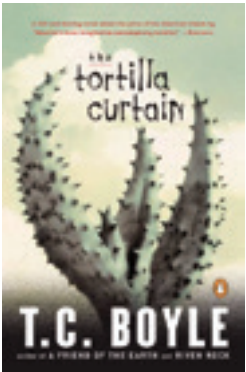
POVERTY RACISM

In this moving autobiography, Stevenson founds the Equal Justice Initiative and dedicates his life to seeking freedom for people who have been wrongly imprisoned. Moving, inspired and devastating.

📖 Nonfiction

AWARDS

NAACP Image Award



The Tortilla Curtain

T.C. Boyle

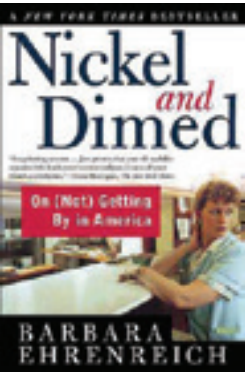
CLASSISM XENOPHOBIA

Class, poverty, xenophobia and illegal immigration; The Tortilla Curtain tackles them all.

☆ Fiction

AWARDS

French Prix Médicis Étranger



Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America

Barbara Ehrenreich

POVERTY ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Ehrenreich shines a lens on class, welfare reform, and living on minimum wage as she documents the challenges of daily survival for America's working poor.

📖 Nonfiction



The Short Tragic Life of Robert Peace: A Brilliant Young Man Who Left Newark for the Ivy League

Jeff Hobbs

RACISM

A tragedy. The biography of Peace shares his story as a boy whose brilliant mind allowed him to leave Newark for Yale University but who could not escape the place he called home.

📖 Nonfiction



Climate Refugees

Collectif Argos

FAIR USE OF RESOURCES CLIMATE CHANGE SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Climate Refugees present facts via interviews with key people whose homes are threatened or already compromised by rising water or changing weather. Anecdotes and vivid photos give the reader close up views of nine sites threatened by global warming.

📖 Nonfiction



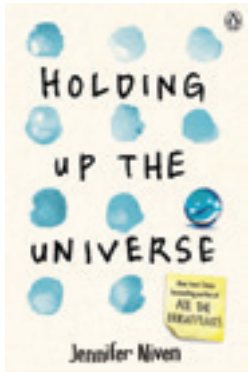
War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race

Edwin Black

RACISM ANTISEMITISM IMMIGRATION

Arguably one of the best books on the history of the American eugenics movement, and its impact on laws, immigration and the Holocaust.

Nonfiction



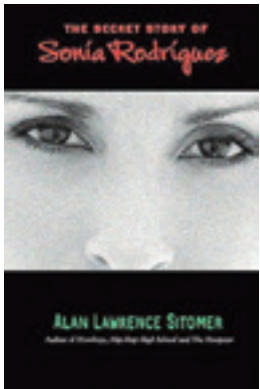
Holding Up the Universe

Jennifer Niven

STEREOTYPES

In this amazing novel Libby goes from being “America’s Fattest Teen” who had to be cut out of her house, to a young woman who has become healthy and is ready to fight to be known as herself, not as the fat girl.

Fiction



The Secret Story of Sonia Rodriguez

Alan Lawrence Sitomer

POVERTY IMMIGRATION STEREOTYPES

Sonia is a native-born citizen with Mexican immigrant parents. Her father works faithfully in multiple jobs to put food on the table, but his daughter, Sonia, has big dreams.

Fiction



Freakboy

Kristin Elizabeth Clark

OTHERING SEXUAL IDENTITY

As Brendan struggles to understand his sexual identity, he writes, “I’m Freakboy and there will never be a place for me. Anywhere.”

Fiction



The Kikuchi Diary: Chronicle from an American Concentration Camp

Author: Charles Kikuchi Editor: John Modell

RACISM

A stunning account of life during WWII as written by a one of the 100,000 Japanese-Americans who were stripped of their rights and forced into internment camps across the United States.

Nonfiction



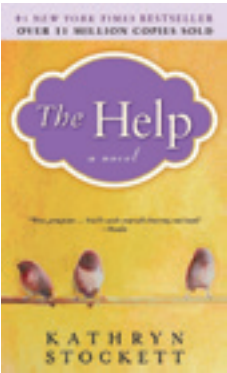
If I Was Your Girl

Meredith Russo

LGBTQ ISSUES

There is a reason ‘If I Was Your Girl’ was on the Best Book of the Year lists by Publishers Weekly, Kirkus Reviews, Amazon, Goodreads and Barnes & Noble—because it is amazing. As Amanda transitions from a boy to girl you will be moved by her struggles and successes.

Fiction



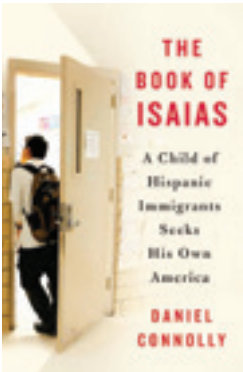
The Help

Kathryn Stockett

RACISM CLASSISM GENDER BIAS

This book examines not only race relations, but also class structure as it delves into the lives of African-American maids in 1960s Mississippi.

