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by PRH Editors These books explore a wide range of voices, from debut authors to personal essayists. Explore a few of our favorite books by Indian and Indian American authors. Discover more books by Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander authors and share these incredible narratives year-round using the hashtag #RepresentAsianStories. Trust book recommendations from real people, not robots However much teachers will make you read classics like Moby-Dick or Great Expectations, chances are that many of the books youll keep closest to your heart are the teenage books you read. Who can forget the first time they met irresistible, fast-talking Anne Shirley in Anne of Green Gables? Or the years that they spent growing up with Harry, Hermione, and Ron? Or the breakneck, cant-tear-your-eyes-away sequences that made The Hunger Games an international phenomenon?Luckily for us, it truly is the golden age for young adult fiction right now, as YA authors today continue to take the genre in new and incredibly exciting directions. Indeed, young adult books have stepped up onto the literary stage as a powerful genre in its own right, creating role models for all of us and leading important conversations about personhood, gender, sexuality, and race.So what are the greatest teenage books ever? It's a question that's too vast for any one person to answer. So to compile this masterpost, we asked our community of 300,000 readers to vote for their favorite teenage books. Without further ado, here are the 115 best young adult books of all time.If you're feeling overwhelmed by the number of great YA books to read, you can also take our 30-second quiz below to narrow it down quickly and get a personalized YA book recommendation Which YA book should you read next? Discover the perfect YA book for you. Takes 30 seconds! From the author of Throne of Glass comes this equally intense and thrilling young adult book series, devised as a loose retelling of Beauty and the Beast. In the eponymous first installment, now a new adult favorite, a young human huntress named Feyre is captured and forced to become the ward of a part-faerie, part-beast High Lord called Tamlin. Though cold to one another at first, Feyres irrepressible human spirit and curiosity soon endear her to Tamlin, and their lives intertwine as she learns the ways of the fae. But this contentment is shattered when Feyre realizes the curse that hangs over Tamlin and his people and finally understands that only she has the power to save them. One of the most quietly impactful young adult books youll find on an AP English reading list, A Separate Peace centers on a complicated friendship between two adolescent boys. Gene and Finny are roommates at the quintessentially northeastern Devon School, where they become thick as thieves despite their very different personalities. But as the shy, unathletic Gene grows jealous of Finnys easy confidence, hes driven to do something unforgivable after which their lives will ever be the same. Set against the sobering backdrop of WWII, A Separate Peace makes universal themes of loyalty and loss of innocence seem incredibly personal, and ensures this story is one the reader will never forget. No one can balance absurdity and tragedy quite like Lemony Snicket. His talents are on full display in A Series of Unfortunate Events, thirteen unrelentingly dark yet deliciously readable young adult books about the luckless Baudelaire children. Their troubles begin with their parents deaths and their adoption by Count Olaf, the notorious (albeit ridiculous) villain of the series who assumes a new identity in each book all in pursuit of the Baudelaires vast fortune, which always seems just out of reach.This is the one shred of luck the children do have, as theyre repeatedly forced into miserable situations with various odd caretakers, and have little success uncovering the secrets behind their parents deaths (and the mysterious organization, V.F.D., to which they belonged). It can certainly be frustrating, especially for young readers, to see them thwarted at every turn. Still, this young adult book series is more than worth it for the intrigue, excitement, and thought-provoking ideas about morality and good vs. evil, especially as these teenage books progress into more sophisticated territory. We wouldnt leave this landmark young adult book from one of SFFs best authors off the list. A Wizard of Earthsea presents the origin story of Ged, a boy with magical powers who must attend wizard school on an island (henceforth establishing this classic YA fantasy premise). Though Geds gifts impress his teachers and fellow students, he struggles to control them, and one day a spell gone awry releases a vicious shadow creature that attacks him. Ged recovers and graduates with his wizards staff, but the shadow pursues him, a looming threat over everything he does. Our hero eventually recognizes that he has seriously disrupted the equilibrium of the universe and that he must do everything he can to make it right. This mind-bending, genre-defying teenage book recounts the fantastical adventures of young Meg Murry, her brother Charles Wallace, and their neighbor Calvin on their mission to save the Murry siblings father. With the help of a supernatural trio of women, they tesser through space and time to strange settings on many different planets, each of which teaches them something new. But when they encounter the dark forces of the universe, will the children be able to overpower them and bring Dr. Murry back to Earth? Utterly unpredictable yet with perfectly calibrated characterization, A Wrinkle in Time absolutely lives up to its Newbery-winning legacy. Theodore Finch is a teenage outcast: an academic slacker and self-labeled freak, he suffers from undiagnosed bipolar disorder and constantly obsesses over death. He believes he has nothing in common with Violet Markey, a popular cheerleader and classmate that is, until the two are jostling for space at the top of the school bell tower, both planning to jump. Finch quickly realizes theres more to Violet than meets the eye, and Violet finds her first true confidante since the death of her sister. But even as their relationship blooms, they cant outpace their demons, and are forced to grapple with them over the course of this quippy yet moving YA novel. More star-crossed lovers take the stage in All the Walls of Belfast, an unlikely romance between two teens who must overcome the weight of their families pasts. Fiona and Danny may have been born in the same hospital, but their paths diverged completely from there: she was raised in the U.S. and has never returned to her fathers Catholic home, while hes a born-and-bred Protestant who plans to escape his abusive father by joining the Royal Irish Regiment. Sparks fly when they meet and figure out how much they have in common, right down to the same favorite band yet old conflicts still threaten to tear them apart, especially when shocking truths about their families begin to emerge. Fabiola Toussaint might have been born in America, but shes lived in Port-au-Prince almost all her life. Now, she and her Manman are returning to the States at last. Armed with an invitation from her aunt in Detroit, shes determined to build une belle vie a good life, richer in possibilities than the one she left behind in Haiti. But Immigration detains Manman as soon as they land in JFK, and Fabiola is forced to fly on to Detroit alone, unable even to cry as the vastness of America passes beneath her. Her aunt Marjorie, she knows, lives on the intersection of American Street and Joy Road. What she doesnt know is how to fit in with her three American cousins and when shell see her mother again. Shortlisted for the National Book Award, American Street is an elegant, deeply moving debut that mines Pushcart nominee Ibi Zobois own experiences growing up as a Haitian-American immigrant. With subtle characterization and a vivid sense of place, its already emerged as a contemporary classic. The first installment in an acclaimed fantasy young adult book series, An Ember in the Ashes offers some of the best worldbuilding in YA fantasy. In its painstakingly rendered, Rome-inspired Martial Empire, members of the deposed former ruling class, the Scholars, live in bondage and poverty under the thumbs of the Martial overlords who displaced them.Laia, a young Scholar girl, witnesses Martial brutality firsthand when her brother is arrested under suspicion of treason. Desperate to save him from a cruel death, she throws her lot in with a shadowy rebel faction with links to her late parents. Now working as their spy, she infiltrates an elite military academy where she meets Elias, a trainee being groomed for the highest echelons of Martial power. But Elias has no desire for a crown on his head or for blood on his hands. Together, these two unlikely allies strike at the very root of the empires corruption. This timely book is no less real for the fact that it's fiction. Anger is a Gift centers on Moss Jeffries, a teenager whose father was murdered by an Oakland police officer several years ago leaving Moss with not only intense grief, but also panic attacks. Now, in his sophomore year of high school, things havent gotten any easier. In fact, the Oakland police officers have been stationed in the halls of his school, where they treat Moss and his classmates like criminals. As the students push back against the administration oppressing them, Moss begins to realize that his anger can be used to fuel the fight to make things right. Louise Rennisons series has been called the YA version of Helen Fieldings Bridget Jones, for good reason: its narrated in first-person by a witty Brit who cant stop fixating on her appearance and often finds herself at the center of frequent mishaps. Check out the first installment, Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging, for the relatable female friendships and stay for the new catchphrases, like Fabbity fab fab! Lucy Maud Montrgomerys timeless story about an outspoken and imaginative orphan is one of the bestselling young adult books worldwide. And its no wonder: Anne of Green Gables is the epitome of an underdog story, tackling themes of friendship, belonging, the human relationship with the natural world, coming-of-age, gender roles, and more.At the center of the Canadian young adult book is, of course, Anne (with an E!), who is adopted by the Cuthberts of Green Gables. The only thing is, when the Cuthberts wrote to Annes orphanage requesting they send a child, they actually asked for a boy. Still, Anne quickly grows on the Cuthberts and they agree to keep her, so long as she doesnt get up to any trouble. Which, for someone as spirited as Anne, proves much easier said than done... The titular character of Are You There God? Its Me, Margaret has just moved from New York City to Farbook, New Jersey. Shes found herself with a new group of friends who have a secret club that meets to talk about personal things, like periods, bras, and boys nothing is off the table. However, one subject proves not to be without shock value: Margaret reveals that her family doesnt follow a specific religion. What she hasnt yet mentioned to her new friends is that shes actually part of another secret club, where the only other member is God. Treating the deity like a diary, Margaret reveals things to God that she tells to no one else not even her new friends. When Aristotle and Dante meet at the swimming pool one day, they dont expect a friendship to flourish. The two have nothing in common: Dante is a self-styled intellectual with a unique way of looking at the world, while Aristotle is an angry teen with an incarcerated brother. But the title Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe is nothing if not direct: the two teens do end up forming an unexpected bond, and enable one another to learn more about themselves, and, of course, the universe. Tanner Scott wants to keep his head down and just get through the last semester of high school with good grades. His family has just moved from California to Provo, Utah, and hes found himself somewhere he never wanted to be: back in the closet, hiding his bisexuality from his new peers. To the protagonist of Autoboyography, laying low seems like a good plan while he waits to graduate and leave Utah. Still, when a friend challenges Tanner to join a prestigious Seminar that has students write their own books in one semester, he finds himself unable to resist. But this doesnt have to derail Tanners plans, he tells himself. The only tiny complication might be the presence of Sebastier Brother, a Mormon prodigy who sold his own Seminar novel the year before and is now mentoring the class. Oh, theres also the fact that Tanner is falling head over heels in love for him. Growing up is turbulent. Its not a coincidence that so many young adult books have become bestselling classics. For Anita de la Torre, adolescence has been anything but carefree. Before We Were Free follows the story of twelve year-old Anita living in the Dominican Republic of the 1960s. There, she faces plenty of struggles: most of her family now lives in the US, her uncle has disappeared, her dad has been receiving mysterious phone calls, and her family is suspected of opposing the countrys dictator a dangerous accusation to live under. Through all this, Anita struggles to come into her own and to find moments when she can truly be carefree. Blood Water Paint is based on the true story of Artemisia Gentileschi, an iconic artist who painted some of Romes most famous works in the early 17th century. Despite her artistic accomplishments, shes remained totally unknown until she is unspeakably violated and has to make a decision: stay silent or speak up. Both choices carry pain and consequences, and Joy McCullough illustrates this impossible choice with eloquence and care. Summer vacation was not everything Jess Aarons hoped it would be, but theres a treat waiting for him with the return of the school year: the