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Message to Educators

Dear Educator,

The New York Public Library is pleased to introduce our *Vibrant Voices Booklist: New Books from Authors of Color* and our Educator Guide to complement this reading list. This guide highlights some of the wonderful titles compiled for children and teens of all ages. Librarians work hard to connect children and teens to books that are diverse, reflective, relate to the world, and that they can see themselves in. Representation truly matters and helps foster a strong sense of self, but also a strong sense of community filled with compassion, empathy, and understanding.

In this guide, you will find new culturally responsive titles that are diverse, engaging, and informative. From Black joy to Indigenous stories to immigrant experiences and historical accounts, there’s so much to read, learn, and discuss in these titles. Many of these titles are available in print, digital, and audio formats, supporting the different ways students read and learn. We hope you enjoy these books as much as we do and are able to incorporate them into your classrooms all year long.

Happy Reading!
School Support & Outreach Team

You can view the full list of titles on our website here: [Vibrant Voices 2021](#).
How to Use This Guide

While you can feel free to use this guide however works best for you and your classroom, below are some tips and tricks to making the most out of it!

1. **Get a New York Public Library card.** To get a New York Public Library card, apply in-person at any open branch library, apply online on The New York Public Library's website [here](#), or apply using SimplyE, our free e-reader app, by downloading the app for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) devices. Tutorials on how to get a library card are available for [iOS](#) and [Android](#), which can be shared with your students and their caregivers.

2. **Access the books listed in this guide using our catalog.** The New York Public Library catalog allows patrons to search for titles, see what is available, and place holds on titles to be picked up at an open branch library. To learn more about how to place a hold in our catalog, check out [this page](#). To discover how to manage your New York Public Library account online, take a look at [this video](#).

3. **Access our remote learning resources.** The New York Public Library provides access to hundreds of digital resources, available with a library card. Many of these resources are available remotely, and can be used in virtual, in-person, or hybrid classroom settings. Our most popular resources for educators can be found [here](#). All digital resources listed in this guide are available with a library card.

4. **Use this guide to create your instructional plans or summer reading assignments.** By selecting titles from this list, you can ensure that you are choosing books that are accessible for students through the public library all year long. This guide also has discussion questions, activities, and digital resources available to library card holders, so that you don’t have to stress!

5. **Learn more about new and existing titles that might work for your classroom library or school library.** These titles have been selected for this list by expert librarians who work regularly with children, teens, and school communities. Any of these materials would make great additions to your classroom or school library!

6. **Recommend these titles to your students—or invite a librarian in to do booktalks with them!** Even if you don’t use the books in this guide for instruction or assignments, these titles are diverse, engaging, and fun reads that students will enjoy. If you’re not familiar with them, no worries! Invite a librarian to come to your classroom in person or virtually by emailing schoolvisits@nypl.org. We are always happy to talk about books and students often enjoy having guests visit their classrooms.
7. **Collaborate with the School Outreach team at The New York Public Library.** Meet one-on-one to discuss all the possibilities to collaborate with your local school outreach librarian, or take a look at our [Menu of Virtual Services](#).

8. **Join us for our upcoming webinars** that will highlight this list, as well as strategies for culturally responsive teaching:
   - **Vibrant Voices: A Booklist Celebrating Stories of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color**
     - **Date and time:** Friday, January 28, 12 noon–1 PM
     - **Description:** Learn more about the *Vibrant Voices* book list and Educator Guide! Educators will learn how to access the guide and utilize the titles in their instruction, while branch staff will gain insight into how to use these titles for book talks, programming, and more!
     - Register [HERE](#)
   - **Towards a Black Historical Consciousness in Teaching and Learning Black History**
     - **Date and time:** Friday, February 11, 9–10 AM
     - **Description:** While Black history is a popular subset of history education, most learners uncritically engage with the subject, leaving major gaps in how we understand Black people's history and culture. This workshop will explore what we know and don't know about how we teach Black history and how it is problematic. Dr. LaGarrett King will explain a Black history framework, Black historical consciousness, that provides a humanistic understanding of Black people. The framework consists of eight principles that can be adopted by schools, libraries, and the general society interested in Black history education. Dr. LaGarrett King is an Associate professor of Black History and Social Studies Education in the Graduate School of Education at the University at Buffalo.
     - Register [HERE](#)

9. **Check out some additional external resources that will help you use these books with your school community:**

   *Importance of Diverse Books*
   - 5 Reasons Why You Should Read a Diverse Book for Your Next Community Read from We Need Diverse Books
   - 14 readers tell us why diverse books are so important from Scholastic’s 'On Our Minds' Blog
   - Students Have a Right and a Need to Read Diverse Books from the National Council of English Teachers Blog
○ Why Diverse Classroom Libraries Matter from Edutopia
○ Why We Need Diverse Books from the National Education Association

**Motivating Reluctant Readers**
○ 6 Effective Strategies to Motivate Reluctant Readers from Resilient Educator
○ How Can I Encourage a Reluctant Reader? from Common Sense Media
○ How to Engage Reluctant Readers from TeachHUB
School-Age Titles
**Dream Street** by Tricia Elam Walker

**Availability**
Print

**Synopsis**
Introducing the importance of community, the author pays homage to the street they grew up on by taking readers to Dream Street, where they will meet an unforgettable cast of characters.

**Teaching Information**
- Lexile: 940
- Genre: Picture Book Fiction
- Grade Level: K–3
- Page Count: 32

**Themes**
Community; Neighbors; Family; Friendship

**Discussion Questions**
1. One of the themes of this book is community. Are there any places that make your community special? Are there any people that make your community special? What makes these places and people special? What do they mean to you?

2. Another theme of the story is dreams and hopes of the children in the book. What kind of dreams do you have for your future? What do you think you might want to do with your life when you grow up?

3. This book is co-written by two cousins who had a dream to be authors. What do you think they had to do to make this dream come true? Do you think it’s easy or hard to write and illustrate a book? How long do you think it took them to write and illustrate this book?

4. If you wrote a book what would it be about? Do you have something that you love to talk about that maybe you could put in a book and make a story out of?
Additional Titles

- El Barrio by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate
- Boogie Boogie Y’all by C.G. Esperanza

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Think about the different places in your community, consider the buildings, sights, and sounds. Draw a picture of your favorite place in your community.

2. Interview a special person in your community. Maybe a minister, a teacher, a neighbor. Ask them questions about their work in the community, how long they’ve been a part of the community, and what they like best about the neighborhood.
Dumplings for Lili by Melissa Iwai

Availability
Print; e-book

Synopsis
Lili loves to cook little dumplings called baos with her grandmother, but when cabbage is needed, Lili races up and down the stairs of her grandmother’s apartment building to find the ingredient and help the other grandmothers borrow ingredients for different dumplings, from Jamaican meat patties and Italian ravioli to Lebanese fatayer and more.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Picture Book Fiction
- Grade Level: Pre-K–2
- Page Count: 48

Themes
Grandparents; Cooking; Community; Family

Discussion Questions
1. What does your family like to cook at home? What ingredients might they need to borrow in order to make them?
2. Before the story begins, we see an illustration of Lili’s apartment building. Where do you think Lili might live? Do you think she lives in the city or in a suburb?
3. What is the most important and most difficult secret that Lili knows about making baos?
4. Why does Lili have to take the stairs to visit other apartments?
5. What are some of the different words for "grandmother" that the story uses?
6. Which of the grandmothers’ foods would you most like to try? Why?
Additional Titles

- *Hot Pot Night* by Vincent Chen
- *Thank You, Omu!* by Oge Mora
- *Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao* by Kat Zhang

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Talk to a family member about one of your favorite meals! What ingredients does he or she use to make it? How long does it take? Together, write the recipe down and draw a picture of the food!

2. Check out BookFlix, which has the classic story *Too Many Tamales* by Gary Soto, as well as a nonfiction story to pair with it titled *Mis Comidas / My Foods* by George Ancona.
**Laxmi’s Mooch** by Shelly Anand

**Availability**
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

**Synopsis**
A joyful, body-positive picture book about a young Indian American girl's journey to accept her body hair and celebrate her heritage after being teased about her mustache. Laxmi never paid much attention to the tiny hairs above her lip. But one day while playing farm animals at recess, her friends point out that her whiskers would make her the perfect cat. She starts to notice body hair all over—on her arms, legs, and even between her eyebrows. With her parents' help, Laxmi learns that hair isn't just for heads, but that it grows everywhere, regardless of gender. Featuring affirming text by Shelly Anand and exuberant, endearing illustrations by Nabi H. Ali, Laxmi’s Mooch is a celebration of our bodies and our body hair, in whichever way they grow.