☆ Fiction



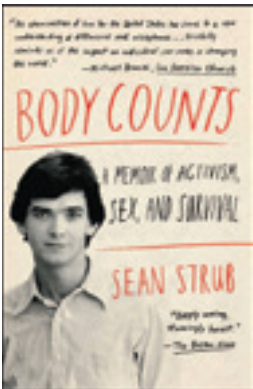
The Book of Isaias: A Child of Hispanic Immigrants Seeks His Own America

Daniel Connolly

IMMIGRATION PREJUDICE XENOPHOBIA

The biographical story of an immigrant teenage child's journey through the American education system and the trials he faces to succeed.

📖 Nonfiction



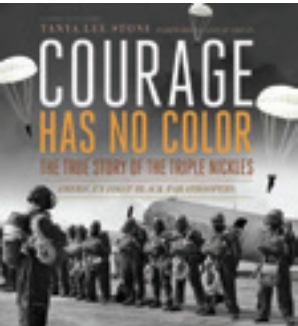
Body Counts: A Memoir of Politics, Sex, AIDS, and Survival

Sean Strub

LGBT

This is the memoir of the first openly HIV-positive Congressional candidate who was one of the founders of the modern LGBT fight for equal rights.

📖 👤 Nonfiction, Memoir



Courage Has No Color: The True Story of the Triple Nickles, America's First Black Paratroopers

Tanya Lee Stone

RACISM

It is a powerful investigation and the true story of the Triple Nickles in the segregated U.S. military during World War II.

📖 Nonfiction

🏆 AWARDS

NAACP Image Award



Luna

Julie Anne Peters

LGBTQ STEREOTYPING

This is really a story about acceptance and belonging wrapped within a narrative about gender dysphoria. It is for those who have trouble understanding what it means to be transgender.

☆ Fiction

🏆 AWARDS

Finalist National Book Award



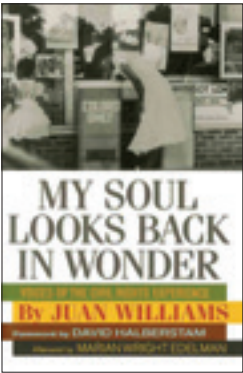
Small Great Things

Jodi Picoult

RACISM

This book helps the reader develop a different perspective regarding race relations and discrimination.

☆ Fiction



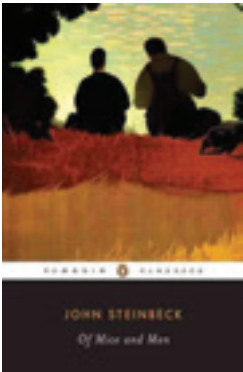
My Soul Looks Back in Wonder: Voices of the Civil Rights Experience

Juan Williams

RACISM

Williams wrote this series of deeply moving personal essays that individualize experiences of a variety of people during the civil rights era. A guide for discussion follows at the end of the book.

📖 👤 Nonfiction, Memoir



Of Mice and Men

John Steinbeck

CLASSISM SEXISM DISABILITY STEREOTYPES

This novel that provides an opportunity to talk about classism alongside disabilities and sexism. Students, even reluctant readers, empathize with Lenny and George.

★ Fiction



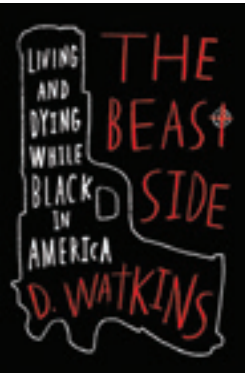
The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Stephen Chbosky

LGBT OTHERING STEREOTYPING

This book teaches the principles of social justice through the authentic lens of experience. By following the life events of the main character, this bildungsroman will give the reader empathy for contemporary issues that face young people, and an appreciation for social justice.

★ Fiction



The Beast Side: Living (and Dying) While Black in America

D. Watkins

RACISM

Watkins is from the streets. He is a compelling and provocative writer who is not afraid to tell it like it is. Note: there is explicit language and material in the essays.

📖 Nonfiction



When the Emperor Was Divine

Julie Otsuka

RACISM JAPANESE INTERNMENT

Written in stark, lyrical prose, this novel relates the experience of one Japanese family that was interred in America during WWII.

★ Fiction

🏆 AWARDS

American Library Association
Alex Award



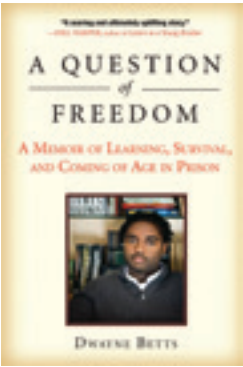
The Souls of Black Folk

W.E.B. DuBois

RACISM

This classic book of essays explores what DuBois calls “the problem of the 20th Century... the problem of the color-line.”