opportunity to race his classmates and leave them all in his dust. Hes been practicing all summer and is pretty confident in his ability to pick up speed. And he would have won, if not for Leslie Burke, a new girl in school, who easily outruns everyone, including Jess. Post-race, it doesnt seem like the two are on the verge of becoming BFFs. But they eventually discover they share more in common than the need for speed: imagination and love of fantasy. Together, Jess and Leslie create a magical kingdom in the woods called Terabithia a place they can run and play, and where anything feels possible. (We cant let you go without a quick warning, however: Bridge to Terabithia is an absolute tearjerker.) Based on Jacqueline Woodsons own life, Brown Girl Dreaming is a heartfelt poetry collection detailing what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 70s: post-Jim Crow, and during the burgeoning Civil Rights movement. The poetry is accessible to all ages. It feels particularly powerful when Woodson shares her struggles with reading as a child which, as is made clear through her mesmerizing verse never extinguished her love for storytelling. This book splashed onto the scene long before it was even printed, making headlines when both the novel and preemptive film rights sold in a deal so large it was basically unheard of for a debut author. What made this deal even more remarkable? Adeyemi was only 23 at a time. With all that hype behind it, youd hope the book lives up to expectations; thankfully, in this case, it does. Children of Blood and Bone follows a young woman named Zlie Adebola, who still remembers a time of magic, before the maji including Zlies mother were killed under the kings orders. Now Zlie finds herself with the opportunity to strike back against the king and return magic to the land. This thrilling fantasy adventure has all the best elements of the genre: a rogue princess, a cunning crown prince on their tail, magical creatures and spirits, and of course, the looming danger as Zlie struggles to control her own ever-growing powers. With all that and more, its no wonder that CBB became such an instant success! Theres just something delightful about a book that isnt afraid to ask, What if Cinderella were a cyborg?With this first installment in her young adult book series of quirky, sci-fi takes on classic fairy tales, Marissa Meyer invites readers into the world of Cinder: a cyborg living in the future city of New Beijing and repairing broken machines to support herself. She lives (of course) with her stepmother and stepsisters until one day when her world is upended by one sister falling ill to a plague. In a quick sequence of events, Cinder finds herself being studied by the royal doctors, and swept up in a world of imperial politics and a looming war with the Lunar colonies. Add in a charming robot sidekick and the requisite swoony prince, and youve got a futuristic fairytale sure to entertain all the way to the moon and back. Like many books for teen girls, this novel has two things about it that are undeniably true: its wildly popular, and people either love it or hate it. So make no mistake, youre going to have strong feelings about this book.For anyone who doesnt know, City of Bones is part of the Shadowhunters universe, a multi-series fantasy saga that encompasses (to date) fifteen novels across four young adult book series, three volumes of related short stories, four graphic novels, as well as the requisite movie and TV show adaptations with plenty more still to come.This first book follows Clary: a seemingly ordinary girl in New York City whose life is turned upside-down when she stumbles upon the world of the Shadowhunters, humans with angel blood who are tasked with keeping the world safe from demons and other magical beings. Its an exciting introduction to an enormous urban fantasy world, full of action, adventure, and romance, and has become an important part of many teenagers reading histories since its release in 2007. Sometimes young adult books are great because theyre beautifully written, or touching, or important and some young adult books are great because they manage to be all three at once.Darius the Great is Not Okay is one of those teenage books, and Darius himself is instantly relatable to teen audiences: somewhat awkward, dealing with depression, not really sure where he fits in the world. One of the few things he definitely understands is Star Trek: The Next Generation, which he watches with his dad every night. But then Dariuss grandfather falls ill, and his family must take an unexpected trip to Iran Dariuss first time in the land where his mother was raised. Its a chance to explore a whole new facet of his family and his identity.Unfortunately, Darius is not entirely sure how to navigate the waters of his new experience, and isnt convinced anyone here will accept him. That is, until he meets a neighbor boy named Sohrab, and the two form a friendship that runs deeper than any cultural differences they were raised with. Its a groundbreaking YA novel about mental illness, racial identity, and above all, the importance of connecting with others. Some young adult books arent just great stories, well-told: theyre essential. This is one such novel.In a story both timely and sadly timeless, Dear Martin follows the life of prep school star Justyce. Justyce has just begun writing a series of letters to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a means of processing the things he experiences, and how race factors into these experiences. What he cannot know is how quickly racial issues will become larger-than-life in his own life. In the wake of being hassled by a cop for helping his staggeringly drunk (and white-passing) ex-girlfriend into a car, Justyces eyes are opened to the ugly reality hes largely managed to avoid until now.Dear Martin truly runs the full spectrum of emotions, so be prepared for them all. Joy and rage, sorrow and love, pain and compassion. It never pulls its punches, and thank goodness for that, because this story wouldnt be anywhere near as powerful or as honest if it did. Its a book that will sit in your heart forever, and may just inspire you to take a page from Martin himself. In the post-Hunger Games world, many young adult novels tried to fill the dystopian void left behind by the beloved trilogy. However, few managed to deliver the same levels of thrills and utterly engrossing storytelling.Divergent is one of those few. Set in an alternate-future Chicago, society is divided into five factions: Abnegation, valuing selflessness; Amity, valuing peace; Erudite, valuing knowledge; Candor, valuing honesty; and Dauntless, valuing bravery. You might think of them like Hogwarts Houses, only the stakes are a lot higher, and the divisions a lot sharper.But what happens when someone fails to fit neatly in one box? Thats the question at the beating heart of this series, and as youll see, the consequences of being different are fraught with danger and drama. Its a story that will quickly sweep you up in the adventure, while also reminding us all of the importance of standing up and being true to ourselves. What more can you ask of a teenage book? Superheroes are all the rage in the movies, but they dont often make a splash in novels. Which is a shame, because as Dreadnought demonstrates, superhero books can have just as much action, tension, thrills, and powerful messaging as their visual counterparts. The story centers around Danny Tozer: a closeted trans-girl who witnesses the death of the most powerful superhero of her city, the famous Dreadnought. At the moment of his death, his powers transfer to her, granting her not only flight, super-strength, and more, but transforming her body into the one shes always wanted. Which is an amazing gift, but unfortunately, one that also forces Danny to admit her true identity to her parents. Well be honest: this is an emotionally difficult book. Throughout the story, Danny faces transphobia from both family and new associates alike, and her abilities and identity are often questioned and underestimated by those around her. But in spite of all that, Danny consistently shows a resilience of spirit thats an inspiration to those of any gender identity. And, of course, we also get all the thrills that a superhero story is capable of delivering, complete with action sequences, entertaining science, and the joy of flight. Round it off with a sweet budding romance, and this debut truly has it all. A love letter to the world of fandom, Eliza and Her Monsters tells the story of Eliza Mirk. Though shy and withdrawn in real life, online shes the anonymous creator of the wildly-popular webcomic Monstrous Sea.Elizas perfectly comfortable with this duality, until one day her world is turned upside-down by the introduction of a boy named Wallace. A huge fan of Monstrous Sea, Wallace is immediately drawn to Eliza, and Eliza to him. Theres just one problem she hasnt actually admitted shes the creator of the comic they both love.Equal parts funny and heartbreaking, this teenage book is a timely examination of what it means to exist in the nebulous space of the internet, as well as what it means to create in our digital age. Its a powerful story about the ways in which we both isolate and open ourselves up, and the importance of sharing our true selves with those were close to. Cinderella is easily one of the most recognizable fairy tales in the western world, and has been adapted countless times, in infinite variations but perhaps none more charming than Ella Enchanted. Like any good fairy tale retelling, the story is one youll immediately recognize, but with an imaginative twist: when she was a baby, Ella of Frell was granted the gift of obedience. In other words, if anyone tells her to do something whether its easy or difficult to do, whether the order is minor or life-changing Ella must obey. But where other girls may simply have accepted their fate, Ella is determined to find a way out of her situation. In a wild adventure involving ogres, giants, elves, and of course a charming prince, this delightful tale not only entertains, but empowers young women everywhere to take charge of their own fate. A beloved sci-fi classic, Enders Game is the story of a future on the defensive. After barely defeating hostile alien attackers, the government sets up a Battle School to train child geniuses who will protect the planet during the next war. Among them is Ender, a rare third-child who grew up with an abusive older brother and a beloved older sister. His skills position him well within his training; however, Ender faces difficulties fitting in among his classmates. This is a book that uses the trappings of science fiction to delve deep into the human condition. Questions of morality and the haunting realities and impact of war make up the core of this book. The characters are relatable, the action fast-paced and breathless, and the writing perfectly tuned. Enders strategizing mind will keep the reader fascinated, while the plot compels us with its many surprising twists and turns. Its no wonder this book has drawn so many young readers into the world of sci-fi as it will no doubt continue to do for years to come. One of the earliest self-publishing success stories, Eragon swept readers into a world of adventure as surely as if we were all riding the dragons back for ourselves.Like many of the best classic fantasy novels, the story of its titular hero starts with very humble beginnings: on a farm. Specifically, Eragons uncles farm, where Eragon was left by his mother just after his birth. While hunting in the woods nearby, Eragon stumbles upon a mysterious stone only to later discover that his prize is not a stone at all, but a dragon egg!This discovery leads to the revelation that Eragon is a Dragon Rider, and soon kicks off a whole new chapter in Eragons life one full of adventure, magic, power, and choices that will have lasting consequences for the whole kingdom. Its a wildly entertaining teenage book that will surely capture the imagination of any child who wishes to become something more than they are. In this poignant historical fiction novel, Muoz Ryan tells us the story of Esperanza, a girl who was raised on her fathers ranch in Mexico. Spoiled by the wealth of her childhood, Esperanzas circumstances take a turn for the disastrous when her father dies and her mother takes her and flees. Together, the two of them travel north, until they wind up in a Mexican labor camp in the United States during the Great Depression. Based on the real-life experiences of the authors grandmother, Esperanza Rising brings us a timeless story of one girls journey to adapt to her new world and improve her life. Even when faced with grueling physical labor, a workers strike, and an illness that threatens her mother, Esperanzas perseverance and courage stand as inspiration to all of us. In this deeply imaginative teenage book, Levithan poses the question: who would we be if we were someone different Every Day? Thats the situation that our protagonist, A, has been facing for as long as they can remember. Every day, they wake up in a different body, with a different life: sometimes as a boy, sometimes as a girl, and always with access to the host bodys memory of facts but not feelings.Its a situation that would drive anybody else crazy and miserable, but A has learned to live with it. Theyve developed a set of rules, and it works. Never get too attached. Avoid being noticed. Do not interfere. That is, until A meets Rhiannon, a girl who changes their life forever.But while this premise might quickly become stilted or gimmicky in another authors hands, Levithan manages to hold true to As essence no matter how many bodies they pass through. Every Day is a novel, above all else, about people the impressions they make, the lives they live, and the deep drives of their hearts. Its a book that will make you laugh and think and ache, as you follow A through the unique and yet universal process of falling in love. In Five Feet Apart we meet two teens, Stella and