**Teaching Information**
- Genre: Picture Book Fiction
- Grade Level: Pre-K–2
- Page Count: 32
- Awards & Honors
  - 2022 Charlotte Huck Award Honor Book

**Themes**
Body positivity; Bullying

**Discussion Questions**
1. How does Laxmi feel at the beginning of the story?
2. Have you ever been teased or bullied? How did it feel?
3. How does Laxmi feel when she says, “My cheeks grew as hot as a steaming bowl of Mummy's aloo gobi”?

4. Why does Laxmi dream of tigers? Why are there butterflies in the picture? What are some things you notice about the tigers?

5. Why do Laxmi’s classmates decide they want mooches like she has?

6. How does Laxmi feel at the end of the story?

Additional Titles

- **Your Name is a Song** by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow
- **My Hair is Magic** by L.M. Marroquin
- **You Matter** by Christian Robinson

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Write a poem celebrating you! What adjectives can you use to describe yourself?

2. Draw a self-portrait. What do you love about yourself? What do you want people to notice about you? What makes you beautiful?
Maryam's Magic: The Story of Mathematician Maryam Mirzakhani by Megan Reid

Availability
Print; e-book

Synopsis
The true story of Maryam Mirzakhani, an Iranian girl whose creativity and love of stories helped her and the world see math in a new way, and who was the only woman ever to win the Fields Medal, the most prestigious honor in mathematics.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Picture Book Biography
- Grade Level: K–3
- Page Count: 40
- Awards & Honors
  - Middle East Book Award, 2000-2021: Honor, 2021

Themes
Women mathematicians; Geometry; Iranian American women

Discussion Questions
1. Maryam was a storyteller. What kinds of stories did Maryam like to tell, and who was her audience?
2. Maryam's family is originally from Iran. In the past, were girls allowed to go to school?
3. Maryam and her Roya were the first girls to join the Iranian team for the Olympiad. What medal did Maryam win?
4. Maryam created a math method that people called “Maryam's magic wand math.” Who were some of the world’s most recognized institutions she helped solve challenging mathematical problems?

5. Finally, Maryam’s magic wand math method was so impressive that the International Mathematical Union gave the highest honor in math; what was the award called?

Additional Titles

- Nothing Stopped Sophie by Cheryl Bardoe
- Ada Lovelace: Poet of Science by Diane Stanley
- Emmy Noether: The Most Important Mathematician You’ve Never Heard Of by Helaine Becker
- Who Says Women Can't Be Computer Programmers? by Tanya Lee Stone
- Margaret and the Moon: How Margaret Hamilton Saved the First Lunar Landing by Dean Robbins

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Create games through math activities! For example, play Math Bingo or make a paper plate clock!

2. Read and watch math stories and play word games using BookFlix or TumbleMath.
**Thao: A Picture Book** by Thao Lam

**Availability**
Print

**Synopsis**
"Thao" seems like a simple enough name. Only four letters—all of them belonging to many other names! And yet Thao had been called everything from "Tail" to "Theo" to "Towel." At one point, completely fed up, she decided it was time to try another name. Something "easy." Something like "Jennifer." But trying to be someone else only works for so long. And eventually "Jennifer" is swayed back to being herself when she opens her lunchbox and finds her mother has packed her Gỏi cuốn (also known as Vietnamese spring rolls)!

Thao's favorite! Her name is pronounced "Tow" like the English word "how." While simple on the surface, this story of cultural assimilation and celebration of cultural pride runs deep. It is a personal one for Thao. And it will strike a chord with readers who have struggled to fit within a mainstream mold—then realized it was just more comfortable to be themselves

**Teaching Information**
- Lexile: 420
- Genre: Picture Book
- Grade Level: pre-K–1
- Page Count: 24

**Themes**
Culture; Identity; Names; Child Immigrants

**Discussion Questions**
1. Has anyone ever mispronounced or made fun of your name? If yes, how did that make you feel? How do you think you would feel if that happened to you?
2. Do you think it was a good idea for Thao to change her name? What advice would you give to someone who might want to change their name?

3. What is your favorite food? Why is it your favorite? Could you give up your favorite food for a day like Thao tried to?

4. What do you notice about the artwork in this book? Have you seen this kind of art before? What kind of art do you like to make? If you had to make a collage what kind of collage would you make? What would you include in your art piece?

Additional Titles

- *Your Name Is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins Bigelow
- *Eyes That Kiss in the Corners* by Joanna Ho
- *Alma and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal
- *My Name Is Yoon* by Helen Recorvits
- *The Name Jar* by Yagsook Choi

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Make a name collage. Use pictures to describe you and your favorite things. You can include your favorite foods, colors, hobbies, and more.

2. Use Brainpop Jr. for inspiration by checking out their Arts & Technology section and learn more about collage art.
Too Small Tola by Atinuke

Availability
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
Three delightful tales from a renowned Nigerian storyteller introduce a chapter-book heroine who is every bit as mighty as she is small. In a trio of droll stories, award-winning author and storyteller Atinuke debuts an endearing and enduring character with plenty to prove. Tola lives in an apartment in the busy city of Lagos, Nigeria, with her sister, Moji, who is very clever; her brother, Dapo, who is very fast; and Grandmommy, who is very bossy. Tola may be small, but she’s strong enough to carry a basket brimming with groceries home from the market, and she’s clever enough to count out Grandmommy’s change. When the faucets in the apartment break, it’s Tola who brings water from the well. And when Mr. Abdul, the tailor, has an accident and needs help taking his customers’ measurements, only Tola can save the day. Atinuke’s trademark wit and charm are on full display, accompanied by delightful illustrations by Onyinye Iwu. Too Small Tola evokes the urban bustle and rich blending of cultures in Lagos through the eyes of a little girl with an outsize will—and an even bigger heart.

Teaching Information

- Genre: Short stories
- Grade Level: 2–4
- Page Count: 89
- Awards & Honors:
  - NYPL's Best Books for Kids 2021
  - SLJ Best Books of the Year, 2010 - 2021: Selection, 2021
The New York Public Library | Vibrant Voices

- Read for Empathy Collections, 2017-2021: Selection, 2021
- Jhalak Children's & YA Prize, 2021: Longlist, 2021
- Horn Book Fanfare, 2001 - 2021: Selection, 2021

Themes

Family; Determination

Discussion Questions

1. Tola's family consists of Dapo, Grandmommy, Tola, and Moji. Each family member has an essential role. Because Tola is the youngest in the family, she feels too small to do anything; what are some ways Grandmommy makes Tola feel BIG and important?

2. What role do you play in your family, and why is it special to your family? For example, how is Tola's Grandmommy teaching Tola and her siblings the importance of finance helped her at the Mouse Seller's shop?

3. Why was it important for Ms. Shaky-Shaky to defend Tola when the Ododi boy tripped Too Small Tola and made her fall?

4. How does Too Small Tola feel when Mr. Abul complimented her on taking excellent measurements for her Grandmommy's dress.

5. Mr. Abdul was so impressed with Tola's measuring skills that he asked her to be his assistant; what did Mr. Abdul do to thank Too Small Tola for doing a great job?

6. Although Tola is small, she could do BIG things. What are some adult duties that children can do as well?

Additional Titles

- Akissi: Tales of Mischief by Marguerite Abouet
- Jasmine Toguchi: Mochi Queen by Debbi Mochiko Florence

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Draw a map of your community and create a legend for your map to highlight the important locations within the community.

2. Take a look at BookFlix! The "Family and Community" section demonstrates the importance of the people in our communities.
When Langston Dances by Kaija Langley

Availability

Book; eBook

Synopsis

Inspired by watching a performance of the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, a young Black boy longs to dance and enrolls in ballet school.

Teaching Information

- Lexile: 580
- Genre: Picture Book Fiction
- Grade Level: pre-K–2
- Page Count: 40

Themes

African American boys; Boy dancers; Individuality in boys; Self-acceptance in children

Discussion Questions

1. Langston loves to play basketball as well as dance. Do you think it’s possible to like doing different things?

2. Langston was inspired to dance after seeing the Alvin Ailey Dance Company perform. Have you ever been inspired to participate in an activity after seeing someone else doing the activity?