📖 Nonfiction



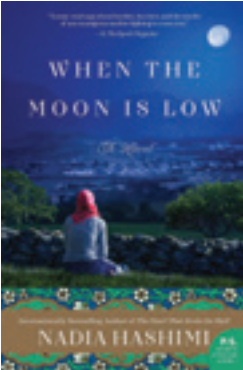
A Question of Freedom: A Memoir of Learning, Survival, and Coming of Age in Prison

Dwayne Betts

POVERTY RACISM

Betts, currently a poet and Yale-trained lawyer, explores the pull of the streets that led him to a prison sentence for carjacking as a minor and the tactics he used to survive while there.

Nonfiction



When the Moon is Low

Nadia Hashimi

REFUGEES

This book details the journey of one family of refugees fleeing the Middle East and the injustices that they face.

Fiction



Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus

Mary Shelley

ETHICS ACCEPTANCE

Frankenstein deals with science and making decisions that have ethical issues, such as robots, climate change, and extending life—real things we are facing today.

Fiction



Wuthering Heights

Emily Brontë

CLASSISM GENDER ISSUES

Originally published in 1847, this classic book is relevant today and the lessons learned in gender and class issues are tremendous.

Fiction



A Thousand Splendid Suns

Khaled Hosseini

GENDER ISSUES POVERTY

The difficult struggles of a young women born illegitimately in Afghanistan. The book takes a hard look at gender, ethnicity, religious issues, not to mention poverty and class issues.

Fiction



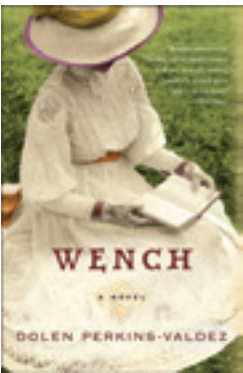
The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

William Shakespeare

GENDER ISSUES

“Frailty, thy name is woman”
Hamlet is one the most quoted piece of literature in the English language and highly accessible to students.

Fiction, Play



Wench

Dolen Perkins-Valdez

RACISM SLAVERY SEXISM

Wench tells the story of a resort in Ohio that white Southern men bring their black enslaved mistresses to for vacation. The questions it raises confront the some of the most fundamental contradictions of the institution of American slavery and those who perpetuate it.

☆ Fiction



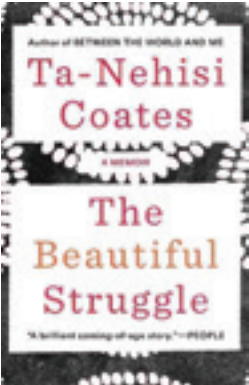
In Cold Blood

Truman Capote

POVERTY RACE ETHNIC ISSUES

The social justice areas my students and I connect it to are poverty, race, ethnicity, and constitutionality of the death penalty. That our school is 30 miles from the prison where Hitchcock and Smith were executed makes it even more relevant.

📖 Nonfiction, Novel



The Beautiful Struggle

Ta-Nehisi Coates

RACISM

This is the memoir of one of the strongest voices for social justice in our country today.

📖 Nonfiction



AWARDS

NAACP image Award



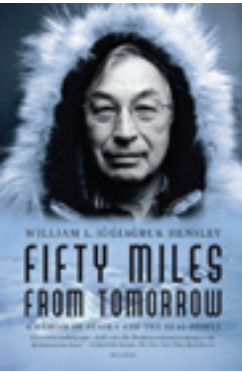
Solar Storms and Mean Spirit

Linda Hogan

GENDER BIAS CULTURAL STEREOTYPES RACISM

These connected books are Bildungsromans focused on young native women. They focus not only on race and generational relationships, but also on reestablishing a relationship with nature through the confrontation of patriarchal perspectives of nature with gender and cultural connections with it.

☆ Fiction



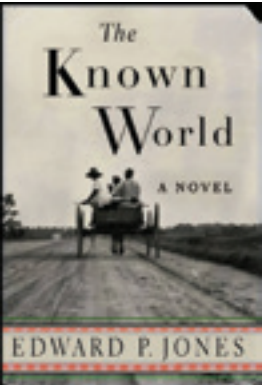
Fifty Miles from Tomorrow: A Memoir of Alaska and the Real People

William L. Iggiagruk Hensley

RACISM COLONIALISM STEREOTYPES

This book offers a unique Native perspective on traditional Alaskan Native tradition and culture within a larger encroaching assimilation-based power structure.

📖 Nonfiction



The Known World

Edward P. Jones

RACISM SLAVERY

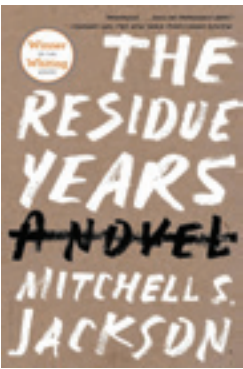
This historical novel, epic in scope, tells the story of black slave owners in antebellum Virginia.