Will: both chronically ill with cystic fibrosis, and both dealing with it in very different ways. For Stella, doing what her doctors prescribe and staying at least six feet away from anyone who may pose the threat of infection is paramount. For Will, its a question of biding his time until he turns eighteen, and can finally rid himself of the machines and drugs and treatments being pushed on him. Their worlds change, however, when the two of them encounter one another as closely as they can, at any rate and, despite the distance, sparks fly. Its a heartbreaking story of what it means to be alive, and what well risk in order to live our lives to the fullest, even if it means cutting our time down drastically. Lets be honest, no list of YA books would be complete without the Harry Potter series. This worldwide phenomenon not only kick-started many peoples love of reading, it reshaped the face of YA literature forever.From the very first novel, Harry entrances us with his sympathetic tale: abused orphan to budding wizard, known throughout the magical community for causing the downfall of He Who Must Not Be Named. Its a big legacy for anyone to live up, much less an eleven-year-old boy but Harry wins over the wizarding world with his big heart and exceptional courage, and watching him grow over the course of seven novels is a true delight.These young adult books are truly a magic trick, full of instantly memorable characters both good and evil, clever mysteries that take multiple installments to unravel, and the irresistible idea that love can save us all. Despite some of the authors problematic statements in recent years, the story of Harry, Ron, Hermione, and the rest will remain a beloved piece of so many of our childhoods. Its no wonder it made the list of the New York Public Librarys 10 most-circulated books of all time. This 1986 Newbery Honor-winning classic is the perfect YA gateway to the works of those like Jack London, Thoreau, or even Hemingway. Hatchet tells the story of Brian Robeson, a thirteen-year-old boy traveling from New York to Canada on a Cessna 406 bush plane. When the pilot dies from a heart attack mid-flight, Brian attempts to land and ends up crashing in a lake in the middle of a forest. Alone with nothing but his hatchet, a gift from his mother, Brian must quickly learn to survive and defend himself in the vast open wilderness. As Brian grapples with not only the physical threats but the emotional impact his experience puts him through, readers will be rapt with the need to find out what happens next. Told in rich details many of which were drawn for the authors real-life experiences! its a story that will make readers both young and old pause to appreciate the things that truly matter in this life. A story of parallel universes, magic, daemons, and armored polar bears whats not to love? His Dark Materials follows the adventures of Lyra Belacqua, a twelve-year-old girl with a talent for lying. After learning of a plan to poison her rebellious uncle, Lyra is swept into a desperate mission to rescue not only him, but her best friends, and a host of other children she learns have gone missing. Lyra travels to the frozen north, where she finds witch clans, armored bears, and a race of child-thieves called the Gobblers. But things are not always what they seem, and soon Lyra will learn the truth about her life, about her family, and about the Gobblers. This epic beginning grows into one of the richest, most complicated fantasy worlds seen in recent years, enchanting readers everywhere with its wildly inventive worldbuilding, numerous twists and turns, and spirited protagonist. In this heartbreaking teenage book of love and loss, teenage boy Griffin is grieving in more ways than one. His ex-boyfriend Theo has just died in a tragic accident but not before breaking Griffins heart by moving to California and starting to date another guy. Thatd be more than enough to wreck anyone, but what makes it worse is that until Theos death, Griffin had maintained the firm belief that Theo would realize his mistake and come back to him eventually.Ironically, the only person who can even begin to understand what Griffin is going through is none other than his would-be romantic rival, Jackson. But even as the two boys begin talking, Griffin continues to spiral downward. And the only way Griffin might be able to escape his own obsessive behavior is to actually unpack his painful history.Basically, this book will tear you apart and heal you back up again. A pitch-perfect examination of first love, grief, depression, and the importance of learning from your past in order to face the future, History Is All You Left Me is an unmissable YA sensation. Sometimes a book needs to be grounded in realism if it wants to tackle serious issues and sometimes, it needs a level of absurdity and general zaniness to help us make sense of them. If the latter is the case, theres no one better than Louis Sachar to tackle the job. In Holes, were introduced to Stanley Yelnats, a boy whose family has been cursed ever since the days of his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather. For Stanley, the curse takes the form of being arrested and sentenced for a crime he didnt commit. As punishment, Stanley is sent to Camp Green Lake, a detention center that has neither greenery nor a lake or hasnt in a long time, at any rate. The whole area has dried up, and in the bottom of the former lakebed, boys build character by digging holes, all day, every day. But of course, theres more going on than meets the eye. Three distinct timelines and narratives weave through this book, each revealing a piece of the puzzle, until the whole thing ties together in the books stunning conclusion. Holes has become a beloved piece of young adult literature not only for its handling of racial issues and the criminal justice system, but for the deft, sure-handed way it balances both the absurd and the tragic. Homecoming centers on Dicey Tillerman, who barely remembers her father he walked out on their family before Diceys youngest brother was even born. Since then, she and her three younger siblings have relied on each other, and on their Momma. Sure, she might be a little drifty and moony, with a tendency to brush off their questions with teary I dont knows. But Dicey knows she loves them all. Then one day, Momma drives them to a mall parking lot and walks away, seemingly for good. Now Dicey, at thirteen years old, finds herself tasked with keeping herself and her siblings alive. With scraped-together funds and only the barest hint of a plan, can the Tillerman kids find their way to someplace they can call home? This searing portrait of loss will haunt you long after you turn the final page. But dont let your fear of sudden tears or a lingering ache in your chest keep you from picking it up: How to Make Friends with the Dark is one of the best contemporary novels of the last decade, YA and otherwise. As long as sixteen-year-old Tiger Tolliver can remember, its just been her and her mom. Like all teens, she occasionally wants her space especially when spending time with her cute new boyfriend. But for the most part, the two Tolliver women make up a well-oiled, good-looking, and good-smelling machine, and Tiger wouldnt have it any other way. Then, Tigers mom dies unexpectedly. All of a sudden shes a ward of the state, planning a funeral with only her grief for company. Needless to say, this isnt the breeziest of reads, but the heartache it leaves you with is rich, rewarding, and real. This charming fantasy classic spawned an Academy Award-winning Studio Ghibli film. Rest assured: the 1986 teenage book delights as readily as its animated adaptation. Howls Moving Castle introduces us to the titular wizard, Howl, who shares his black-turreted, physics-defying home with prickly fire demon, Calcifer. But despite this charismatic pair, the real hero of the story is Sophie Hatter, who looks far older than her eighteen years thanks to a witchs curse.Eager to break the spell (and just as eager to be somewhere other than her familys hat shop) Sophie goes to work for Howl. A wizard, after all, is the perfect person to undo a witchs work or so she figures. What follows is a mesmerizing tale of magic, love and contract law. Fifteen-year-old Julia Reyes knows she isnt her parents favorite daughter. That would be Olga, who helped their Am clean houses, showed up faithfully to church each Sunday, and went to community college so she could live at home. Sweet-natured and devout, she was every bit the perfect Mexican daughter that brash, inquisitive Julia cant seem to be. So when Olga dies in a car accident, aged twenty-two, she becomes enshrined in familial memory as something of a saint. I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter offers a sharply rendered portrait of a complicated grief. As Julia mourns, she clashes with parents who seem determined to remold her in the likeness of her dead sister a sister who, it turns out, was far more complicated than the blameless Saint Olga of memory. Can Julia unravel the truth of Olgas life and find her own place in a family that cant seem to let her be herself? In I Wish You All the Best, nonbinary author Mason Deaver tells the story they wish they could have read as a teen. The result is an urgent, nuanced tale of coming out and coming of age that captures all the wonders and horrors of growing up. Ben De Backer is your typical high school overachiever, with a report card full of As and a resume burnished by an Art Club presidency. Theyre also nonbinary. When Ben comes out to their parents, they get thrown out of the house. With no one else to turn to, Ben gives their estranged sister Hannah a desperate call. Though Ben hasnt seen Hannah in a decade and theyve never met her new husband, the young couple is happy to offer them a place to stay, a school to finish out the year, and even a therapist to help them work through their parents rejection. But despite all these gifts, Ben remains closeted at their new school--and around the cute new neighbor boy. After the trauma of what happened the last time they came out, can Ben learn how to let their guard down and truly be themselves around those they care about? This is the rare book youll want to reread as soon as you turn the last page. On the first pass, Ill Give You the Sun will mesmerize you with evocative language and an intricate structure, a narrative puzzle that begs to be figured out. On the next, youll relish getting to know its complex, vividly drawn characters all over again. The narrative centers on the artsy Sweetwine twins, who give us two separate strands of the same, twisty story. Sensitive painter Noah and gregarious sculptor Jude have been inseparable since their days in the womb. But by the time theyre sixteen, theyre no longer speaking. Part of the novels initial pleasure lies in figuring out the root of their estrangement. Noah recounts the early years the twins spent by each others side, while hes grappling with his emergent queer sexuality in shadow of his charismatic sister. Jude, meanwhile, narrates their painful time apart as shes alone at art school, carving sculptures that keep inexplicably falling apart. Together, the Sweetwines alternating chapters tell a rich, intoxicating story of blood bonds, family trauma, and artistic ambition. When Amanda Hardy moves to a new school for her senior year, she finds herself being chatted up by the local heartthrob right away. Grant Everretts easy charm is interfering with all her well-laid plans: what she meant to do was keep her head down and her potential friends at arms length at least until she can escape to New York for college. After being beaten by her former classmates for being trans and rejected by a father who still called her Andrew, Amandas finally beginning to feel at home again. A cute boy with a crush on her? Thats a complication she doesnt need no matter how easy he is to talk to. Still, sweet-natured Grant bats off all Amandas warnings about her complicated past, and he makes no secret of the fact that she makes his heart race. Can Amanda allow herself to feel the same way? If I Was Your Girl offers heartfelt romance thats equal parts serious and sweet, written by a trans author with a flair for both nuanced characterization and swoony-worthy dialogue. This wildly imaginative work offers a sprawling, galaxy-sized space opera in a striking, comic-adjacent package. Illuminae is an epistolary teenage book with visual flair, pieced together from hush-hush interviews, heavily redacted emails, and sleek schematics baring the structure of giant spaceships. Its not unusual to turn the page and find yourself staring at a gorgeous map of the heavens. Too bad those beautifully rendered stars are marking out the boundaries of a war zone, where megacorporations command bomb-flinging fleets and whole planets bear the risk of imminent destruction.Sound complicated? Wait till you hear that its also a love story. Teen heroine Kady Grant might be a gifted hacker forced to deal with the sudden invasion of her planet, but shes also a high school student, reeling from a fresh breakup with the sweet but shiftless Ezra Mason. Unfortunately Kady doesnt exactly have the time to process her feelings: the invading warships are hot on her heels. Maybe thats for the best, since she has no choice but to fight her way past them with her just-dumped ex. Fifteen-year-old Craig Gilner never imagined having his dreams come true would land him in the hospital. He worked so hard to get into the Executive Pre-Professional High School, which was supposed to set him on the path to success for life. Instead, the mounting pressure almost cost him his life. After a suicidal episode, Craig checks himself into a mental health ward. Cue five life-changing days of talk therapy, grudging introspection, and encounters with his fellow patients, all of them grappling with issues from sex addition to self-harm. Based on author Ned Vizzinis own experiences with depression, Its Kind of a Funny Story tackles mental illness in a way