3. Why do you think Langston is confident about dancing?

4. Who are some people in your life that encourage you to do something you have never done before?

5. How do you think Langston feels when he dances? Why?
Additional Titles

- *Julián Is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love
- *The Thumbtack Dancer* by Tami Charles
- *Eyes That Kiss in the Corners* by Joanna Ho
- *Alaina and the Great Play* by Eloise Greenfield

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Create dancing games! For example, freeze dance or balloon dancing.
2. Use The New York Public Library's Digital Collection to view images of male ballet dancers.
3. Discover the life of Alvin Ailey and his dance company through the Schomburg Center for Research In Black Culture.
4. Read books more on the art of dancing using TumbleBooks Library.
Middle Grade Titles
Ahmed Aziz’s Epic Year by Nina Hamza

Availability
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
An Indian American boy endures a family move from Hawaii to frigid Minnesota and, with the help of three life-changing books he reads in school, he learns to like reading, and ultimately, himself.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Realistic fiction
- Grade Level: 4–7
- Page Count: 320
- Awards & Honors
  - A Chicago Public Library Kids Best Book of the Year
  - A BookPage Best Book of the Year

Themes
Moving to a new state; Identity

Discussion Questions
1. Ahmed finds joy in reading. Do you like to read? What are your favorite types of books to read?
2. Ahmed’s father is sick, which leads to the family’s move to Minnesota. Have you ever had a family member who was sick for a long time? Did you feel similar to Ahmed, or different?
3. If you notice a new student in your class, how can you make them feel welcome?
4. Which of the three activities would you have chosen to do at Camp Burn? Why?
5. What is the role of family in this book? How does Ahmed's uncle, who passed away, play a role in the story?

Additional Titles

- Front Desk by Kelly Yang
- Pie in the Sky by Remy Lai
- Merci Suarez Changes Gears by Meg Medina

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Holes by Louis Sachar is referenced throughout this novel. Borrow a copy of Holes from your local library. In what ways do you feel Stanley and Ahmed are similar? In what ways are they different? Which character from Holees do you relate to most?

2. Try the cup challenge that Ahmed participates in at Camp Burn. Have a family member or friend guide you!
Ancestor Approved: Intertribal Stories for Kids edited by Cynthia Leitich Smith

Availability
Book; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
Edited by award-winning and bestselling author Cynthia Leitich Smith, this collection of intersecting stories by both new and veteran Native writers bursts with hope, joy, resilience, the strength of community, and Native pride.

Teaching Information
- Accelerated Reader: IL: MG, BL: 5, AR Pts: 9
- Grade Level: 3–6
- Genre: Short stories; poetry
- Page Count: 320
- Awards & Honors
  - NYPL's Best Books for Kids 2021
  - Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection

Themes
Celebrating identity; Cultural traditions

Discussion Questions
1. Ancestor Approved: Intertribal Stories for Kids is a collection of short stories by Native writers. What does it mean to have so many voices in one story, sharing their experiences? How does this build a sense of community?

2. Which story or poem spoke to you or resonated with you most? Why?
3. Powwows are present throughout this book. What did you learn about powwows? What do they represent? What happens at a powwow?

4. In the poem "Circles" by Carole Lindstrom, what do the circles represent? Why does she use the image of a circle?

5. Does your family have cultural traditions that they share?

Additional Titles

- Once Upon an Eid: Stories of Hope and Joy by 15 Muslim Voices edited by S.K. Ali and Aisha Saeed and illustrated by Sara Alfageeh
- Flying Lessons and Other Stories edited by Ellen Oh

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Sit down with a family member and discuss with them what holidays and events are significant to your family? What do you do to celebrate them? Does your family have certain traditions?

2. Read more about powwows on Kids InfoBits.
Black Boy Joy: 17 Stories Celebrating Black Boyhood
edited by Kwame Mbali

Availability
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
From 17 acclaimed Black male and nonbinary authors comes a vibrant collection of stories, comics, and poems about the power of joy and the wonders of Black boyhood.

Teaching Information
- Lexile: 710
- Genre: Anthologies
- Grade Level: 3–7
- Page Count: 304

Awards & Honors
- NYPL's Best Books for Kids 2021

Themes
African American fiction; Anthologies; African American Boys; Literary collections

Discussion Questions
1. In the story "There's Going To Be A Fight In The Cafeteria," Cornell makes a list of his favorite superheroes. Who are the superheroes in your life (real or fictional), and what do they mean to you?

2. The McCoy Games is about survival of the fittest. Jamal and his cousin Dre must complete a mystery scavenger hunt to inherit their grandfather’s house. Would you do something scary or dangerous if it meant you would receive a prize?
3. Did Jamal's grandfather Big Mac assign him and Dre to this scavenger hunt together to rebuild their relationship? Why or why not?

4. What is your definition of “fly” and how do your clothes express your version of fly?

5. In the story “Extinct,” Mr. Nasir tells Dylan, “I learn from you as much as you learn from me.” Has there ever been a time where you taught an adult something new?

6. What does joy mean, and how can you make each day a joyous experience?

Additional Titles

- Recognize!: An Anthology Honoring and Amplifying Black Life edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson
- Look Both Ways by Jason Reynolds
- New Kid by Jerry Craft
- Becoming Muhammad Ali by James Patterson

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. To challenge yourself, search for superheroes most people haven't heard of and then find out the character’s history and what made them become superheroes.

2. Create a scavenger hunt using clues from the book and have rewards at each station.

3. Design your own comic book! Pixton is a digital comic creation website for kids and teens. No drawing skills are required—just select from preset characters and backgrounds from a variety of pop culture, literary, scientific, and historical themes.
Cece Rios and the Desert of Souls by Kaela Rivera

Availability
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
When a powerful desert spirit kidnaps her sister, Cece Rios must learn forbidden magic to get her back in this own-voices middle grade fantasy perfect for fans of The Storm Runner and Aru Shah and the End of Time. Living in the remote town of Tierra del Sol is dangerous, especially in the criatura months, when powerful spirits roam the desert and threaten humankind. But Cecelia Rios has always believed there was more to the criaturas, much to her family's disapproval. After all, only brujas—humans who capture and control criaturas—consort with the spirits, and brujeria is a terrible crime. When her older sister, Juana, is kidnapped by El Sombrerón, a powerful dark criatura, Cece is determined to bring Juana back. To get into Devil's Alley, though, she'll have to become a bruja herself—while hiding her quest from her parents, her town, and the other brujas. Thankfully, the legendary criatura Coyote has a soft spot for humans and agrees to help her on her journey. With him at her side, Cece sets out to reunite her family—and maybe even change what it means to be a bruja along the way.

Teaching Information

- Accelerated Reader: IL: MG, BL: 4.7, AR Pts: 10
- Genre: Fantasy
- Grade Level: 4–7
- Page Count: 352
- Awards & Honors
  - NYPL's Best Books for Kids 2021
  - 2022 Charlotte Huck Award Winner
Themes
Coming of age; Fantasy

Discussion Questions

1. At the start of the story, Juana shouts to Cece that she's not brave enough to go into the ruins—and while Cece acknowledges that it's a "dumb" decision, as she gets angry, she thinks, "But now being dumb felt worth it." Have you ever gotten angry and wanted to prove someone wrong, even if it wasn't the smartest decision? What happened? How did you feel after? How does Cece feel after she jumps over the red rope into criatura territory?

2. At the center of this story is family, as Cece works to save her sister, Juana. What does it mean to be family? Do you have to be related to consider someone family?

3. In what ways does this story follow a traditional fantasy coming-of-age story? In what ways does it differ? Think of popular fantasy stories like *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* or movies like *Lord of the Rings* or *Frozen*. What does this story have in common with them? In what ways is it different?

4. What character traits would you use to describe Cece? What makes you feel that way?

Additional Titles

- *Paola Santiago and the River of Tears* by Tehlor Kay Mejia
- *Lotería* by Karla Valenti

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Draw one of the criaturas from the book. How do you imagine them? What do they look like?

2. Use *Explora Elementary* to search for and read two Mexican folktales: *Cuckoo and Senor Coyote and the Dogs*. 
Legacy: Women Poets of the Harlem Renaissance
by Nikki Grimes

Availability
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
From Children's Literature: Legacy Award–winning author Nikki Grimes comes a feminist-forward new collection of poetry celebrating the little-known women poets of the Harlem Renaissance—paired with full-color, original art from today's most talented female African American illustrators. Taking inspiration from the unsung women poets of the era, Grimes uses the "Golden Shovel" poetry method to create original poems drawn from the words of groundbreaking women writers. Set alongside the original works, Grimes’s all-new poetry pays tribute to the unique heritage of these women and their spiritual connection to nature, illuminating female self-expression in the early 20th century, reinvented with contemporary relevance and context.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Poetry
- Grade Level: 7–12
- Page Count: 134
- Awards and Honors
  - NYPL's Best Books for Kids 2021

Themes
Poetry; African American Poets; Women Poets; Harlem Renaissance
Discussion Questions

1. The Harlem Renaissance was a vibrant time in the early 1900s in African American culture. What do you know about the early 1900s and African American History? What was happening during that time period? What would you like to know about that time period?