☆ Fiction



AWARDS

Pulitzer Prize for Fiction
National Book Critics Circle Award
National Book Award Finalist



The Residue Years

Mitchell S. Jackson

RACISM

This book tells the story of a street-smart college student in Portland, Oregon, turned drug dealer whose path collides with his addicted mother.

☆ Fiction



The House of Sand and Fog

Andre Dubus III

IMMIGRATION RACISM

This is a book that discusses what it's like to be an immigrant in a foreign country and what rights they have.

☆ Fiction

AWARDS

National Book Award Finalist



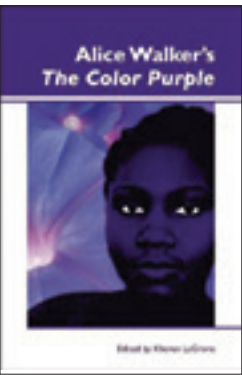
Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet

Jamie Ford

RACISM JAPANESE INTERNMENT

Injustices that occurred during World War II with Japanese internment camps are detailed in a creative way.

☆ Fiction



The Color Purple

Alice Walker

RACISM CLASSISM LGBT SEXISM

I use this book to discuss issues of race, class and gender with my students. Sexual assault and sexual orientation are other themes that we discuss. This book is one of the most cited on the Advanced Placement College Board English Literature test.

☆ Fiction

AWARDS

Pulitzer Prize for Fiction
National Book Award



Things Fall Apart

Chinua Achebe

RACISM COLONIALISM RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

This classic novel tells the story of British colonization from an African perspective. Achebe was revolutionary in that regard, so the book is a great way to teach students about the importance of multiple perspectives.

☆ Fiction



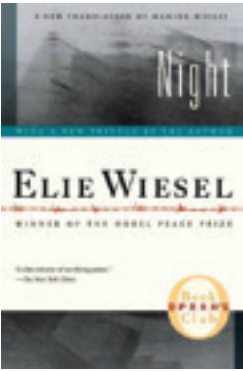
The Grace of Silence: A Family Memoir

Michele Norris

RACISM

This memoir discusses many themes of race, racism and whiteness as well as family secrets that are kept to protect children from the racism that exists in the book.

☆ Fiction



Night

Elie Wiesel

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Wiesel's memoir about his time in the Auschwitz extermination camp during WWII. Themes of empathy and understanding as well as acceptance of differences are included.

  Nonfiction, Memoir



Black Boy

Richard Wright

RACISM

Richard Wright's memoir from 1945 explores systemic racism in the United States and the desire for blacks to migrate north for a better life.

  Nonfiction, Memoir



Native Son

Richard Wright

POVERTY RACISM

One white student enjoyed Black Boy so much that I recommended she read Wright's Native Son. She said that combination of books forever changed her life in terms of racial understanding.

 Fiction



Invisible Man

Ralph Ellison

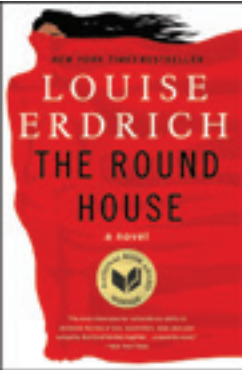
RACISM CLASSISM

A 1952 novel about an African American man that still has much to teach today's students. This book has appeared more than any other title on the College Board's Advanced Placement English Literature exam.

 Fiction

 AWARDS

National Book Award



The Round House

Louise Erdrich

POVERTY RACISM NATIVE AMERICAN ISSUES

Part mystery, part revenge tale, Erdrich's book explores issues of justice on an Indian reservation, especially the high rates of sexual assault that American Indian women experience compared to other racial groups.

 Fiction

 AWARDS

National Book Award



The House on Mango Street

Sandra Cisneros

POVERTY ASSIMILATION SEXUAL ASSAULT

Learning how one's identity is embedded in family practices, culture and language is a journey that students often crave. The House on Mango Street helps ignite students' interest in Esperanza's experience while offering a terrific point of departure to reflect on their own identity.

  Nonfiction, Memoir



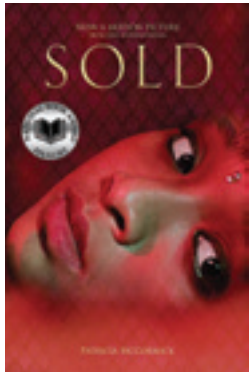
No Crystal Stair: A Documentary Novel of the Life and Work of Lewis Michaux, Harlem Bookseller

Vaunda Micheaux Nelson

RACISM

In many schools we teach about social justice by having our kids read To Kill a Mockingbird—written by a white woman. This is a great companion to Mockingbird and details the life of Lewis Michaux—a man who started a bookstore in Harlem despite efforts to dissuade him from doing so.