thats sharp, sensitive, and not at all saccharine. Craig, with his acid wit and budding self-awareness, will wring shocked laughter out of you as he makes sense of anxiety with pitch-dark humor. Hes not lying: it really is kind of a funny story. Janes Aunt Magnolia once made her promise to accept any invitation she got to Tu Reviens, a sprawling island manor owned by the family of a glamorous acquaintance. But now Magnolia is dead, and Tu Reviens heiress, gala invite in hand. Jane jumps at the chance to make good on her promise, and to maybe feel something other than grief. Jane, Unlimiteds setup seems to promise either fairytale escapism or gothic horror: its heroine has a mysterious mansion to explore, after all, its hallways filled with beautiful people and hints of potent, dangerous possibility. But the story were actually told is far more unruly and far more interesting. When bells ring through Tu Reviens, Jane encounters a series of choices that will allow her to reshape her world, now emptied of Magnolias presence, in the image of a literary genre. Will she choose to live out a spy thriller or a space opera, a love story or a romance? Can any of these stories even save her from her grief? Juliet Milagros Palante grew up in the Bronx, chatting over arroz con maz with her gossipy aunts and fending off her moms questions about her lack of boyfriends. But as much as she loves her big Puerto Rican family, she no longer feels at home in their world. Theres Grandma Petalda dismissing queerness as crazy talk, and Titi Wepa using a lesbian identity as a convenient lie something you toss out laughingly to sidestep unwanted suitors. Juliet knows they love her, but how can she tell them the truth: that she has no boyfriend because shes in love with her best friend Lainie, whom shes actually been dating for a year? When Juliet does come out, the evening ends in confusion and tears. But before she can fix things with her family, she has to leave the Bronx for Portland. There, shes due to intern for her idol, the queer feminist author Harlowe Brisbane: her magnum opus has shaped Juliets burgeoning queer identity as much as Lainies love. As Juliet Takes a Breath recounts the wild and wonderful summer that follows, we get to know one of the fiercest, most finely rendered heroines in all of YA lit. Cynical readers see the YA dystopian genre as nothing more than a cash cow, but no one does it like Marie Lu. Sure, her wildly popular Legend checks all the boxes that make naysayers roll their eyes, from the Hunger Games comparisons to the Lionsgate film deal. But its crafted with enough polish to weather the strictest scrutiny, and its rich palette of influences makes for a fascinating world. After all, how many cyberpunk adventures can claim inspiration from Les Misrables? Lus audacious Victor Hugo rewrite swaps out post-revolutionary France for a police state centered in LA and replaces Javert and Valjean with two brilliant, troubled teens. Theres June, a military-trained prodigy dealing with the murder of her brother. And theres Day, the murder suspect, whose own brother is succumbing to a terrifying Plague. Brought together by a crime investigation where alls not what it seems, June and Day realize theyve finally met their intellectual matches in one another. As unexpected sparks fly between them, it dawns on them both that the city they call home isnt safe for either of them. This isnt actually the first installment in pioneer girl-turned-bestselling author Laura Ingalls Wilders iconic, autobiographical young adult book series. But theres no denying its the best known Little House book of them all: it even gave its name to the cherished, 200-episode TV adaptation. Wilder knows how to spin a satisfying yarn, and Little House on the Prairie shows off her storytelling chops at their sharpest. Urgent and emotionally varied, it combines tautly suspenseful beats a wolfpack, a bout of malaria with a surprisingly nuanced (though heavily romanticized) take of settler colonialism.Since its publication, Wilders masterwork has kept generations of young readers on the edge of their seats, daydreaming of homesteading exploits on the rolling plains of Kansas. Eight decades later, theres still nothing like it for immersive historical fiction. Theres been a fair bit of recent ink spilled on Greta Gerwigs whip-smart, Academy-approved, boldly metafictional Little Women. But this staple of girlhood bookshelves has been a big deal ever since 1868, when it sold out its initial print run. Its even been called the original super-franchise: an igniter of 19th-century ship wars and early 20th-century cosplays not to mention the dozen or so pre-Gerwig adaptations, from the Broadway musical to the anime. As they come of age in the 19th century, the four March sisters deal with tribulations both personal and profound, from their faded frocks to their familys place in a nation at war with itself. Whether theyre literary strangers to you or beloved old friends, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy are sure to charm you with their imagination, adaptability, and fierce sisterly love. Written in sparse, dynamic verse, Long Way Down offers a chilling look at gun violence and grief. The teenage book takes place almost entirely over the course of sixty seconds. And in that single, terrifying minute, a fifteen-year-old boy has to decide whether or not to use the gun tucked into his waistband.Wills older brother, Shawn was just murdered, and now hes out for revenge. Its the only option, since The Rules that have been ingrained in him since childhood dictate no snitching and no tears. So Will grabs his brothers gun and gets in the elevator that will bring him to the promised site of his vengeance. But hes got seven floors to travel, and a lot can happen in the minute it takes to make his long way down. This high school English standby is as cynical, in its own way, as Westeross grimdark tales of carnage. Just in case you havent had to grind out an essay on Lord of the Flies, well briefly sketch out the scene. A group of English boys crash-land on an uninhabited island and work together to survive sans schoolmastery supervision. But it turns out, choir practice is poor preparation for self-governance, and the boys attempts to civilize the wild quickly dissolve into chaos. Goldings masterwork has been called an allegory, a morality tale, and a chilling glimpse into the darkness at the heart of man (or at least, at the heart of a mid-century English schoolboy). Think of it as a dark, resolutely un-magical anti-Narnia, where dropping youthful, World War II-era Brits into a strange new country leads to bloodshed instead of a golden age. This small press hit is delectably strange, combining old-timey found photos with buttoned-up, sepia-tinged prose fittingly enough, since its set in the 1940s. But this isnt a cozy, nostalgia-driven childrens fantasy, the sort of thing youd turn to

literature and media have been devoted to the topic of time travel, but no other time travel book is quite like this. Rather than approaching it in terms of grand scientific possibilities, The Clay Lion uses time travel to tackle a single, very human question: what if you could go back in time and save your dying brother? The result is this beautifully rendered, fantastically moving journey undertaken by Brooke Wallace, whos willing to bend all the rules of time, space, and society to do exactly that even as she acknowledges the possibility of her failure. We bet that you havent read a book like this one. Winning both the Newberry and Coretta Scott King Awards the year it came out, The Crossover is the story of JD and Jordan Bell twin brothers who love basketball and are playing towards the championship playoffs of their schools division when a groundbreaking crisis strikes. Whats more? Its written entirely in verse. If thats hard to wrap your head around, take a quick look at the opening of its first chapter below: At the top of the key, I'm MOVING & GROOVING POPPING and ROCKING-- Why you BUMPING? Why you LOCKING? Man, take this THUMPING. Be careful though, 'cause now I'm CRUNKing CrissCROSSING FLOSSING flipping and my dipping will leave you S L I P P I N G on the floor, while I SWOOP in to the finish with a fierce finger roll... Straight in the hole: Swoooooooooosh. Though its bouncing rap beat might be different from the prose youre accustomed to reading, underneath the poetry lies the same themes that ground all of the best YA books: friendship, individuality, courage, and the power of family. Ingenious and bursting with humanity, The Crossover is simply a triumph in YA literature that will quickly win over any poetry-phobic teen. The worldwide phenomenon thats been adapted into a blockbuster play on Broadway, Mark Haddons The Curious Incident of the Dog at Night-Time will introduce you to an unforgettable protagonist in Christopher John Francis Boone. Christopher is fifteen-years old, wildly intelligent, curious, methodical and hes on the autism spectrum, which means that he doesnt understand human emotions the same way as the people around him. He goes out of his way to make sure that his world is organized and logical, until all order is disrupted when he discovers his neighbors dead dog. What ensues is a rousing, touching adventure as Christopher attempts to crack the case of Wellington the dogs death and another even greater mystery in the family all by himself. A staple of YA fiction, The Fault in Our Stars is John Greens beautiful, lyrical tribute to a doomed teenage romance. Hazel Grace Lancaster, our heroine, knows that her days might be numbered she has cancer, junk lungs, and a mother who insists that she attend Cancer Kid Support Group. She doesnt dare to let herself think about the future, until she meets a gorgeous boy named Augustus Waters at the support group. Unfairly attractive, darkly funny, and wise beyond his years, Augustus steals both her heart and her breath. Nobody told her about this plot twist and we wont reveal anything else about what happens in this beloved novel about first love, heartbreak, courage, and the will to not go gently into that good night. If any YA book should be required reading for people of all ages, its The Giver. Published in 1993, Lois Lowrys hallowed masterpiece has stood the test of time. It might be even more relevant and more inspiring today than ever before. Twelve-year-old Jonas world is one of peace, security, and order, and its the only life hes ever known. But everything changes when the Ceremony of Twelve comes to pass, and Jonas is assigned to be the future Receiver of Memory the single person upon whom all of the memories of the past are given. Becoming the Receiver of Memory will mean coming face-to-face with the sameness that the elders in his fragile community so fiercely protect, and confronting an unspeakable question: where exactly does the line fall between a utopia and a dystopia? The Glass Castle is truly a memoir that can stand on its own; fairytale-like in its prose and so emotionally transparent that you wont be able to look away. In The Glass Castle, Jeannette Walls tells the story of her own life growing up with three siblings and a set of demanding, non-conformist parents. Her father spent her childhood either drinking himself into a stupor or sparking his childrens imaginations by teaching them about physics and geology. Her mother shrank from the mere idea of domesticity, shunning her role in the household. In this dysfunctional environment, the Walls children took care of one another and dreamt together of a way to get out. This is the tale of the guts, drive, and unconditional love that it took to actually succeed and carve out a life of their own in New York. Every once in a while, a book comes along that will make the literary world sit up, read, and even listen. This kind of book makes waves and, more importantly, its ripples might even incite change in society. The Hate U Give was that book when it was published in 2017. At its center is sixteen-year-old Starr Carter, who has a foot in two worlds: one in her poor neighborhood, and the other in her rich prep school. But both worlds end up colliding when her best friend from childhood, Khalil, is shot and killed by a police officer. Thus begins a national uproar that upends Starrs already crumbling world, for she is the key to the true story behind Khalils death: she was the only one who witnessed the shooting that night. Searingly relevant, emotionally resonant, and bravely unapologetic in its unflinching portrayal of institutional racism and the corruption of the justice system, An important entry into the contemporary canon of African American literature, The Hate U Give is a must-read in our day and time. People might steer you towards the Lord of the Rings trilogy, or tell you that The Hobbit is only a childrens book, but dont listen to them. The Hobbit is actually the best of them all. The prequel to the epic trilogy, The Hobbit is the funnier, livelier, and altogether better slice of the whole story the Elizabeth Bennet to the Lord of the Rings Mr. Darcy, if you will. From the start, youll meet Bilbo Baggins, a hobbit who embarks on an unexpected adventure with a band of twelve dwarves (and one unreliable wizard named Gandalf). Their mission? To journey to the Misty Mountains, defeat Smaug the great dragon, and help Thorin Oakenshield reclaim the seat of the King Under The Mountain. Meanwhile, Bilbo is the designated burglar of the merry gang, which is appropriate because, suffice to say, this time-tested book might just steal your heart. The House on Mango Street is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year, and its no secret why this young adult book remains beloved even after so many generations have passed: the key is its remarkable universality. Sandra Cisneros set out to make The House on Mango Street accessible in all ways, once saying in an interview: You could read one or you could read the whole thing. You dont have to read the whole thing, but if you do its like a necklace of stories. I wrote it so that