2. Nikki Grimes focuses on women poets in this collection. Why do you think she chose this as her focus?

3. What are some of the themes you recognize in this poetry collection? Why are they important?

Additional Titles

- One Last Word: Wisdom from the Harlem Renaissance by Nikki Grimes
- Out of Wonder by Kwame Alexander
- The Dream Keeper and Other Poems by Langston Hughes

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Learn more about the women of the Harlem Renaissance. Use the Biography in Context database to search Zora Neal Hurston, Anne Spencer, and Gwendolyn Bennett. What did they contribute to the movement? What are they known for?

2. Write a poem or song celebrating a great woman in your life.
The Many Meanings of Meilan by Andrea Wang

Availability
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
A family feud before the start of seventh grade propels Meilan from Boston's Chinatown to rural Ohio, where she must tap into her inner strength and sense of justice to make a new place for herself.

Teaching Information
● Genre: Realistic Fiction
● Grade Level: 4–7
● Page Count: 352
● Awards & Honors
  ○ NYPL's Best Books for Kids 2021

Themes
Families, Immigrant Families, Moving, Facing Racism, Friendship

Discussion Questions
1. Meilan must begin a new life in a new place without knowing anyone else or having any friends after a family fight. Have you ever had to deal with a big change like this? How did it make you feel? What advice would you give to someone in a similar position?

2. What do you think about Meilan's principal changing her name? Why do you think he decides to do this? What would you do if you were in a similar situation?
3. What do you think about Meilan's parents? Meilan's mom goes along with the changing of her name. Do you agree or disagree with her mother's decision? Why do you think she does this?

4. Meilan must learn how to forgive people who hurt her in this story. Do you think her bully deserves forgiveness? Why or why not?

5. Consider some of the proverbs in the story. Have you heard of any of them? Have you heard of the “Early Bird Gets the Worm?” What does “Like Grasshoppers Tied to One Rope” mean to you? Give an example of how this expression might be true.

Additional Titles

- Ahmed Aziz's Epic Year by Nina Hamza
- Merci Suarez Changes Gears by Meg Medina
- The Year of the Dog by Grace Lin
- Stef Soto, Taco Queen by Jennifer Torres

Extension Activities and Digital Resources


2. Meilan learned even more about her grandfather when he shared his military experience with her. Check in with your family on whether or not there are any family members who served in the military. Talk to them about their experience and what they learned during that time.
Take Back the Block by Chrystal D. Giles

Availability
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
Sixth-grader Wes Henderson sets out to save the Oaks, the neighborhood where he’s lived his whole life, from being sold to a real estate developer.

Teaching Information
- Lexile: 760
- Genre: Realistic Fiction
- Grade Level: 4-7
- Page Count: 240

Themes
Community Activism; Gentrification; Family; Friendship

Discussion Questions
1. One of the themes of this book is community. What are some things that make a community a true community? What makes a community strong? What makes a community unique? What are some things that you like about your community?

2. Wes and his friends learn about gentrification in this story. Have you ever heard the word gentrification before? What does gentrification mean? What are the pros and cons of gentrification if any?

3. What are some projects you can work on to help your community? Do you see things in your community that can be improved? What steps can you take to help make things better?
4. Friendship is another theme in this story. How can friends stay close when they no longer live near each other? Have you ever grown apart from a good friend? How did you handle it? What are some ways to show friends you are there for them when they are going through a difficult time?

Additional Titles
- Class Act by Jerry Craft
- Simon B. Rhymin' by Dwayne Reed

Extension Activities and Digital Resources
1. Explore different neighborhoods by viewing our digital collections. Look at the buildings, parks, and schools and compare it to what you see when you walk in your neighborhood? What are some things you notice in the images? How much has changed from then until now?

2. Think about something you would like to see improved in your neighborhood. Write a letter to your elected officials explaining the issue and why it needs to be addressed. Encourage them to take action for your community and present any possible solutions you have for the problem.
Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre by Carole Boston Weatherford

Availability
Print; e-audiobook

Synopsis
A powerful look at the 1921 Tulsa race massacre, one of the worst incidents of racial violence in our nation's history.

Teaching Information
- Reading Level: X
- Grade Level: 4-8
- Lexile: 980
- Page Count: 64
- Genre: Picture Book Nonfiction
- Awards & Honors
  - NYPL's Best Books for Kids 2021
  - Jane Addams Children's Book Awards, 1953-2022: Finalist, 2022
  - SLJ Best Books of the Year, 2010 - 2021: Selection 2021
  - Best Illustrated Children's Books, 1952-2021: Selection 2021

Themes
History; Social issues

Discussion Questions
1. In the book Unspeakable, Tulsa, OK had a community called Greenwood it was also known as The "Black Wall Street." Why was Greenwood given this name?
2. What were some of the businesses in the Greenwood district that made it so successful?

3. How many people lived in this community and what were some of the reasons people decided to migrate to Tulsa, OK?

4. On May 31, 1921 a race massacre known as the Tulsa Race Massacre occurred. What were some of the causes of the massacre?

5. After the massacre, many people lost their lives, their homes burned to ashes. What were some of the other After effects of the massacre?

6. How long did it take for lawmakers to investigate what took place in Greenwood, causing the worst racial attack in U.S. history? To honor the contribution African Americans made in Oklahoma's history, what has Oklahoma done to keep the residents' memories alive?

Additional Titles

- *Birmingham 1963: How A Photograph Rallied Civil Rights Support* by Shelley Tougas
- *Someday Is Now* by Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich
- *This Promise of Change: One Girl's Story in the Fight for School Equality* by Jo Ann Allen Boyce
- *Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Anti-Racism, and You* by Sonja Cherry-Paul

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Create your newspaper with information and images regarding the Tulsa Massacre of 1921.

2. Check out the *African American Experience* database, which provides text and images of the history of Greenwood community and its residents before and after the tragic event.

3. Explore the hidden history of the Greenwood community in Tulsa, OK with the *Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture*.

4. Check out *U.S. History in Context*, which provides coverage of the most-studied U.S. history topics web-like experience that supports the development of critical thinking and information literacy skills.

5. Take a look at the *World Book Online Reference Center* for historical accounts of Tulsa Race Riot.
Young Adult Titles
Angel of Greenwood by Randi Pink

Availability
Print, e-book, e-audiobook

Synopsis
Seventeen-year-old Isaiah Wilson is, on the surface, a town troublemaker, but is hiding that he is an avid reader and secret poet, never leaving home without his journal. A passionate follower of W.E.B. Du Bois, he believes that black people should rise up to claim their place as equals. Sixteen-year-old Angel Hill is a loner, mostly disregarded by her peers as a goody-goody. Her father is dying, and her family’s financial situation is in turmoil. Also, as a loyal follower of Booker T. Washington, she believes, through education and tolerance, that black people should rise slowly and without forced conflict. Though they’ve attended the same schools, Isaiah never noticed Angel as anything but a dorky, Bible toting church girl. Then their English teacher offers them a job on her mobile library, a three-wheel, two-seater bike. Angel can't turn down the money and Isaiah is soon eager to be in such close quarters with Angel every afternoon. But life changes on May 31, 1921 when a vicious white mob storms the community of Greenwood, leaving the town destroyed and thousands of residents displaced. Only then, Isaiah, Angel, and their peers realize who their real enemies are.

Teaching Information
- Genre: African American fiction; Historical fiction
- Grade Level: 8-12
- Page Count: 295

Themes
Race Massacres, Community, Identity
Discussion Questions

1. Had you heard of the Tulsa Race Massacre before reading this book?

2. Angel and Isaiah see things differently. One is a follower of W.E.B. DuBois and the other is a believer of Booker T Washington. What are some pros and cons of each outlook? Place yourself in Angel and Isaiah's shoes. Where would you stand, give your thoughts and ideas.

3. Do you feel more connected to Angel or Isaiah or both? What made you feel this way?

4. Muggy's family issues causes Muggy to act out, ultimately making him a bully. He is even cruel to his own friend Isaiah. Why do you think Isaiah stays friends' with him? Would you continue to stay friends with someone who was mean to others?