Nonfiction / Fiction, Documentary Novel



Sold

Patricia McCormick

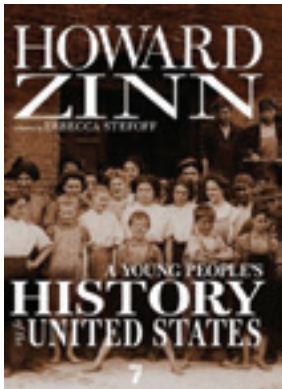
SEXUAL TRAFFICKING

Students often do not realize that human trafficking is an issue world-wide and this story of a young woman named Lakshmi is eyeopening and heartbreaking.

Fiction, Verse Novel

AWARDS

National Book Award Finalist



A Young People's History of the United States

Howard Zinn

HISTORIC RANGE OF ISSUES

A book that reframes traditional narratives of US history by examining pivotal moments from the perspective of marginalized and oppressed people.

Nonfiction



Flight

Sherman Alexie

RACISM CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In “Flight,” the protagonist time-travels to different moments in U.S. history, witnessing conflict from different points of view and drawing conclusions about injustice, revenge, and the truth of history.

Fiction



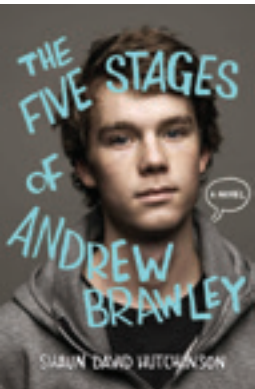
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Sherman Alexie

RACISM POVERTY

I adore this book and protagonist Junior's wry, hilarious, and heart-breaking take on life as an American Indian living on the rez. Surrounded by forces that conspire to keep him down, Junior's adolescent struggles to break away and succeed resonate with readers and remind us that all most kids need are chances and people who believe in them.

Fiction



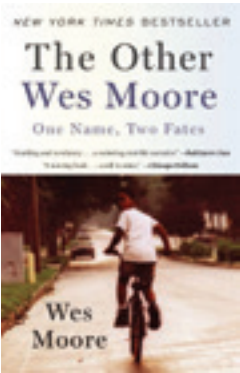
The Five Stages of Andrew Brawley

Shaun David Hutchinson

BULLYING HOMELESSNESS DISABILITY OTHERING LGBT

This book is an emotional roller coaster with excellent, believable characters. Drew, the protagonist, is hiding from life in the hospital where his family died. He meets a burn victim from a hate crime and they form a bond that allows them both to heal. An amazing read!

Fiction



The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates

Wes Moore

RACISM CLASSISM POVERTY

An intricate and fascinating narrative study of how two African-American, inner-city men with similar backgrounds ended up with two different fates because of the family and community support structures around them.

Nonfiction



The Pink Triangle

Richard Plant

HOMOPHOBIA

The Pink Triangle depicts the stagnation of progress for civil rights for homosexuals from before WWII to the present. Whereas the other victims of Holocaust have been given legal recognition, justice and restitution, the homosexual victims are still greatly unrecognized in these areas.

Nonfiction



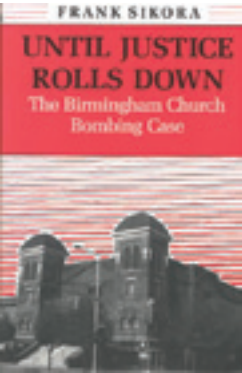
The Men With the Pink Triangle

Heinz Heger

HOMOPHOBIA

One of the few accounts of a homosexual survivor of the Nazi concentration camps. Brutal, painful and an important book that shows how not only were gay men punished by the Nazis but also by the Americans who liberated them refused to release them from prison.

Nonfiction



Until Justice Rolls Down: The Birmingham Church Bombing Case

Frank Sikora

RACISM

Until Justice Rolls Down is a great explanation of a very misunderstood era and event in U.S. History, centered on the Birmingham church bombing.

Nonfiction



The Namesake

Jhumpa Lahiri

CULTURAL CONFLICT / BIAS

This story focuses on conflicts of assimilation, clash of cultures, and generational conflict. It follows the story of a family who move from Calcutta to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Fiction



The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts

Maxine Hong Kingston

SEXISM RACISM STEREOTYPES

This work offers opportunities to explore the themes of sexism, racism, assimilation, and stereotypes through the eyes of a Chinese family assimilating into American culture.

Nonfiction, Memoir

AWARDS

National Book Critics Circle Award



The Poisonwood Bible

Barbara Kingsolver

RACISM RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

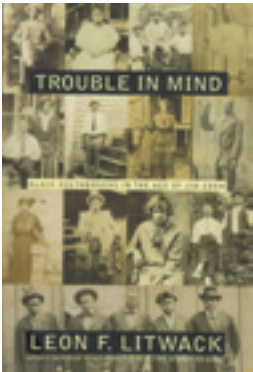
The story is told through a missionary family that travels to the Congo. It is a well-written story that offers opportunities to explore racism.



Pulitzer Prize Finalist



Fiction



Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow

Leon Litwack

RACISM

This book provides an exceptional, unvarnished history of the Jim Crow South. As a social studies teacher, this is the most powerful book I have ever read and it provides a sobering reminder about how our nation's history requires strong social justice education.