it would be approachable for all people, whether they were educated or not, and whether they were children or adults. Thats exactly the kind of warmth and love that replenishes the pages of this bildungsroman, which consists of a series of beautifully crafted vignettes about a twelve-year-old girl named Esperanza who grows up in the Hispanic quarter of Chicago, on a street called (you guessed it) Mango Street. Unless youve been living under a rock for the past ten years, youve probably heard of Suzanne Collins generational sensation, The Hunger Games. Collins dreamt up the premise one day while watching television and thinking, What if a reality TV show was about 24 children killing each other, and what if it was broadcasted nationwide? Katniss Everdeen is one such unlucky child in this first installment of The Hunger Games. From a poor family in District 12, Katniss must now compete against (read: murder) 23 other teenagers in order to survive if possibly, made even more complicated by the fact one of the other tributes is a gentle boy from her district, who she has grown to know and perhaps even like. In a faraway land, unicorns do exist. One in particular is shy and content to keep to herself in her clearing, deep in the green forest that is, until the day that she overhears a whispered conversation that suggests she is the last of her kind. In this classic book about a unicorn who sets out on a journey to find out what happened to her brethren, Peter Beagle has weaved a rich, spellbinding fairy tale of enchantment, hope, whimsy, and bittersweet lessons learned. Youll encounter harpies, witches, wizards, and kings, all told in prose so lovely its heartbreaking. Indeed, if youre looking for a book that will haunt you with its exquisiteness long after youve closed its pages, The Last Unicorn is the one for you. Heard of Percy Jackson and the Olympians? Get ready to meet The Lost Hero, Rick Riordans acclaimed spin-off. Though the setting and basic premise (demigods exist in our midst, and they practice their skills at a training facility called Camp Half-Blood) wont be unfamiliar to readers of Percy Jackson, our protagonists are different this time around. The Lost Hero features Jason, who has entirely lost his memory, Piper, who has a secret that could change everything, and Leo who somehow keeps seeing ghosts. How will they come together when the real enemy arises from the mist? Intricately plotted, fast-paced, and endlessly entertaining, The Lost Hero will be a satisfying return to Camp Half-Blood for any fan of Percy Jackson or Roman and Greek mythology. What would you do if you had lost the ability to dream? Would you resign yourself to the new reality? Or would you go mad and regain the capacity to dream at all costs even murder? This is the tantalizing idea that grounds Cherie Dimalines The Marrow Thieves, which finds a dreamless population of non-natives hunting indigenous Canadians, for the latters bone marrow is the key to a cure. But the price is death for the unwilling donor, which is why sixteen-year-old French and his family have been on the run for the last fifteen years. To escape the dark horror that awaits them at the hands of their pursuers, they must do something even more dangerous than dream they have to act. Cameron Post was just hanging out with her best friend Irene, eating ice cream and soaking in the rays of the summer sun, when Irene suddenly leans towards her and kisses her. It changes everything not least because soon her conservative aunt Ruth arrives to whisk her away to live with her in Miles City, Montana. Her aunt intends to fix Cameron, but when the measures she takes become drastic, Cameron has to step up and figure out who exactly she is changing into and whether or not she even wants that for herself. Bold and bracingly realistic, The Miseducation of Cameron Post is a frank exploration of identity, individuality, and sexuality that many children growing up will be able to relate to. A lonely boy named Bastian. The doomed world of Fantastica. Dragons, giants, monsters, magic, empresses, and a strange book that draws all of them deeper and deeper into its pages to a point where even Bastian may not be able to return from his quest. Just ask its millions of readers worldwide: whoever reads Michael Endes The Neverending Story is never quite the same again. Whether thats because of the dazzling imagination that bursts from its pages, the beauty of its prose, or the unforgettable nature of its universe is up to debate, but one thing is for certain: The Neverending Story has that extra something that elevates a mere story into a time-worn classic for the ages. Ponyboy Curtis is a legend in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and in the hearts of the readers who grew up with S.E. Hintons The Outsiders. Hinton herself was only 15 when she started writing this classic novel about two warring rival gangs: the working-class greasers and the privileged Socs (short for socials). Ponyboy, our protagonist, is a proud greaser who would die for his boys. But he didnt actually think that mortality was in the cards until the night that his friend Johnny murders a Soc. The two weeks that ensue will turn Ponyboys life and maybe even his entire worldview upside-down in this precocious book with a beating, emotional heart. Sure, The Perks of Being a Wallflower is a celebrated Hollywood film with an all-star cast of Logan Lerman, Emma Watson, and Ezra Miller but, as the saying goes, the book is always better. In his original novel, Stephen Chbosky has crafted a sensitive, deeply powerful story about a boy who knows what its like to be, well, a wallflower. Charlie tries to blend in with the wallpaper at parties, he hasnt kissed anyone that he really likes yet, and he writes to himself in a diary because he feels like its the only place he can really be himself. All of this starts to change when he meets two seniors at school, Patrick and Sam but the earthshaking revelations that surface as a result might only serve to remind Charlie why he had created a safety net for himself in the first place. The Poet X is the debut novel of revered slam poet Elizabeth Acevedo, which is how youll already know that it will be something special. And it starts and ends with the novels powerfully drawn, irresistible protagonist, Xiomara Batista: a young girl whos just beginning to discover her fiery passion for words. As her body grows into curves, her family life worsens, and the ever-constant gossip seethes at her school, it seems that Xiomara can only find solace in her schools slam poetry club just another thing that her ultra-religious mami cant find out about. If youd like another level of immersion, we recommend also listening to the audiobook. The verses are hard-hitting, beautiful, and so visceral that you might reel, and Xiomaras story will ricochet around in your head long after youve put down the book. Yes, this book is the progenitor of two of the most famous lines in cinematic history (if you dont mind spoilers, you can watch Inigo Montoyas iconic moment in action here). But the beloved The Princess Bride, a simple story about a young, beautiful woman who is kidnapped and forced into a marriage with the awful Prince Humperdinck, is much more than just that iconic film scene. Its a story that has adventure, humor, determination, pain, death, heroes, cowards, fun, tragedy, and miracles all in one humble, fairy tale-like book. William Goldman once said, "I've gotten more responses on The Princess Bride than on everything else I've done put together all kinds of strange outpouring letters. Something in The Princess Bride affects people." Pick it up and see for yourself just how much it might change your life. If you ever wondered who or what higher being you can thank for Julie Andrews pitch-perfect rendition of a rather stern Queen of Genovia, its this book right here. Mia Thermopolis is just trying her best to be a normal freshman. This, to Mia, includes: passing Algebra, getting her hair under control, and kissing (or trying to kiss) gorgeous Josh Richter, otherwise known as six feet of unadulterated hotness. This does not include: finding out that youre the crown princess of an entire small country called Genovia and then being forced into princess lessons. Both these average-teen and royal trials and tribulations are related first-person in The Princess Diaries, written in Mias hilarious, warm voice as she struggles to stay true to herself in a situation she never asked for one thats quickly threatening to spiral out of her control. Maggie Stiefvaters The Raven Boys was a bonafide sleeper hit when it was published in 2012, spawning a bestselling series of four novels and a legion of fans across the nation. A good deal of its success has to do with the Raven Boys themselves: the group of four magnetic, unforgettable boys at the heart of the novel. Theres handsome Gansey, whos on a quest to unearth the lost Welsh King. Theres fiery Ronan, whos struggling with inner demons. Theres intelligent Adam, whos in school on a scholarship. And theres quiet Noah, who listens more than he talks. But heres the thing: Blue Sargent, our protagonist, was warned away from the Raven Boys for a good reason. But as shes inexorably drawn into Ganseys quest, she realizes that maybe shes in for more trouble than even she expected. To illustrate the ferocity with which teenage readers have loved Ann Brashares The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants series, allow us to share a tidbit from a Reedsy team member: when she was a teenager, she and her five best friends all bought the same pair of jeans and decorated them so that they too could be a sisterhood of the well, pants.For the uninitiated, this young adult book series follows four best friends in their final years of high school and early years of university. Each of the four teenage books (well, five, but we dont like to talk about the fifth one), documents the four girls lives over summer breaks, along with the life lessons and growing pains that come with growing up. Meanwhile, the constant thread in the teen series is each girls attempt to stay true to the friends whove been by her side and, of course, this bond of adolescent friendship is symbolized by the pants which mysteriously happen to fit each girl perfectly. Natasha is on her way to meet with a lawyer to stop her familys deportation from their home in New York City to Jamaica. Daniel, the son of Korean shopkeepers, is on his way to interview with a Yale alum. Its a big day for both of them. And it becomes even bigger when the two happen to meet and spend the rest of the day learning about one another, falling in love. Nicola Yoons The Sun is Also a Star is YA romance at its best, and a reminder that the universe is home to a million different paths for each of our lives to follow sometimes the course we ultimately chart boils down to a single, by-chance moment. The title of Sarah Dessens novel promises a lot: who wouldnt be intrigued to find out the truth about forever? For Macy, the teenage protagonist of The Truth About Forever, that truth might just reveal itself to her one fateful summer, when shes overcome with grief. Her father has just unexpectedly passed away and her boyfriend has informed her that he thinks they need a bit of space before leaving abruptly for Brain Camp. Macy begins to shut herself off from those around her even her mother and sister, probably the only people who really understand what Macys going through. Then an unexpected encounter with a catering company lands her a new job and maybe even a new set of friends. As the summer wears on, Macy starts to come out of her shell, finding that she might just be ready to take on what lies in store for her out in the world. Sure, Mole, Ratty, Badger, and Toad might all be animals. But the characters in The Wind in the Willows serve as very human archetypes, and the tale in general is ultimately one that we all recognize about camaraderie. It follows the misadventures of this motley crew of friends, as they each struggle to withstand the strong personalities of one another. While the book can be read by young readers, critics have credited its lasting power to the mature themes and sharp social satire that run throughout its story and which are observed at different levels based on the age of the reader. As Kenneth Grahame said, the book is for those who still keep the spirits of youth alive in them. Set in 1687, The Witch of Blackbird Pond follows orphaned Kit Tyler, who has just been forced to move from her beloved home in Barbados to the cold shores of colonial Connecticut. Feeling alone and misunderstood, she frequently flees to the nearby meadows, the one place she feels relatively at home. Its in these meadows that Kit meets the eponymous Witch of Blackbird Pond, an old Quaker woman whom Kit forms a friendship with a friendship that eventually causes locals to regard Kit with suspicion, giving life to the rumor that she, too, might be a witch. The 1937 novel Their Eyes Were Watching God is considered a classic of Harlem Renaissance literature, and in 2005, TIME included it in its list of the 100 best English-language novels published since 1923. While the novel deals with mature themes, its become a staple in American high school classrooms. Tackling important topics such as race and gender roles, the novel centers around Janie Crawfords quest to be her own person not an easy feat for a black woman living in 1930s Florida. Her journey of self-discovery takes readers back through her past, and explores the relationships and roots that made her into who she is today as well as her lifelong clashes against the values imposed on her by others. This Savage Song is a dark urban fantasy about a city on the brink of becoming overrun by monsters monsters being bred by the violence within the city itself. Kate Harker and August Flynn are both heirs to the city, but they couldnt be more different. Kate takes after her father, who believed that monsters should roam free and humans should pay for protection. Meanwhile, August