5. Miss Ferris helped Isaiah to channel his abilities into poetry and also started the mobile library. Do you have any teachers or adults in your life who have helped you discover a passion and how has that stuck with you?

Additional Titles

- **A Sitting in St. James** by Rita Williams-Garcia
- **The Black Kids** by Christina Hammonds Reed
- **Out of Darkness** by Ashley Hope Perez

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

3. Start a journal, like Isaiah, and challenge yourself to write and create everyday.

4. Write poems and give them to your friends, family and community organizations, like your local library. Need inspiration? Explore *Columbia Granger's World of Poetry* with your library card! This premiere poetry on-line resource contains 250,000 full text poems and 450,000 citations, as well as poetry commentary, poets' biographies, and literary glossary terms.

5. Want to know more about Booker T. Washington or W.E.B Dubois? Dive into *Biography in Context*, a comprehensive database of biographical information on more than one million people from throughout history, around the world, and across all disciplines and subject areas.

6. Did you know The New York Public Library has three bookmobiles? Try visiting one and return and check out a book. Think about Angel and Isaiah and their bookmobile, and how far we have come. To find out where they are parked up follow them on Twitter [@NYPLBookmobile](https://twitter.com/NYPLBookmobile).
Black Birds in the Sky: The Story and Legacy of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre by Brandy Colbert

Availability
Print, e-book, e-audiobook

Synopsis
In the early morning of June 1, 1921, a white mob marched across the train tracks in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and into its predominantly Black Greenwood District, a thriving, affluent neighborhood known as America's Black Wall Street. They brought with them firearms, gasoline, and explosives. In a few short hours, they'd razed thirty-five square blocks to the ground, leaving hundreds dead. The Tulsa Race Massacre is one of the most devastating acts of racial violence in US history. But how did it come to pass? What exactly happened? And why are the events unknown to so many of us today? These are the questions that author Brandy Colbert seeks to answer in this nonfiction account of the Tulsa Race Massacre.

Teaching Information
- Genre: History books; Social issues
- Grade Level: 9-12
- Page Count: 216 pages : illustrations, map
- Awards & Honors
  - NYPL Best Books for Teens 2021

Themes
African Americans, Race relations, Race massacres
Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever heard about the Tulsa Race Massacre? If you have, what did you know and how did you learn about it? How did it make you feel? If you had never heard about it, what were your thoughts/feelings going into this reading?

2. Discuss the terms “Negro uprising,” “Race Massacre,” and “Race Riot.” What do these terms mean and how are they different? Why do you think many, or most race based massacres were and sometimes are still called race riots? How does this make you feel?

3. Do you know of any other race massacres or uprisings? Discuss further.

4. How did the images in the book make you feel? Did it help to connect deeper to the historical events? How do images help while reading?

5. How did the media play a role in disseminating information and knowledge of the event to the larger community? How does the media help or hurt in current times?

Additional Titles

- The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre: A Photographic History by Karlos K. Hill (adult title)
- Revolution in Our Time: The Black Panther Party’s Promise to the People by Kekla Magoon
- Unpunished Murder: Massacre at Colfax and the Quest for Justice by Lawrence Goldstone
- Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Explore other perspectives using African American Experience, and American Indian Experience.

2. Explore old newspaper articles to see what was written about the Tulsa Race Massacre. Compare newspapers, research the newspaper and perspective they were writing from. How are the articles written, what is the tone. Are there images? Check out: African American Newspapers, 1827-1998 (Readex), African American Periodicals, 1825-1995 (Readex) and Newspaper.com
Firekeepers' Daughter by Angeline Boulley

Availability
Print, e-book, e-audiobook

Synopsis
Daunis Fontaine has never quite fit in, either in her hometown or on the nearby Ojibwe reservation. She dreams of college, but when her family is struck by tragedy she puts her future on hold to care for her fragile mother. The only bright spot is meeting Jamie, a new recruit on her brother Levi’s hockey team. When Daunis witnesses a shocking murder, she reluctantly agrees to go undercover, drawing on her knowledge of chemistry and Ojibwe traditional medicine to track down the source of a new drug. How far will she go to protect her community, if it threatens to tear apart the only world she’s ever known?

Teaching Information
- Lexile: 720
- Genre: Thrillers and suspense
- Grade Level: 9-12
- Page Count: 494 pages
- Awards & Honors
  - NYPL Best Books for Teens 2021
  - School Library Journal Best Books 2021

Themes
Drug addiction, Drug trafficking, Families, Identity, Ojibwe Culture, Grief, Justice
Discussion Questions

1. Rituals are important. Daunis has her own rituals that she practices every morning: a prayer and a run. Why do you think she does these things? Do you have rituals that you do? Why do you do them?

2. Elders are respected in the Ojibwe community. Danuis seeks guidance from them throughout the book. Describe the role the elders play in her community and discuss how elders play a role in your community. Do they look similar or are they different?

3. Daunis is many things: A Firekeeper, a Fontaine, hockey player, science lover and eventually a confidential informant. How do all these aspects of her identity come into play during her investigation?

4. Discuss what the Blanket Party is, and how you felt when you read about it. What do you think about this form of justice?

Additional Titles

- This is my America by Kim Johnson
- Found by Joseph Bruchac
- Walking in Two Worlds by Wab Kinew

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Danuis is learning about herself; how she sees herself, how others see her and everything else that creates her identity. Write a Bio Poem showcasing who you are.

2. Explore ScienceFlix and “nature identification guides,” to learn more about the great outdoors surrounding us. See if you can identify a tree, plant, bird, that you see everyday, but may know nothing about.

3. Check out Looks Like Daylight: Voices of Indigenous Kids by Deborah Ellis, #NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women edited by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale and Everything You Wanted to Know about Indians but were Afraid to Ask by Anton Treuer to learn more about historical traumas that Indigenous still deal with today.
From a Whisper to a Rallying Cry: the Killing of Vincent Chin and the Trial that Galvanized the Asian-American Movement by Paula Yoo

Availability
Print, e-book, e-audiobook

Synopsis
A groundbreaking portrait of Vincent Chin and the murder case that took America's Asian American community to the streets in protest of injustice. America in 1982. Japanese car companies are on the rise and believed to be putting American autoworkers out of their jobs. Anti-Asian American sentiments simmer, especially in Detroit. A bar fight turns fatal, leaving Vincent Chin-a Chinese American man-beaten to death at the hands of two white men, autoworker Ronald Ebens and his stepson Michael Nitz. From a Whisper to a Rallying Cry is a searing examination of the killing and the trial and verdicts that followed. When Ebens and Nitz pled guilty to manslaughter and received only a $3,000 fine and three years' probation, the lenient sentence sparked outrage in the Asian American community. This outrage galvanized the Asian American movement and paved the way for a new federal civil rights trial of the case. Extensively researched from court transcripts and interviews with key case witnesses-many speaking for the first time-Yoo has crafted a suspenseful, nuanced, and authoritative portrait of a pivotal moment in civil rights history, and a man who became a symbol against hatred and racism.

Teaching Information
● Genre: Social issues
● Page Count: 374 pages : illustrations
● Awards & Honors
  ○ Time Young Adult Best Book of 2021
  ○ NPR Best Book of 2021
  ○ NYPL Best Books for Teens 2021
School Library Journal Best Nonfiction 2021

Themes
Civil Rights; Activism; Racism

Discussion Questions
1. What did you know about the killing of Vincent Chin before reading this book?
2. How did reading this book make you feel?
3. Ronald Ebens stated that he wasn’t a racist. What has cultivated implicit bias toward Asian Americans? How do we abolish this bias in ourselves and/or others?
4. How do you check yourself and hold yourself accountable if you notice you, or someone else, is being racist?
5. Have you and your friends ever taken a stand for something that you felt truly passionate about? How did you come together, what impact did it cause within yourself, and what was the outcome?

