

Books, Short Stories, Graphic Novels

Elementary

A Taste of Colored Water

Matt Faulkner

Young cousins Lulu and Jelly, inspired by stories told by a classmate, hitch a ride into the city hoping to take a gulp of what they imagine must be some pretty special water that comes from the "colored" drinking fountain.

Freedom on the Menu

Carole Weatherford

When four courageous black teens sat down at a lunch counter in the segregated South of 1960, the reverberations were felt both far beyond and close to home. This insightful story offers a child's-eye view of this seminal event in the American Civil Rights Movement.

Freedom Summer

Deborah Wiles

In 1964, Joe is pleased that a new law will allow his best friend John Henry, who is African-American, to share the town pool and other public places with him, but he is dismayed to find that prejudice still exists.

I Am Enough

Grace Byers

The book offers positive affirmations for those who lack self-esteem and self-acceptance. It celebrates children for who they are. *I Am Enough* follows a girl of color as she makes positive declarations – “Like the sun I am here to shine... like the bird I am here to fly and soar high over everything.” The young girl, surrounded by friends of different colors and cultures declares in “the end we are right here to live a life of love, not fear... I am enough.”

Last Stop on Market Street

Matt de la Peña

Newberry Winner Caldecott Honor Book-- A young African-American boy named CJ exits a church, accompanied by his grandmother (nicknamed Nana), during a rainstorm. As they walk to a bus stop, CJ asks Nana why they have to walk in the rain, and Nana replies that trees, too, need water.

Preaching to the Chickens

Jabari Asim

John wants to be a preacher when he grows up—a leader whose words stir hearts to change, minds to think, and bodies to take action. But why wait? When John is put in charge of the family farm's flock of chickens, he discovers that they make a wonderful congregation!

Ruth and The Green Book

Calvin Alexander Ramsey

Ruth was so excited to take a trip in her family's new car! In the early 1950s, few African Americans could afford to buy cars, so this would be an adventure. But she soon found out that

black travelers weren't treated very well in some towns. Many hotels and gas stations refused service to black people because of the Jim Crow laws.

Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice

Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins and Ann Hazzard

Something happened in our town follows two families — one white, one black — as they discuss a police shooting of a black man in their community. In almost every school, children are practicing intruder drills. Again, everyday violence is plaguing marginalized communities because of the systematic oppression of white supremacy. The story aims to answer children's questions about such traumatic events. Lastly, it will help children identify and counter racial injustice in their own lives.

Sulwe

Lupita Nyong'o

It follows the story of a young girl who wishes for her dark skin to be lighter. The story is ultimately about colorism and learning to love oneself, no matter one's skin tone.

The Day You Begin

Jacqueline Woodson

Jacqueline Woodson's lyrical text and Rafael López's dazzling art reminds us that we all feel like outsiders sometimes—and how brave it is that we go forth anyway. And that sometimes, when we reach out and begin to share our stories, others will be happy to meet us halfway.

The World Needs More Purple People

Kristen Bell & Benjamin Hart

Purple people always ask really great questions. They bring their family, friends, and communities together, and they speak up for what's right. They are kind and hardworking, and they love to laugh (especially at Grandpa's funny noises)! A purple person is an everyday superhero! How do you become one? That's the fun part! Penny Purple will lead you through the steps. Get ready to be silly, exercise your curiosity, use your voice, and be inspired.

Upper Elementary/Middle

Blended

Sharon Draper

Piano-prodigy Isabella, eleven, whose black father and white mother struggle to share custody, never feels whole, especially as racial tensions affect her school, her parents both become engaged, and she and her stepbrother are stopped by police.

New Kid

Jerry Craft

2019 Newberry Winner—Seventh-grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn

between two worlds--and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?

Night on Fire

Ronald Kidd

Thirteen-year-old Billie Sims, a white girl in 1960s Alabama, and her black friend Jarmaine, get caught up in the Freedom Rides passing through her town on the way to Birmingham. Along the way, change comes to Billie, her family, and her town in big and small ways.

The Unsung Hero of Birdsong, USA

Brenda Woods

Twelve-year-old Gabriel gains new perspective when he becomes friends with Meriwether, an African American World War II hero who has recently returned to the unwelcoming Jim Crow South.

Watsons Go To Birmingham

Christopher Paul Curtis

The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963 is the story of the Watson family of Flint, Michigan. The eldest son, Byron, the self-proclaimed 'King of Clark', is a sixth-grader at Clark Elementary School for the second time. He's a stubborn bully who's bigger and meaner than most of the kids at school. Kenny, the narrator, is in fourth grade, and little sister Joetta (called Joey) is a kindergartner. Kenny often gets picked on by his older brother and his friend Buphead and by the fourth-grade bully, Larry Dunn.

Young Adults

Born A Crime

Noah Trevor

The author, comedian Trevor Noah, shares his personal journey from his birth in South Africa to his job behind a desk at "The Daily Show."

Dear Martin

Nic Stone

Writing letters to the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., seventeen-year-old college-bound Justice McAllister struggles to face the reality of race relations today and how they are shaping him.

Ghost

Jason Reynolds

Ghost, a naturally talented runner and troublemaker, is recruited for an elite middle school track team. He must stay on track, literally and figuratively, to reach his full potential.

Ghost Boys

Jewell Parker Rhodes

After seventh-grader Jerome is shot by a white police officer, he observes the aftermath of his death and meets the ghosts of other fallen black boys including historical figure Emmett Till.

I am Alfonso Jones

Tony Medina

Alfonso Jones is buying his first suit--dreaming of playing Hamlet in his school's hip-hop version of the Shakespearian play and finally telling Danetta how he really feels about her--when an off-duty cop mistakes his coat hanger for a gun and shoots him. In the afterlife, Alfonso finds himself on a ghost train guided by police shooting victims, while in life his family and friends struggle to confront their grief.

Light It up

Kekla Magoon

Told from multiple viewpoints, Shae Tatum, an unarmed, thirteen-year-old black girl, is shot by a white police officer, throwing their community into upheaval and making it a target of demonstrators.

March

John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell

Presents in graphic novel format the life of Georgia congressman John Lewis, focusing on his youth in rural Alabama, his meeting with Martin Luther King Jr., and the birth of the Nashville Student Movement.

The Hate U Give and On the Come Up

Angie Thompson

Angie Thomas' searing debut about an ordinary girl in extraordinary circumstances addresses issues of racism and police violence with intelligence, heart, and unflinching honesty.

High School

5th Avenue, Upton

James Baldwin

In 1960, James Baldwin, wrote 'Fifth Avenue, Uptown: A Letter from Harlem,' an essay that portrayed the ugly dynamic between white police officers and young black men in the neighborhood where he grew up.

All American Boys

Jason Reynolds

When sixteen-year-old Rashad is mistakenly accused of stealing, classmate Quinn witnesses his brutal beating at the hands of a police officer who happens to be the older brother of his best friend

How it Went Down

Kekla Magoon

When sixteen-year-old Tariq Johnson is shot to death, his community is thrown into an uproar because Tariq was black and the shooter, Jack Franklin, is white, and in the aftermath, everyone has something to say, but no two accounts of the events agree.

Response

Paul

Three boys are charged with a hate crime after an African-American high school student is beaten with a baseball bat in a white neighborhood.

The Color of Water

James McBride

"The Color Of Water" is a memoir written by James McBride. It's about his life as a black man raised by a white, Jewish mother, named Ruth. The book is the product of fourteen years of research, including the author's interviews with his mother about her heritage.