also makes like his father, who was a kind-natured man that sought to better protect the citys human citizens. The one, tiny complication? August is, in fact, a monster. Can the two heirs work together to save their city? Do they even want to? Read on to find out. Most of us have had that nightmare where you suddenly find yourself at school with no clothes on. In To All the Boys Ive Loved Before, Lara Jean lives a different, but still mortifying, situation: all the secret letters shes written to her various crushes have been mailed out without her knowledge! And now each one of them is approaching her to discuss the letters including her sisters ex-boyfriend. Adapted into an equally charming Netflix movie, Jenny Hans tale of teenage love and finding the courage to speak your mind is sure to be the kind of book that teens struggle to put down. This story about a sleepy Southern town rocked by a crisis of conscience also shook up the publishing world when it was first released in 1960. Meeting instant critical acclaim, To Kill a Mockingbird became an immediate bestseller. It then went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961, be adapted into an Oscar-winning film in 1962, remain a staple in high school English classes, and find its way into just about every Best Of list published including this one! In other words, its a classic of American literature, through and through. The love against all odds trope is frequently at play in YA novels, so much so that you might be tired of it. But in Natalie Babbitts Tuck Everlasting, young love is up against the toughest foe of all: time. The Tuck family live a nomadic life on the outskirts of society, trying to remain as inconspicuous as possible. Why? They unknowingly drank from a magic spring that granted them eternal life, and for years have ceased aging. Theyve remained pretty successful at hiding their endless youth, until young Winnie Foster one day stumbles upon their secret. Winnie quickly becomes entranced by the Tuck family and bonds with them, vowing to keep their secret. What she doesnt know is that shes being followed by someone who wants to expose the Tucks and the magic spring in order to make a fortune and hell stop at nothing to do so. Things have been tough for Henry Denton lately. His mom is a struggling waitress barely keeping it together. His brother is an unemployed college dropout whos just found out he might be a father. His grandmother is slowly losing a battle with Alzheimers. And hes overwhelmed with unbelievable grief after his boyfriends suicide a year earlier. So when hes abducted by aliens and given the option to destroy the world with the push of a big, red button, he cant help but admit: it doesnt sound like such a bad idea. But Henry is a scientist whos nothing if not logical. And so We Are the Ants makes Henry weigh the pros and cons of putting a stop to the world as we know it, and ultimately ask the question: Is there still good to be found? The Sinclair family looks perfect from the outside, propped by the fact that their family gathers every summer on their very own private island. However, one summer on the island ends up being not so perfect: 15 year-old Cadence experiences an accident that leaves her physically weak and amnesiac. Now she must find out exactly what happened to her. The New York Times called We Were Liars a ticking time bomb of a novel. If that doesnt convince you this is a book of suspense and intrigue that you probably want to read, what will? Kit Lowell is popular, and David Drucker isnt. Typically, Kit sits with her friends Annie and Violet at lunch until the day that she decides to sit with David to both of their surprise. The thing is, Kits dad has passed away, and amidst all of the sympathy and awkward silences, she finds Davids blunt honesty and direct nature refreshing. More than that, she wants to enlist his help in figuring out what really happened the night of her fathers trafic car accident. David agrees to help, but neither of the teens are prepared for the answers they find in Buxbaums acclaimed young adult novel, What to Say Next. Dimple Shah couldnt be more relieved when her parents agree to send her to a summer program for aspiring web developers, taking it as a signal that theyre going to ease up on the pressure for her to find the Ideal Indian Husband. Rishi Patel, on the other hand, finds himself eagerly anticipating the same summer program for the exact opposite reasons: his parents have told him that his future wife is going to be at the program, and this is his opportunity to meet and woo her. When the two protagonists of When Dimple Met Rishi finally, well, meet, their parents maneuvering doesnt go exactly as planned. But the summer feels long when youre young, and theres lots of time to discover that first impressions arent always what they seem to be. When You Reach Me is a Newbery Medal-winning science fiction and mystery novel set in late-1970s New York City. Our protagonist is Miranda Sinclair, a seemingly ordinary sixth grader, who starts receiving strange and mysterious notes from an unknown source one who seems to know a whole lot about her, including things that havent even happened yet. The notes seem to be telling Miranda that a tragic death is forthcoming, and shes the only one who can stop it unless shes already too late? Steads novel revolves around themes of friendship, redemption, and independence the latter being an important component to Stead, who felt that children in the latter half of the 20th century had much more independence than children of the 21st century. With the Fire on High follows Emoni Santiago, a high school senior with more than just a full course load to juggle shes also got a daughter to look after and her abuela to support. The only place that Emoni really feels like she can forget the struggles of her day is in the kitchen, where shes a natural at creating mouth-watering dishes. Some might even say theres a little bit of magic in each of her culinary creations. For a long time now, Emoni has dreamed of finding work as a chef when shes done with high school, but then shes always forced to remind herself that she doesnt have time to pursue her dreams. Still, her passion for cooking has been simmering away for all this time, and things look like theyre about to reach a boiling point In Zen and Gone, teen protagonist Essence McKree lives in Colorado with her mother and nine-year-old sister, Puck. Of course, her mom works in a pot shop and is high most of the time leaving Essence with the job of taking care of Puck, and feeling much older than just her 17 years. But when she meets Oliver, a new kid in town for the summer, she starts to feel a little bit lighter and freer. The two agree to go on a three-day trek in the Rocky Mountains, only to find upon setting out that they have an unexpected stowaway: Puck. As if thats not bad enough, the next morning Puck has vanished altogether. Its now up to Essa to rely on her own instincts and her new friend Oliver to find her sister, and save her family once again. ***You may have reached the end of this list, but that doesn't mean there aren't tons of other wonderful young adult books to explore. Check out this list of the best young adult romance books or discover the newest indie YA novels hitting the shelves here! More posts from across the blog. When it comes to Victorian literature, no one was as prolific or influential as Charles Dickens to the extent that we still use the word Dickensian to describe things reminiscent of his works! If you ever had to read Great Expectations or A Tale ... Read post Reading a fantasy novel can transport you to a world of wonder and danger, as different from mundane reality as a dragon from a mouse. And Read post As 2024 comes to a close, we're delighted to present the winners of our inaugural Discovery Editors Choice Award. These four titles are a testament to the quality of independent publishing and we're proud that their authors chose to launch them on Reedsy Discovery.F... Read post Featured Discover Submit Reviewers Your profile is where readers can find your published reviews, learn more about your reading tastes, and turn into followers. Discovery can complement your existing blog and allow you to reach a whole new community of bookish fans. Want a story idea right away? No problem! Here are our top ten favorite story ideas for you to use: A group of villains go on a team-building retreat. You are granted one wish. But you have to use the wish for someone else. Instead of trying to get a man on the moon, every nation raced to be the first at the very bottom of the ocean. Money really does grow on trees and is heavily regulated by governments. A plane takes off with 81 passengers. It lands with 82. You are home alone watching TV. A character dials a number on their phone. Your phone rings. You open a fortune cookie at a Chinese restaurant. Inside is a handwritten note. A magician, a troll, and a college student walk into a bar. It is the year 3000. The sun starts to flicker. An optimist becomes a pessimist. Why? Top 10 short story ideas... also for you! Everyone who writes short stories out there knows that short stories are different and not just because theyre, well, shorter. So if youre seeking a short story idea, weve got you. Here are our favorite bite-sized short story ideas: Turn one of your grandparent's old stories into fiction. A romance told through a series of texts. Two people are playing chess. One person can read minds, the other person can see the future. Write a story that draws from a moment in your life where you wish you'd made a different choice. Have your protagonist make that choice, and then see what happens. Amazon has invented time travel and introduced pre-emptive shipping. Today, you receive something completely unexpected from your future self. Write about the way the sunset looks from the perspective of two characters. One is sad, the other is happy. A wand-maker goes to the forest ready to work, only to find a group of environmentalists camped out in front of their favorite hemlock tree. Pick a genre and then write about a long walk home after school. The last person on earth celebrates their own birthday. A team of scientists have successfully teleported an apple. It reappears with a bite taken out of it. How to come up with short story ideas yourself We get it: writing prompts are an excellent resource, but you want to know how to come up with your own story ideas, maybe even for a longer project. Here are four of our go-to tricks when thinking of interesting things to write about. 1) People-watch:Hands down, this our favourite way to come up with story ideas. All stories, even ones about robots or plants, have some element of humanity at its core. There are therefore a countless number of stories to be found by observing human nature. 90% of the prompts included in ourwriting prompts newsletterare inspired by simply staring out a window and watching people go by. 2) Forget what you already know:Have you ever become trapped in a but why? loop with a child? Its enough to make your head spin or an existential crisis occur. But if you can return to this sense of curiosity and wondering you had as a child, you can find a treasure trove of short story ideas to be found. Take in your surroundings and ask yourselfwhythings are the way they are.What ifthey were different?Whatwould that look like andhowwould it work? 3) Use your day job:If you feel like you have the most interesting job on the planet, well, perfect! It shouldnt be hard to use it as plot-fodder for a great short story. On the other hand, if you find yourself yawning a lot at work, ask yourself:What could happen to make this work day interesting?Lets say you work as a receptionist but your real passion lies with art. Write a story about a receptionist who sees a colleague hang a new piece of art in their cubicle one the receptionist recognizes as being famous for going missing a century ago. 4) Read:Imagine walking up to a piano and trying to make beautiful music without ever having heard it played before. You need to consume great short stories in order to know what you enjoy about them. Figure out what you like, and youll be on the path to great writing topics. Ready to start submitting your short story to writing contests? Find the right one for you in our list of writing contests. Looking for writing tips? Sign up for our free course How to Craft a Killer Short Story here. Trust book recommendations from real people, not robots Our world is not a simple place to live in. It is wide and full of color; its inhabitants enjoy a multitude of experiences and struggle with a variety of obstacles. Learning about these differences and appreciating them takes a whole lifetime, so what better way to prepare the generation of the future by reading childrens books about diversity with them?Weve put together here a list of 60 books to introduce to young minds a range of subjects: from cultural differences to gender fluidity, from social expectations to identity construction. Created by a diverse cast of writers and artists, these stories offer different lenses through which children can see the world. You can choose to ease little ones in with light-hearted and eye-catching picture books, or you can encourage self-reflection by going through more introspective stories.Weve divided the books into the sections below to help you find you the most suitable childrens book.General childrens books about diversity All types of families are valid, which is the message that this inspiring, joyous book imparts to children of all ages. Gentle rhymes accompany cleverly framed portraits of traditional and non-traditional families in these bright pages. All they want to tell you is this: whether youre living with two dads, two moms, a mom and dad, your grandparents, a stepmom, or a stepdad, youre in exactly the right place youre with your family. You wont find any preaching about the importance of differences here! Instead, Jess Hongs Lovely straight-up offers a delightful look at