Additional Titles
- Rise Up!: How You Can Join the Fight Against White Supremacy by Crystal Marie Fleming
- The Talk: Conversations About Race, Love & Truth by Wade Hudson
- We Hereby Refuse: Japanese American Resistance to Wartime Incarceration by written by Frank Abe, Tamiko Nimura; artwork by Ross Ishikawa, Matt Sasaki

Extension Activities and Digital Resources
1. Use US History in Context to learn more about the Asian American Movement which dates back to the 1960s.
2. Learn more about implicit bias by watching this video from PBS.
Home is Not a Country by Safia Elhillo

Availability
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
A novel in verse follows the experiences of a misfit teen in a discriminatory suburban community who questions her mixed heritage before unexpected family revelations force her to fight for her own identity.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Novel-in-verse; Realistic Fiction
- Grade Level: 7-12
- Page Count: 215
- Awards & Honors
  - National Book Award for Young People's Literature, 1996-2021: Longlist, 2021
  - Recent Book Award
  - Winners & Honorees: Longlist, 2021

Themes
Children of immigrants; Muslim families; High school students; Hate crimes

Discussion Questions
1. In Home is Not A Country, Haitham and Nima have been best friends like siblings since childhood but now they will not be in the same class. Do you think this will change their friendship?

2. Nima and her mother were turned away at the Airport because the airport staff judge their appearance because they are Muslim. Have you ever thought you were being misjudged by people because of your appearance?
3. Nima is being bullied at school and feels alone. What are some ways Nima can empower herself?

4. Nima’s family celebrates many of their homeland traditions and customs here in America. How do you think her family’s customs influence her coming into her own identity?

Additional Titles

- *The Colors of the Rain* by R. L. Toalson
- *Saints and Misfits* by S.K. Ali
- *Clap When You Land* by Elizabeth Acevedo
- *Every Body Looking* by Candice Iloh
- *The Sun Is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Create a music playlist that expresses your personality and the topics/events to affect your life.

2. Inspired by the title *Home Is Not a Country*, create a poem that describes what inspires you to be the unique individual you are.

3. Discover the rich history of Islamic Art by visiting the [NYPL Digital Collections](https://www.nypl.org/digitalcollections).

4. Learn the Arabic language as well as the other 71 languages using [Mango Languages](https://www.mangolanguages.com).

5. Through the [Schomburg Center for Research In Black Culture](https://www.schomburgcenter.org), delve into the history of Islam and take a virtual tour through our [Malcolm X: A Search for Truth exhibit](https://www.schomburgcenter.org/exhibits/malcolm-x-a-search-for-truth).
Hurricane Summer by Asha Bromfield

Availability
Print, e-book, e-audiobook

Synopsis
Tilla has spent her entire life trying to make her father love her, but every six months he leaves their family and returns to his true home: the island of Jamaica. When Tilla's mother tells her she'll be spending the summer on the island, Tilla dreads the idea of seeing him again, but longs to discover what life in Jamaica has always held for him. Now, as a hurricane threatens the island, Tilla learns about the dark secrets that lie beyond the veil of paradise.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Coming-of-age stories
- Grade Level: 9-12
- Page Count: 376 pages : illustrations (some color)
- Awards & Honors
  - NYPL Best Books for Teens 2021

Themes
Families, Fathers and daughters, Sexual abuse, Sexism

Discussion Questions
1. The title of the book is Hurricane Summer. Discuss how the hurricane plays a role in this story.
2. Hurricane Summer speaks about the beauty of destruction and celebrates imperfections and mistakes and the journey we are on to understand ourselves. Pick any character, here are a few, Tilla, Tyson, aunt Herma, cousin Diana, Hessan, and talk about their journey, what mistakes they made and what they may have learned.

3. By the end of the book Tilla realizes how strong and powerful her voice is. Share a time/experience that helped you to find your voice and speak up for yourself and/or others.

4. Tyson, Tilla’s father, gives her a butterfly necklace on her ninth birthday. He says “You are soft, but you are powerful. Just like a butterfly.” Give examples from Tilla’s summer that show these qualities. What animal/insect do you think of when you think of yourself and the powers you possess?

5. Tilla realizes that Paula and Tyson are together and her son is Tyson’s child. If you were Tilla would you tell Mia, (her younger sister). Why or why not? Is it your place to tell?

Additional Titles

- Sugar Town Queens by Malla Nunn
- The Marvelous Mirza Girls by Sheba Karim
- The Revolution of Birdie Randolph by Brandy Colbert

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Has there ever been a time where you forgave someone but you didn't actually share your true feelings and thoughts with them, and in the end realized you weren't able to heal? Write a letter saying all the things you wish you would have said to that person. Let it out like Tilla did with some of her family and Hessan.

2. Tilla doesn't remember all her family from Jamaica and tries to reconnect and connect while visiting. Create a family tree and explore some of our Genealogy databases.

3. Check out one of these books about empowering yourself and finding your voice. Empowered Black Girl: Joyful Affirmations & Words of Resilience, Dare to be You: Inspirational Advice for Girls on Finding Your Voice, Leading Fearlessly, and Making a Difference or Write a Poem, Save Your Life: A Guide for Teens, Teachers, and Writers of all Ages.
Iron Widow by Xiran Jay Zhao

Availability
Book; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
"Pacific Rim meets The Handmaid's Tale in this blend of Chinese history and mecha science fiction for YA readers. The boys of Huaxia dream of pairing up with girls to pilot Chrysalises, giant transforming robots that can battle the aliens that lurk beyond the Great Wall of China. It doesn't matter that the girls die from the mental strain. When 18-year-old Zetian offers herself up as a concubine-pilot, it's to assassinate the ace male pilot responsible for her sister's death. But when she gets her vengeance, it becomes clear that she is an Iron Widow, a rare kind of female pilot who can sacrifice males to power up Chrysalises instead. To tame her frightening yet valuable mental strength, she is paired up with Li Shimin, the strongest male pilot in Huaxia, yet feared and ostracized for killing his father and brothers. But now that Zetian has had a taste of power, she will not cower so easily. She will take over instead, then leverage their combined strength to force her society to stop failing its women and girls. Or die trying."--
Provided by publisher.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Fantasy
- Grade Level: 9-12
- Page Count: 200
- Awards & Honors
  - Best Books for Teens 2021
  - A 2021 Goodreads Choice Awards Nominee, Best Young Adult & Science Fiction

Themes
Fantasy; Strong female protagonist; Action; Revenge; Sisters; Death
Discussion Questions

1. How do traditional gender roles play a part in this story? How does Zetian twist those traditional gender roles by becoming an Iron Widow?

2. The author Xiran Jay Zhao makes YouTube videos about their passion for Chinese history and culture. While this story is a futuristic fantasy, what elements of Chinese history are interwoven throughout the novel?

3. As a woman in Huaxia, how much free will does Zetian actually have? While she becomes empowered in many ways, are there others where she is pressured by the social norms of her society?

4. The story ends with a hint of a sequel. Where do you think the story will go from here?

5. Though this story is action-packed, it is emotionally driven. In what ways can you relate to the Zetian's emotional journey throughout the book?

Additional Titles

- Gearbreakers by Zoe Hana Mikuta
- The Poppy War by R.F. Kuang

Extension Activities and Digital Resources


2. Visit Xiran Jay Zhao's YouTube channel, where she explores different topics like Chinese history and representation in the media, and watch a few of their videos. (One particularly fun one? Relatable cat poems from 800 years ago!)
Kneel by Candace Buford

Availability
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
This fearless debut novel explores racism, injustice, and self-expression through the story of a promising Black football star in Louisiana. The system is rigged. For guys like Russell Boudreaux, football is the only way out of their small town. As the team’s varsity tight end, Rus has a singular goal: to get a scholarship and play on the national stage. But when his best friend is unfairly arrested and kicked off the team, Rus faces an impossible choice: speak up or live in fear. "Please rise for the national anthem." Desperate for change, Rus kneels during the national anthem. In one instant, he falls from local stardom and becomes a target for hatred. But he’s not alone. With the help of his best friend and an unlikely ally, Rus will fight for his dreams, and for justice.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Realistic Fiction
- Grade Level: 9-12
- Page Count: 320

Themes
Facing racism; Issue-oriented; Football
Discussion Questions

1. This book was inspired by athletes who choose to protest by taking a knee during the national anthem, like Colin Kaepernick, for example. Though protests and activism happens often, Colin Kaepernick was given widespread media attention and was censured by the NFL for taking a knee. Why do you think this is?

2. Biased policing is present throughout this story, and throughout daily life in the United States. Bringing to mind George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, as well as countless other cases, this book reflects a systemic problem with police in our society. Have you ever faced, or known someone who’s faced, this unfair treatment? What emotions come up?

3. Why do you think the author chose to set the story in a small town in Louisiana? Would this story look different if set in New York City? Why or why not?