Nonfiction



Something to Prove: A Daughter's Journey to Fulfill a Father's Legacy

Yvonne S. Thornton

RACISM

A memoir about a woman's journey to becoming the first African-American to be board-certified in maternal/fetal medicine. Her story focuses on determination, triumphs, and challenges,



Nonfiction, Memoir



Hand to Mouth: Living in Bootstrap America

Linda Tirado

POVERTY

Rising out of poverty without a raise in the minimum wage is inhumanely difficult, but Tirado writes about the struggle with deep humanity, humor, and hope.



Nonfiction



GLBTQ: The Survival Guide for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Teens

Kelly Huegel

LGBTQ

Help and information for teens (and their parents) to understand what it means to LGBTQI, with advice on how to come out, deal with prejudice, find safety, and how to keep yourself healthy both mentally and physically.



Nonfiction



How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents

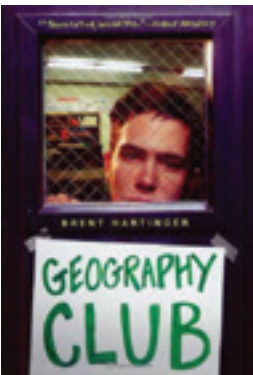
Julia Alvarez

CULTURE

This book takes a journey through the lives of girls who felt compelled to assimilate to American culture, abandoning their cultural identity



Fiction



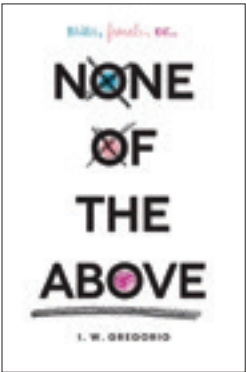
Geography Club

Brent Hartinger

LGBTQ

Harrowing, brutal, and honest view into the lives of high schoolers making a club for outsiders.

☆ Fiction



None of the Above

I.W. Gregorio

LGBTQ INTERSEX

The searing tale of a homecoming queen who realizes she is intersex.

📖 Nonfiction



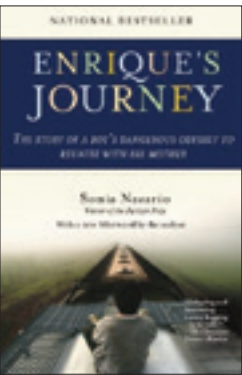
Simon vs Homo Sapiens Agenda

Becky Albertalli

LGBTQ

In this engaging page-turner, we meet Simon, a young man who has to juggle his high school life along with his secrets.

📖 👤 Nonfiction, Memoir



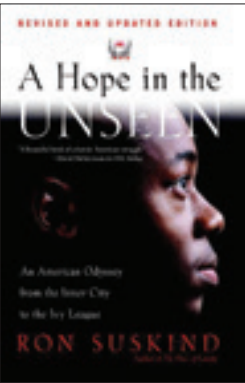
Enrique's Journey

Sonia Nazario

IMMIGRATION

A 17 year-old from Honduras makes the journey to the United States to be reunited with his mother in this book based on a Pulitzer Prize-winning series of articles.

📖 Nonfiction



A Hope in the Unseen

Ron Suskind

POVERTY RACE

An inspiring story about transcending poverty and black excellence.

📖 Nonfiction



The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother

James McBride

INTERRACIAL ISSUES

McBride tells the story of navigating his world being an interracial person. The book is also a tribute to his white mother who helps him grow in a world in which, at first glance, he does not seem to fit.

📖 👤 Nonfiction, Memoir



The Hate U Give

Angie Thomas

RACISM POLICE BRUTALITY

A timely and powerful story that is all too realistic as a teenage girl and her city cannot hide from the issues of race, class, and police brutality.

☆ Fiction

AWARDS

NY Times Bestseller



October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard

Leslea Newman

LGBTQ ISSUES PREJUDICE

This book of poetry, which received the Stonewall Honor Book Prize from the American Library Association, includes 68 poems that Newman wrote in response to the beating death of Matthew Shepard, a gay college student. The collection even includes a few poems written from the perspective of the fence which witnessed Shepard's beating near Laramie, Wyoming.

📖 Poetry

AWARDS

Stonewall Honor Book



TESTIMONIAL

“This extensive collection of reading has something for everybody. It is one of the most inclusive and divergent collections of reading to which I have ever had the pleasure to contribute.”

JOHN TIERNEY

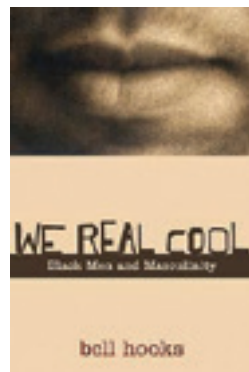
2016 Nevada Teacher of the Year

Teachers

“ **There is no doubt power resides in texts;** however, my work with Philosophy for Children has shown me texts are most meaningful when they are utilized as a catalyst for students to raise philosophical questions that initiate collaborative inquiries concerning life’s most important issues. The value of these titles resides in their abilities to stimulate this much-needed dialogue in our classrooms in an effort to create a more thoughtful, compassionate, and just society. If our children do not have the opportunity to verbalize their ideas and explore perspectives different than their own in school, when will they learn how to do so?