every kind of person under the sun. Her portraits of people cover the gamut of race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender expression, body shape all of which ask the question, What is lovely? And it all culminates in one simple, powerful message: there is beauty in everyone, and we are all lovely. From Empire actor and activist Grace Byers comes a wonderful and empowering collection of positive affirmations for your child to read and cherish. Put simply, this is a celebration of you. In unassuming but freeing terms, Byers will show you the merits of a positive sense of self while teaching you how to appreciate and embrace differences. If your child is looking for a role model, you cant do better than Sonia Sotomayor the first Hispanic and Latina justice to sit on the Supreme Court, bestselling author, and all around great human being. And while the briefs that she writes for the Supreme Court might be a little too hard for kids to understand, Just Ask! might just be perfect for them. In this hopeful, affirmative picture book, kids of all sorts of backgrounds and personalities work together to build a community garden. In encouraging children to ask others about their varying experiences, Sotomayor's wisdom and kindness shines through on the page. Brute strength. Unfeelingness. Misogyny. Those are the norms that underpin toxic masculinity in todays culture and A Boy Like You is the joyous, gentle book thats here to teach boys everywhere that thats actually not what you need to have in order to be a boy. Instead, Murphy and Harren (quite literally) paint a picture of positive masculinity that bucks stereotypical gender norms, providing a much-needed reminder that character, vulnerability, kindness, and sportsmanship are much more important than physical strength and privilege. Diversity isnt just a hot topic to learn about when you start entering school its everywhere already even when youre just a baby! Everywhere Babies is the perfect representation of that: full of charming rhymes and delightful watercolor illustrations, it never tries to preach or be assertive when it depicts diversity. Instead, its gentle, warm, and humorous approach to multiculturalism lets even the littlest kid get a grasp on the matter. A book that belongs in every classroom and library, All Are Welcome invites children to step into a school where everyone is received with open arms. Even though its the nerve-wracking first day of school and even though everyone is different, from the kid in the wheelchair to the kid with the hijab all come together to learn from and laugh with each other. Accompanied by bright, accessible illustrations, this is a picture book that children will cherish throughout the school semester. In An ABC of Equality, Chana Ginelle Ewing and Paulina Morgan re-imagine everyones favorite ABCs in terms of diversity. Which means that A is for ability, B is for belief, C is for class, and P is for pick this one up if youd like a cheerful, colorful book to help you explain social justice to your children. With its vibrant illustrations and simple explanations, this book is particularly great for younger children for whom its never too early to start learning about equality. Sofia and Maddi are the best of friends. Everything they do, they do together: they play together, go to school together, and enjoy life together. But then Sofia finds out one day that Maddis fridge is almost completely bare and that Maddi goes hungry more often than not. How can Sofia help Maddi despite having promised her ashamed best friend that shell keep this discovery a secret? Brandt handles hard topics like poverty, hunger, and diversity with a sensitive, empathetic touch, and the result is a compassionate picture book that instills a true lesson about friendship and trust. No, no, NO! Geraldine is NOT moving, especially NOT to a new place where shes always the odd one out. Not to mention that shes a giraffe with an incredibly dramatic neck, which complicates matters (and doorways)! But in this whimsical, heartwarming book about getting along with people different from you, with the help of another girl as unusual as her, Geraldine discovers just how to fit in without losing herself. If you cant get enough of Geraldine, check out Gerald the giraffe, who just wants to dance. As you might expect, this is quite a feat for a giraffe: his twisty neck, knobby knees, and spindly legs dont make him the most natural fit for the stage! But theres hope for Gerald yet, especially when he meets a little cricket who teaches him about the value of self-esteem and how to step to the rhythm of his own tune. Award-winning Jacqueline Woodson is back with another awesome hit for children. For any child whos ever felt scared and different from others, this sweet book will help them find the courage to reach out and connect. Whether theyre feeling excluded because of their race, hair style, family, or learning ability, The Day You Begin, with its gentle verse and gorgeous artwork, is here to give them the support and reassurance that there will always be someone out there who welcomes them. When theres a complex question, trust Elmo and the Sesame Street gang to figure out the answer! In Were Different, Were the Same, the beloved show is packed into a beloved book that teaches children and adults alike that its whats on the inside that truly matters. Colorful and engagingly illustrated, it will let you in on a secret about what makes our world so wonderful. (Spoiler alert: its us!) If youre looking for a book that approaches the topic of diversity from a Christian point of view, One Big Heart might be the one that you want to read out loud to your kids at night. In this multicultural picture book, similarities are celebrated as much as differences. From our laughter to our dreams, were more alike than we are different, and theres always common ground to be found when you meet someone else. 8,000 miles might separate Elliot and Kailash, but that distance wont stop these pen pals from writing letters and exchanging pictures with one another! The more notes that they exchange, the more they realize exactly how different their cities, their lives, their families, and their backgrounds are. But theyre also much more similar than they realize, which is where the true magic of friendship lies. Books about cultural diversity 88 pages. 40 inspiring black women. This book will introduce children of all types to forty brave and beautiful ladies, from shining icons like abolitionist Sojourner Truth and poet Maya Angelou to more obscure (but no less important) leaders like Rebecca Lee Crumpler and Mary Bowser. Wonderfully illustrated and entertainingly written, Harrison nevertheless doesnt shy away from hard topics like racism and sexism that these women faced in their lives. Put simply, this is a must-read for any child who wants to learn about the trailblazing, powerful, kind, and courageous black women who changed the world and continue to inspire childrens lives. Everyone knows about the towering significance of Brown vs. Board of Education, and the dynamic change that it wrought in the country. But do you know the story of Sylvia Mendez, who helped end school segregation in California about 10 years earlier? In Separate Is Never Equal, Tonatiuh has created a culturally rich and historically important childrens book about one familys fight to desegregate schools in the United States. A true story that draws from court transcripts, newspaper articles, and reports, this nonfiction book is a must-read that fills in the gaps that school curriculums might skip over. Zuri is a lovable little girl who has an extremely relatable problem: her beautiful hair has a mind of its own. Whether its sticking up, kinking, or curling, it just doesnt listen to her! It only listens to her mom, who does her hair everyday. But what will happen when her mom is away? Enter Zuris dad, who LOVES Zuri despite not knowing much about hair. This is the empowering book that you and your child will love reading together a fun, touching ode to African-American heritage, and fathers and daughters everywhere in the world. In 2018, a museum-goer snapped a photo in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington DC that quickly went viral and melted hearts: a 3-year-old black girl staring up in awe at Amy Sheralds regal portrait of Michelle Obama hanging on the wall. Parker Looks Up is her story, which we get to relive with her. Told from her own perspective, its a moving tribute to the world of possibilities that appropriate representation can offer to children everywhere. A magnificent and timeless childrens book, John Steptoes Mufaros Beautiful Daughters is a African retelling of Cinderella that will enchant your child even more than the original did. At its center are two daughters: Nyasha and Manyara. While Manyara is selfish and vain, Nyasha is kind and beautiful both on the inside and out. So what will happen when the Great King decides to take a worthy wife? Though you can probably guess the ending, its the journey there that counts and Steptoe makes sure that its a stunning, original ride packed with folklore from Zimbabwe. Meet Grace, a girl who just loves stories. Shes lived as Joan of Arc, Anasi the spider-man, and every other character under the sun. When her school announces that its putting on Peter Pan, she wishes that she could try out for the role of Peter, even though her classmates insist on reminding her that Peters a boy and she, well, is not. But Graces positive attitude and brilliant imagination carry the day, as Hoffman delivers a transcendent book with an empathetic message about identity, gender, race, and the power of dreams. The 2016 winner of the prestigious Newbery Medal, Last Stop on Market Street is a magical, heartening picture book about a young African-American boy and his grandma who go on a bus ride across the city. CJ is full of questions, to which his grandma patiently answers along the way, helping him learn about the simple beauty in the world and the people that surround all of us, all the time. Henry Brown dreams of one thing growing up: freedom. As a slave in the deep South, he has no freedom, no birthday, and no rights. When one day his family is torn apart from him, his desire to escape slavery crystallizes into one desperate, dangerous plan: he will mail himself in a wooden crate to a place where slavery does not exist, and where the prospect of freedom will wait for him. A groundbreaking, moving book by an award-winning author and illustrator duo, Henrys Freedom Box is a hard story, but a necessary one that everyone children and adults ought to read to remind ourselves that the concept of liberty, justice, and equality for all is something that we still fight for today. Sulwes skin is the color of midnight, and its made her yearn for a lighter, fairer tone ever since she was born. She struggles to come to terms with the darkness of her skin until a beautiful legend about day and night helps her see her own beauty in the world. Vashti Harrisons lush, dream-like illustrations combined with Academy Award winning actress Lupita Nyongos wise prose culminate in a culturally important picture book thats destined to become a beloved classic for future generations. Mommys khimars are colorful, lovely, and right there in the closet for our little protagonist to try on for dress up. And thats exactly what she does! In this exquisite book that holds up a mirror for young Muslim girls everywhere, we learn how much a khimar means to her as she tries them on, one by one. One of them might make her imagine herself as a queen, and another might make her think of herself as a superhero but all of them make her feel beautiful, and powerful. An award-winning duo paired up to bring us Mango, Abuela, and Me a wonderfully tender story about a bright young girl and her Abuela whos come to stay with her and her parents in the city. But theres just one problem: Mia doesnt really know Spanish, and Abuela doesnt really know English. So what can they do? Start by bonding over learning each others mother tongues while cooking, of course. Add a chatty parrot to this team of pupils, and you get an exceptional picture book with a warm message: love truly knows no language barrier. Mackenzie is a beautiful young girl who has hair that is as wild, unruly, and untamable as a forest. Shes bullied relentlessly for it by the kids at school until one day that she reaches a breaking point and runs to her next door neighbors house, where theres a stunning garden Mackenzie thinks of as a sanctuary. How can Miss Tillie change her mind about how much trouble her hair is? Gorgeously rendered, My Hair Is A Garden will provide affirmation and support for black children who struggle with their hair and show them that theres a garden to admire in every forest. Fry bread isnt just bread: its a gateway into Native American culture. In Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story, we learn about this dishs place in food, art, and heritage for Native American people through simple but charming text. Dont forget to read the back matter, which will take you even deeper into Native American life to show you what fry bread represents to Native Americans, and how it brings people together. The clincher? Theres a recipe at the end to make your own fry bread! The 2018 winner of the Caldecott Honor Book Award, A Different Pond depicts a simple fishing trip taken by father and son at dawn in Minnesota. In between reels, the father tells his son about life back in Vietnam, and a different pond in his homeland that he used to fish at. Soon, the father will need to go to his second job and work again, but for now, both have this: the pond, the fish that they need to catch in order to put food on the table for the night, and each other. This is an eye-opening and elegantly illustrated autobiographical account of the immigrant experience a must-read, especially in this day and age. Otsaliheliga (oh-jah-LEE-hay-lee-gah): a word that members of the Cherokee Nation use to say thank you, or express gratitude. Its also the word that We Are Grateful revolves around, as Traci Sorell zeroes in on it to create a truly remarkable picture book that illustrates all the different ways that the Cherokee people cultivate gratitude throughout the seasons. Complete with a helpful pronunciation guide, this book isnt just insightful, its also engaging and fun to read. This will end up being a book that your child will be grateful to have on their shelves. Theres no better way