4. What issues is Gabby passionate about? What is food justice? What does it mean to be an intersectional feminist?

5. In what ways can you relate to the characters in the story? Who do you feel most connected to? Why?

Additional Titles

- **Why We Fly** by Kimberly Jones
- **All American Boys** by Jason Reynolds
- **Dear Martin** by Nic Stone

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Research Colin Kaepernick in Biography in Context, and browse articles written about him in some of the newspaper databases, like Newspaper Source (EBSCO). How much of his real life story is reflected in this title? What’s different and what’s similar?

2. What issues are you passionate about? Look at what local teen activists are doing, and consider participating in an activity or event that they’re hosting!
Me (Moth) by Amber McBride

Availability
Print, e-book

Synopsis
Moth, who lost her family in an accident, and Sani, who is battling ongoing depression, take a road trip that has them chasing ghosts and searching for ancestors, which helps them move forward in surprising, powerful and unforgettable ways.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Novels in verse
- Page Count: 248 pages
- Awards & Honors
  - SLJ Best Books 2021
  - Kirkus Reviews Best Books

Themes
Coping with death, Dealing with mental illness, Road tripping

Discussion Questions
1. Moth discusses names and how she came to have hers. “Given or replaced, names hang on to your bones like forever suits.” What does this mean to you? Is there an origin story of your name and why it was given to you? Have you ever wanted to change your name? What would you change it to, and how do you think your name would change who you are?

2. Moth describes truly being at home when she was under stage lights, dancing, but after the accident she stopped dancing, and stopped feeling alive. Think about what home means to you. Is it where you live, a thing you do, or where you came from? Discuss what home is to
you. Like Moth, has your home ever been disrupted or completely broken apart? How did you/or continue to heal and process?

3. Analyze both Aunt Jack’s and Moth’s Lists of Rules. (Pages 32-33) What do you notice? What is similar and what is different? Does one honor rituals? If so, what are the rituals? What do you find is healing on these lists? What can cause more trauma on these lists? Discuss. Does staying silent hurt or help the healing process? Explain your thoughts.

4. Both Moth and Sani are unseen in their mostly white suburban neighborhood. What does *Me(Moth)* say about the importance of being seen? Do you feel seen by your family, friends, school and community? Express yourself.

**Additional Titles**

- [Home Is Not a Country](#) by Safia Elhillo
- [Home Home](#) by Lisa Allen-Agostini
- [One of the Good Ones](#) by Maika Moulite and Maritza Moulite

**Extension Activities and Digital Resources**

1. “But Sani smells like witch hazel bark. I know that root. Grandfather said Native Americans taught settlers about witch hazel bark. It can reduce grief but it can also reduce the ability to love.” Explore titles under the subject heading “Herbs. Therapeutic use,” and explore the power of plants and nature. Check out this book [Healing Secrets of the Native Americans: Herbs, Remedies and Practices that Restore the Body, Refresh the Mind and Rebuild the Spirit](#), only found in our Research collection.

2. Plan your road like Moth and Sani. Create a list of eleven places you would go and the reason for going.

3. Build your road trip playlist.

4. Create a story through dance and song, channel both Moth and Sani.
The Mirror Season by Anna-Marie McLemore

Availability
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
"After Ciela and Lock are sexually assaulted at the same party, they develop a cautious friendship through her family’s possibly-magical pastelería and his secret forest of otherworldly trees. Graciela’s whole world changes after she and a boy she barely knows are assaulted at the same party. She loses her gift for making enchanted pan dulce. Neighborhood trees vanish overnight, while mirrored glass appears, bringing reckless magic with it. Ciela is haunted by what happened to her, but when the boy, Lock, shows up at Ciela’s school, he has no memory of that night, and no clue that a single piece of mirrored glass is taking his life apart. Ciela knows who assaulted her—and him. And she knows that their survival depends on no one finding out what really happened." -- adapted from jacket

Teaching Information
- Lexile: HL780L
- Genre: Magical realism
- Grade Level: 9-12
- Page Count: 320
- Awards & Honors
  - One of Publishers Weekly’s Best Books 2021

Themes
Magical realism; Sexual assault
Discussion Questions

1. How does this story pull from *The Snow Queen*? What elements from *The Snow Queen* does McLemore use to tell this story?

2. This novel begins with (and continues to) grapple with sexual assault. Was this a hard book to read? Why do you think the author chose to write about such a heavy and emotional topic through the lens of *The Snow Queen*, a classic fairy tale?

3. This book is considered magical realism, in that there are magical elements added to realistic fiction. What magical elements does McLemore include throughout the novel?

4. How do Lock and Ciela grow as characters over the course of the novel?

Additional Titles

- *Black Girl Unlimited* by Echo Brown
- *Every Body Looking* by Candace Iloh
- *Tonight We Rule the World* by Zack Smedley

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Read *The Snow Queen* and consider how McLemore adapts this story into her modern retelling. Browse the NYPL catalog, or SimplyE to find different tellings.

2. Write a letter to either Ciela or Lock. What would you say to them if they were a friend?
Nubia: Real One by L.L. McKinney

Availability
Print, e-book

Synopsis
Nubia has always been a little bit different. As a baby she showcased Amazonian-like strength by pushing over a tree to rescue her neighbor's cat. But despite her having similar abilities, the world has no problem telling her that she's no Wonder Woman. And even if she were, they wouldn't want her. Every time she comes to the rescue, she's reminded of how people see her: as a threat. Her moms do their best to keep her safe, but Nubia can't deny the fire within her, even if she's a little awkward about it sometimes. Even if it means people assume the worst. When Nubia's best friend, Quisha, is threatened by a boy who thinks he owns the town, Nubia will risk it all; her safety, her home, and her crush on that cute kid in English class, to become the hero society tells her she isn't.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Comics and Graphic novels; Superhero comics
- Page Count: 205 pages: chiefly color illustrations
- Awards & Honors
  - NYPL Best Books for Teens 2021
  - BCALA and the ALA Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table: Supplemental Reading Lists

Themes
Identity, Women Superheroes, Friendship
Discussion Questions

1. Besides the actual superpowers Nubia has, discuss what her real strengths are. What superpower(s) do you possess?

2. Nubia kept her powers a secret from her friends. If you woke up one day and had superpowers, what would you do? Would you tell everyone, keep it a secret and tell no one, tell only your family, friends and crush? Discuss and explain.

3. What was your reaction/feelings to the scene where Nubia is put in handcuffs and put in the back of the police car? Do you think you would have reacted/responded the way Nubia did? Because this is a graphic novel do you think you reacted differently to seeing the images verus reading prose and no images?

4. Do you know anyone like Wayland? How have you handled situations where you or someone you know has been mistreated and abused by someone else? How did you handle the situation?

5. One of Nubia’s moms reminds her when she is in trouble to “take a moment to ground yourself. And remember to breathe. Stay in the now.” Share any other ideas you might add to this advice. What do you do when you feel scared, in trouble or dealing with a situation that feels out of control?

Additional Titles

- Wings of Ebony by J. Elle
- Unearthed: A Jessica Cruz Story by Lilliam Rivera
- I Am Not Starfire by Mariko Tamaki

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Check out these books on comic strips and drawing or use Pixton to create your own superhero comic.

2. Create a superpower mood board. What superpowers would you want? Research 3-4 women using Biography in Context who possess these same superpowers. What have they used their powers for? Create a poem and/or collage about you, these women and your superpowers.
Perfectly Parvin by Olivia Abtahi

Availability
Print; e-book; e-audiobook

Synopsis
Heartbroken and humiliated when she is dumped just days into her first relationship, Iranian American Parvin Mohammadi struggles to remain true to herself while attempting to prove to a school heartthrob that she is rom-com girlfriend material.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Realistic Fiction
- Grade Level: 7-10
- Page Count: 320
- Awards & Honors
  - NYPL's Best Books for Teens 2021

Themes
Friendship; Dating; Family

Discussion Questions
1. Parvin decides to change her personality after she is dumped by her first boyfriend. What do you think about this decision? Should you ever change for someone to make yourself more likable in their eyes?

2. Do you think today's society and media sends the message that females should be quiet and demure to be approachable, attractive, or successful?
3. Parvin struggles with her multiracial identity. Why do you think Parvin has trouble accepting herself and the different parts that make up her racial identity? What do you think was the most difficult part for her in accepting her multiracial identity?

4. What role does Parvin's aunt play in this story? Do you think it was justified that Parvin's aunt was detained by immigration officials when trying to visit her family?

5. In 2017 there was a Muslim travel ban issued by the President of the U.S. How much do you think has changed from 2017 until now on how Muslims are treated when they travel and as they live in the U.S. Are things better now then they were then?