CHAD MILLER, PhD
2012 Hawaii State
Teacher of the Year



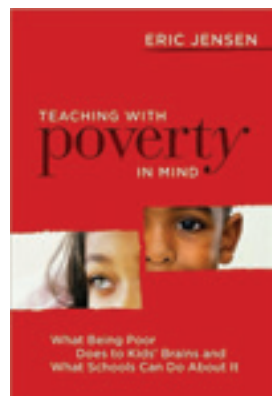
We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock’s Central High

Bell Hooks

RACISM

About masculinity, fear, and the needs of black men.

 Nonfiction



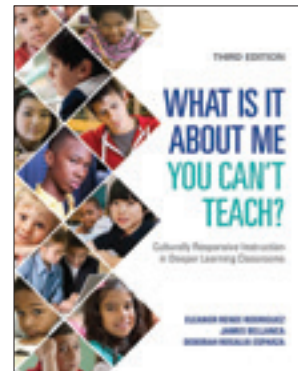
Teaching With Poverty in Mind: What Being Poor Does to Kids’ Brains and What Schools Can Do About It

Eric Jensen

CLASSISM

Science has shown that brain development is altered in children who are growing up in poverty. This book explains how you can change your teaching methods to help these different learners.

 Nonfiction



What Is It About Me You Can’t Teach?

Eleanor Renee Rodriguez, James Bellanca

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES **CLASSISM**

This guide is a must for teachers who want to raise student achievement by creating high expectations for the learners and providing the supports that the urban teacher needs.

 Nonfiction



Teaching for Social Justice

Edited by William Ayers, Jean Ann Hunt, and Therese Quinn

RANGE OF ISSUES

These are great readings and real-life applications for classroom teachers with additional readings and sources for further reading. They run the gamut in terms of thinking and teaching about social justice issues.

 Nonfiction



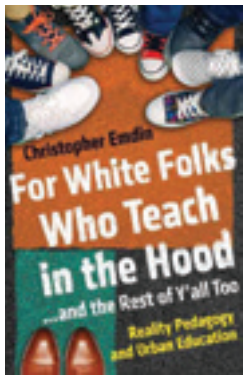
Power, Privilege, and Difference

Allan G. Johnson

RANGE OF ISSUES

This thoughtful book describes how privilege is created, how it functions, thrives, and how it can be overcome. It also discusses paradoxes and myths with ideas of power and privilege.

 Nonfiction



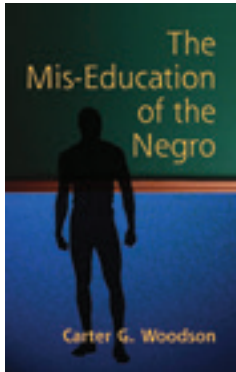
For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education

Christopher Emdin

RACE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

This is a primer for understanding and practicing cultural literacy in the classroom to be the most effective teacher of students of color.

Nonfiction



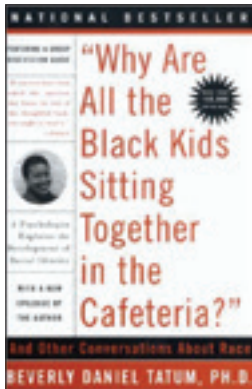
Mis-Education of the Negro

Carter G. Woodson

RACISM

Woodson systematically and with precision breaks down the problem with the educational experience for African-Americans and makes concrete recommendations about what is to be done. Although it was written 80 years ago, it is still applicable today.

Nonfiction



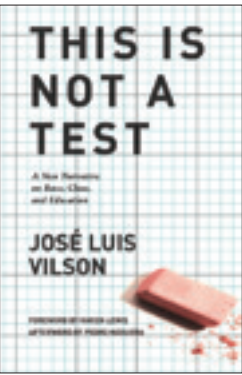
Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?; And Other Conversations About Race

Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D.

RACISM

Dr. Tatum provides a foundation to have professional conversations on topics such as racism, whiteness, identity development and cross-racial dialogue. There are stories interspersed throughout the book to give concrete scenarios that are real and authentic to discuss and deepen your knowledge.

Nonfiction



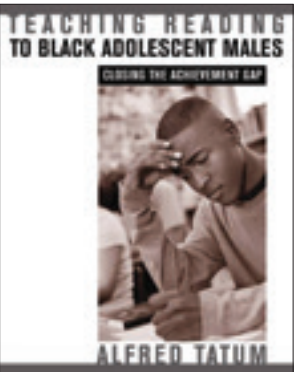
This Is Not A Test: A New Narrative on Race, Class, and Education

José Vilson

RACISM CLASSISM POVERTY

Jose's book is a walk through the complicated world of educational equity, student advocacy, policy making, justice, and whose voices are and aren't heard. It's grounded in his classroom experience as a teacher in New York City where he's served for over a decade.