6. This book has a great cast of characters. Who was your favorite character in this story and why? Who was your least favorite and why?

Additional Titles

- **I Believe in a Thing Called Love** by Maureen Goo
- **The Girl Least Likely** by Katie Loutzenhesir
- **From Twinkle With Love** by Sandhya Menon

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Write a love letter to yourself. Take some time to think about the things that make you wonderful and beautiful and put it on paper. Save this to go back to when you’re having a bad day, need a pick-me-up, or just want to smile.

2. Read up on Immigration and Travel Bans in our [Opposing Viewpoints Database](#). Why is immigration such a hot topic? Who are the main targets of travel bans? Did you learn anything new from these articles?
Piece by Piece: The Story of Nisrin's Hijab
by Priya Huq

Availability
Print; e-book

Synopsis
Nisrin is a 13-year-old Bangladeshi-American girl living in Milwaukie, Oregon, in 2002. As she nears the end of eighth grade, she gives a presentation for World Culture Day about Bangladesh while wearing a traditional cultural dress. On her way home, she is the victim of a hate crime when a man violently attacks her for wearing a headscarf. Deeply traumatized by the experience, Nisrin spends the summer depressed and isolated. Other than weekly therapy, Nisrin doesn't leave the house until fall arrives and it's time for her to start freshman year at a new school. The night before class starts, Nisrin makes a decision. She tells her family she's going to start wearing hijab, much to their dismay. Her mother and grandparent's shocked and angry reactions confuse her--but they only strengthen her resolve. This choice puts Nisrin on a path to not only discover more about Islam, but also her family’s complicated relationship with the religion, and the reasons they left Bangladesh in the first place. On top of everything else, she's struggling to fit in at school--her hijab makes her a target for students and faculty alike. But with the help from old friends and new, Nisrin is starting to figure out what really makes her happy.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Graphic Novel
- Grade Level: 7-10
- Page Count: 224
Themes
Muslims; Racism; Islamophobia; Identity; Friendship; Family

Discussion Questions
1. What role does color play in this graphic novel? How does Huq use color to convey meaning? What scenes come to mind when you think about Huq's use of color?

2. In the beginning of the story, Nisrin is the victim of a hate crime. How does Nisrin deal with this trauma? How does her family attempt to help her cope?

3. What leads to Nisrin choosing to wear the hijab? How do you think her conversation with Poroma impacts that decision?

4. How does Huq convey Nisrin's emotions when she first wears the headscarf to school? What panels and specific illustrations tell you how she's feeling? Give examples from the book.

5. Ms. Johnson mispronounces Nisrin's last name in her homeroom, and makes inappropriate and racist remarks when Nisrin attempts to politely correct her. What would you do in that situation? How would you handle it? What would you say to the teacher? What advice would you give to Nisrin?

6. Throughout the book, Nisrin must convince her parents how seriously she takes wearing her hijab, and why it's meaningful to her. Why don't her parents want her wearing the hijab? Why is her father so against it?

Additional Titles
- Accused: My Story of Injustice by Adama Bah
- All American Muslim Girl by Nadine Courtney
- An Emotion of Great Delight by Tahereh Mafi

Extension Activities and Digital Resources
1. Read more about the history and culture of Bangladesh using the World Book Online Reference Center.

2. This book focuses on identity, friendship, and family. Consider who you are, and who you want to be, and create a collage using old magazines and art supplies to celebrate you.
The New York Public Library | Vibrant Voices

Sunny Song Will Never Be Famous by Suzanne Park

Availability
Print, e-book, e-audiobook

Synopsis
When Sunny Song accidentally films a PG-13 cooking video that goes viral (#browniegate), she is shipped off to a digital detox farm camp in Iowa for a whole month. She's traded in her WiFi connection for a butter churn, and if she wants any shot at growing her social media platform this summer, she'll need to find a way back online. Thanks to some unexpected friendships, Sunny might be surprised by the connections she makes when she is forced to disconnect.

Teaching Information
● Genre: Romantic comedies
● Page Count: 334 pages
● Awards & Honors
  ○ NPR Best Book of the Year

Themes
Social media addiction, Camps, Farm life, Identity

Discussion Questions
1. Sunny is a social media influencer. Would you want to be an influencer? Why or why not? What would you focus on, which platform(s) would you use? Would this be a career or a side hustle?

2. Sunny gets sent to camp to detox from social media. Do you think Sunny needed to be sent to camp? Explain your thoughts. How long do you think you could go without social media?
3. Do you seek validation through likes and followers? When it comes to social media do you think you only post the good times and happy times, creating a more public persona?

4. What are the pros and cons of social media? List your top five and discuss.

5. Sunny struggles with identity and never being Korean enough. Have you ever felt like you didn’t fully belong to a part of something or you were not enough of something?

Additional Titles

- Made in Korea by Sarah Suk
- Perfectly Parvin by Olivia Abtahi
- How Moon Fuentez Fell in Love with the Universe by Raquel Vasquez Gilliland

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Use Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center to find information on the effects of social media.

2. Check out some of these other titles! The Dark Side of Social Media, The Social Media Workbook for Teens: Skills to Help You Balance Screen Time, Manage Stress, and Take Charge of Your Life, and Obviously: Stories from my Timeline.

3. Explore Career Cruising, where you can find information on hundreds of occupations, 2 and 4 year college and universities, and financial aid, including scholarship opportunities.
When We Make It by Elisabet Velasquez

Availability
Print, e-book, e-audiobook

Synopsis
A first-generation Puerto Rican eighth grader, Sarai can see with clarity the truth, pain, and beauty of the world both inside and outside her Bushwick apartment. Together with her older sister Estrella she navigates the strain of family traumas and the systemic pressures of toxic masculinity and housing insecurity in a rapidly gentrifying Brooklyn. As she questions the society around her, her Boricua identity, and the life she lives with determination and an open heart, Sarai learns to celebrate herself in a way that she has been denied.

Teaching Information
- Genre: Coming-of-age stories; Novels in verse; Realistic fiction
- Grade Level: 9-12
- Page Count: 375 pages
- Awards & Honors
  - School Library Journal Best Books 2021

Themes
Children of immigrants, Mental Illnesses, Colorism, Drug abuse, Families, Gentrification, Identity, Poverty, Violence against women

Discussion Questions
1. Close your eyes. Think about Sarai’s neighborhood, Bushwick. Describe and discuss. What do you hear, see, smell? How has Sarai’s neighborhood been involved in her upbringing?
How do you see your neighborhood in conjunction with who you are? Has your neighborhood changed? How did/could this affect you and how did it affect Sarai?

2. “You are not from Puerto Rico. You are Nuyorican, Mami says, a Puerto Rican born in New York. Does that make me less Puerto Rican?” Please share your thoughts and opinions. Think about identity, ancestry, surroundings, language, and anything else you can think of. Is this something that you ever struggle with as well?

3. What adults, if any, does Sarai have to rely on? Where did the adults in Sarai’s life fail/help? Give examples and your feelings of the situations.

4. Sarai talks about talent and how that might not be “the way out of the hood.” She talks about all the talented people who are still in the neighborhood, like the “ladies who make the toilet paper doll covers made of yarn, and hood musicians who record then hustle their mixtape on CDs on the ave...” What do you think about this idea and statement? Think about your own neighborhood. What talents do you see in your community? What talents do you possess and how has your community affected or not affected you?

5. “The Daily News says...” How does the media portray the people of Bushwick and Bushwick itself? Is there a disconnect between how the media is portraying the people and place and Sarai’s experience? Do you think the media can affect how people view others? Give examples/feelings.

Additional Titles

- Chlorine Sky by Mahogany L. Browne
- The Education of Margot Sanchez by Lilliam Rivera

Extension Activities and Digital Resources

1. Sarai believes in the importance of names and sharing the story of how something came to be named. She shares how she and her sister got their names, and how Knickerbocker came to be called Hookerbocker. Write a story, made up in your head, or something real, and how it came to be called its Name.

2. Create a map of your neighborhood, using a legend to signify important places. Write a story about your neighborhood. It can be based on something that happened, or many things that happened over time, or something completely made up, like starting with “It started when octopi fell from the sky on Ocean Avenue...”

3. Write a poem about your neighborhood being a feeling. Call on things that make your neighborhood special, different, familiar. What do you see, hear, and smell?

4. Explore Latino American Experience and explore the history of Puerto Rico.
5. Borrow a Spanish/English dictionary and create your own dictionary looking up the Spanish words and phrases throughout the book.