Nonfiction



Teaching Reading to Black Adolescent Males: Closing the Achievement Gap

Eleanor Renee Rodriguez, James Bellanca

RACE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

A great book on how to reach out to and teach male African-American readers.

Nonfiction



Open Minds to Equality: A Sourcebook of Learning Activities to Affirm Diversity and Promote Equity, 3rd Edition

Nancy Schniedewind and Ellen Davidson

RANGE OF ISSUES

This book directly addresses the different "isms" and has student activities that work well in the classroom.

Nonfiction



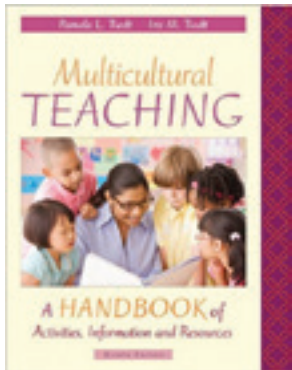
Black, white and other: Biracial Americans Talk About Race and Identity

Lise Funderburg

RACE

An inspirational book that serves as a great point of departure for discussions about biracial and mixed-race student identities.

 Nonfiction



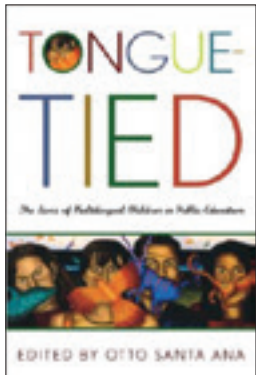
Multicultural Teaching: A Handbook of Activities, Information, and Resources, 8th Edition

Pamela L. Tiedt

RANGE OF ISSUES

If you need activities that will help you roll out a curriculum that respects diversity and celebrates it, this handbook is very helpful.

 Nonfiction



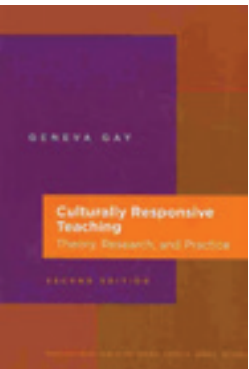
Tongue-Tied: The Lives of Multilingual Children in Public Education

Edited by Otto Santa Ana

IMMIGRATION CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Tongue-Tied provides a richer context for various issues and challenges, both from a teacher awareness standpoint, and also from a broader cultural perspective.

 Nonfiction



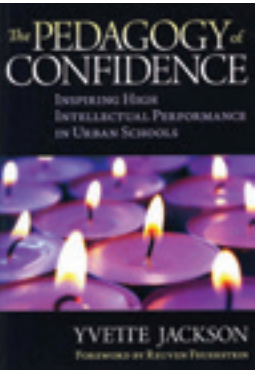
Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice

Geneva Gay

CULTURAL TEACHING BIAS

Geneva Gay is widely recognized and respected author who offers insights into teaching from shifting cultural viewpoints so that students from other cultures can excel.

 Nonfiction



Pedagogy of Confidence: Inspiring High Intellectual Performance in Urban Schools

Yvette Jackson

RANGE OF ISSUES

Jackson deconstructs the drill-and-kill response to low test scores, providing a delightful alternative: rigorous, engaging, confident instruction that engages all learners.

 Nonfiction



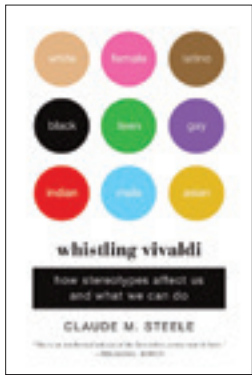
Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom

Lisa Delpit

RACISM

Delpit uses interviews and conversations with teachers, parents and students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds to show how American culture on the whole suffers with power imbalances and how that impacts the school system.

 Nonfiction



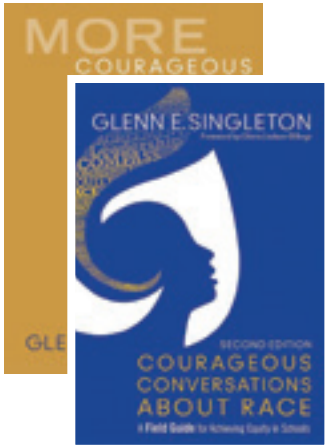
Whistling Vivaldi: And Other Clues to How Stereotypes Affect Us

Claude M. Steele

STEREOTYPES BIAS

Steele vividly deconstructs stereotypes in a way that helps teachers deconstruct our biases.

 Nonfiction



Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools and More Courageous Conversations About Race

Glenn E. Singleton

RACISM POVERTY STEREOTYPES

Those titles discuss a protocol for adults to discuss issues of race, racism and whiteness with staff and students as well as case studies of schools that have worked for racial justice and equity.

 Nonfiction