of the planet. Drawing from intense investigative reporting and heartbreaking personal stories of addiction,Dreamlandreveals how and why the opiate industry has wrought destruction on communities in the United States and Mexico. From prescription painkillers to black tar heroin, these drugs have devastating consequences, as Quinones reminds us. His book makes clear that real people are being harmed by corrosive capitalism. The Warmth of Other Sunsis one of the greatest tales of American history youve never heard. Wilkerson chronicles the years between 1915 and 1970, when millions of black Americans embarked northward or westward in search of opportunity, hoping to leave behind the racial prejudice and economic oppression of the South. What unfolds is a profoundly sympathetic and richly rendered story of countless families, seeking acceptance and better lives in the nation they call home. Though the citizens of North Korea consistently confront poverty and famine under the censorship of a repressive regime, little details about their lives sometimes escape the countrys impenetrable borders.Nothing to Envyventures inside the worlds most closed-off society, giving voice to everyday people as they try to live their lives amidst totalitarianism. It is a haunting look at their despair and disillusionment and the dreams they continue to nurture in spite of it all. From acclaimed historian andNew Yorkerstaff writer Jill Lepore,These Truthstraces the birth of a country forged in contradiction, from its mythos as a land of opportunity to its history of extermination and oppression. Examining contemporary identity and politics through the lens of history,These Truthscalls for a comprehensive reassessment of Americas past as well as its future. For the people of Annawadi, an impoverished community not far from the Mumbai airport, lives of luxury and economic prosperity are constantly within sight but always out of reach. Though the building of upscale hotels and growth of the Indian economy initially gave residents hope of upward mobility, personal and political tragedy quickly dismantled their dreams.Behind the Beautiful Foreversis a shocking examination of pervasive inequality in contemporary India and the people left behind by the powerful elite. For the millions of Americans who perform low-paying jobs, unskilled labor, the living wage they supposedly earn is by no means actually liveable. InNickel and Dimed, journalist Barbara Ehrenreich goes undercover, journeying from Florida to Maine to Minnesota working a series of minimum-wage jobs. She quickly gains firsthand experience of the nearly insurmountable hardships the working poor encounter when they attempt to secure jobs or homes and put food on the table. Her eye-opening narrative reveals the dire situation of low-wage workers and the failures of employers and governments to provide anything near adequate support. In the wake of the #MeToo movement that has had transformative effects around the world, college campuses have become intensely scrutinized battlegrounds for debates about sexual politics. Vanessa Grigoriadis travels to universities across the United States to examine how the movement has prompted students to think differently about their sexuality, as well as the sexism or sexual violence they confront on campus. Unafraid to tackle controversial topics and contentious debates,Blurred Linesis a complex account of radical changes to contemporary culture. Underlandliterally takes us beneath the surface of our world venturing into underground caves, graves, and geological features. Yet Macfarlane also goes on a deep-time exploration and digs into the intertwined history of humans and nature, scrutinizing the traces we leave behind for generations to come. This riveting journey through time traverses the rich expanse of humankinds past and future. Journalist Rebecca Traisters bookAll the Single Ladiesunderscores the collective power of single women, creating a vivid and diverse portrait of unmarried women in the United States. Composed of interviews and explorations of the history of women in intellectual and public life, this feminist book is a richly researched triumph. You may not recognize the name Alexander von Humboldt. InThe Invention of Nature, however, Andrea Wulf argues that he has undoubtedly shaped our understanding of the environment and our role in protecting it. Von Humboldt was a German naturalist and explorer, and his then-radical ideas that nature existed for more than human consumption paved the path for contemporary conservation movements. Wulfs luminous look at his life, full of ecological exploration and scientific advocacy, shows the lasting impact of his ideas. While countries in the Americas continue to grapple with the enduring horrors of slavery, there is a side to this devastating history that has never been fully confronted: the enslavement of indigenous peoples.The Other Slaveryis a revelatory examination of the native populations enslaved throughout the western hemisphere, exposing how deeply entrenched oppression was in the creation of the new world. Resndezs fierce prose delivers on its promise to be myth-shattering and enlightening. Thurgood Marshall, the Supreme Courts first black justice, is perhaps the most significant legal figure of the twentieth century, arguing landmark civil rights cases.Devil in the Grovelooks at the toughest cases he confronted before he was on the Supreme Court: fighting for The Groveland Boys, black workers in Floridas orange industry who were subjected to horrific violence and lynchings in the Jim Crow South. This account oftrue crimeand the fight for justice delves into Marshalls origins as a fearless crusader something not to be missed. After watching intense debates about racism unfold in the United States, British journalist Reni Eddo-Lodge recognized that the same conversations were just as urgently necessary in Britain. This led her to writeWhy Im No Longer Talking to White People About Race,one of the most accessible and best nonfiction books about the difficulties of, well, talking about race. Eddo-Lodge analyzes modern Britains race relations, reminding British and international readers alike of imperialisms complicated history. This massively successful book by Malcolm Gladwell investigates the process of thingsgoing viral,dissecting how and why certain ideas can take off.The Tipping Pointexplores phenomena ranging from the sharp decrease in street crime in 1990s New York to childrens television shows suddenly becoming all the rage among all age groups. This is a sharp book that cannot fail to capture its readers with its masterfully recounted sociological and psychological case studies. Susan CainsQuietargues that Western society (and especially American society) is structured in a way that valorizes extroverted personality traits, to the detriment of introverts. In this nonfiction book, she defines the concept of introversion, traces its history, and proceeds with a mind-blowing analysis of our everyday lives and the biases inherent in the way people are assessed in asocial atmosphere. Shoshanna ZuboffsThe Age of Surveillance Capitalismtakes as its subject our current technological state, where corporations have access to alotof personal information. Zuboff investigates the power and peril of digital surveillance, arguing that we have now entered a new age of capitalism where information and personal data are tools in the hands of corporations. A fascinating and thorough book,The Age of Surveillance Capitalismis guaranteed to provoke deep thinking about our relationship to tech. InOn Writing,bestselling author Stephen King discusses his early-career struggles, offering advice to up-and-coming writers. Intimate, honest, and approachable, this book is one every aspiring author should read. This encouraging memoir thematizes the power of memory and the importance of perseverance. If you needed the inspiration to keep writing, this is one of the best nonfiction books for you. Marjane SatrapisPersepolisis an immersivegraphic memoirbased on the authors childhood in the Iranian capital of Tehran during the Islamic Revolution. As she grows up during a tumultuous chapter of the countrys history, her story is both a coming-of-age tale and a historical chronicle. Satrapis stark, black-and-white artwork supplements her text to create a thoroughly memorable reading experience. Freakonomics, the famous nonfiction book by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, reveals the hidden side of everything, as its subtitle makes clear. Its a bold claim, but not one that it fails to live up to. The authors make the case for constantly asking questions, challenging accepted truths, and looking at facts and data in a novel way.Freakonomicsis a witty, eye-opening interpretation of the economy, suitable to any reader with an interest in why things work the way they do. Mary BeardsSPQRis a sweeping and epic history of the Roman Empire, covering over 1000 years of the classical civilizations story. In this cinematic account, Beard explores the growth of the empireand reflects on its multilayered legacy. Intelligent and informative,SPQRis an excellent choice for both devoted historians and casual nonfiction readers. More urgent than ever,The Uninhabitable Earthby David Wallace-Wells draws attention to the pressing need to address the growing problem of climate change. This unsettling book warns about the potential devastation that awaits us in the near future unless we can enact a revolution in how we tackle global warming. Another fascinating historical read,The Silk Roadsby Peter Frankopan closes in on the relationship between the East and West. Examining and dismantling Eurocentric narratives, Frankopans illuminating work focuses on the history of countries lying on the Silk Road, the trade route connecting East and West, and attempts to re-balance history. In Frankopans version of world history, the center point of Western civilization is the Persian Empire. Neuroscientist Matthew WalkersWhy We Sleepachieved sensational status due to its hyperfocus on a universal experience: sleep. Walker delves into the scientific specifics of why sleep is so important, and reminds his readers that sleep deprivation, though common in modern society, is a worrying phenomenon. This is one of the best nonfiction books to make a convincing case for being generous with our down-time and getting some rest. Grayson Perrys cheerful, informative, and inspiringPlaying to the Galleryis a crash-course in art appreciation. According to Perry, no one is too ignorant to pursue an interest in art. This joyful and down-to-earth book is an excellent resource for anyone whos interested in modern art but daunted by the sometimes-elitist institutions that represent it. David CrystalsHow Language Worksis a detailed, all-encompassing nonfiction book addressing the many questions that arise when you start to really think about the processes of using language. In learning more about language, youll also learn more about yourself, your idiolect, and your unconscious linguistic influences. InPolitical Order and Political Decay, political scientist Francis Fukuyama (famous for his 1992 bookThe End of History and the Last Man) explores the historical development of political institutions in various countries. In this insightful book, Fukuyama asks important questions about corruption and its eradication and what it might take to run a well-functioning state in the present day. For cartography fans and or anyone with even a casual interest in geography, Tim MarshallsPrisoners of Geographyis a brilliant interpretation of ten modern maps. Marshall analyzes the geopolitical complexities of each region, showing the many layers and dimensions of our political reality as captured by cartographers. This book is guaranteed to change the way you view maps forever. Peter PomerantsevsThis is Not Propagandafocuses on the complication and confusion of the current disinformation age. This book explores how surfaces can be deceiving, delving underneath them to examine (among other things) how Twitter, Reddit, and Facebook seep into our political thinking. This disturbing book provides fascinating insights important to everyone, but especially to readers troubled by the current involvement of digital technologies in the political realm. Joel BakansThe Corporationdraws an intriguing parallel between the psychopathic mindset and the way corporations grow. In this thought-provoking book, legal theorist Bakan uses his training in law to break down the potential of power to corrupt both individuals and corporations.He supplements this analysis with several informative interviews investigating the psychology of pursuing success. Brandon Stantons photo interview series Humans of New York initially became famous on Facebook for capturing everyday lives. This utterly heartwarming (and heart-wrenching) volume compiles multiple stories into a book you can hold. InHumans of New York,interviewees bare their souls to Brandon as they pose for his camera, creating a meaningful reminder of our shared and enduring humanity. Champion of creativity Ken Robinson urges artistic minds to follow their heart and identify their element in his inspirational nonfiction bookThe Element. Your element, he explains, is where passion intersects with talent: thats where you can harness your own power the most. Robinson argues for educational reform that will make helping students find their element a priority, as it is the key to unlocking creativity and innovation for the future. Written by successful novelist Jonathan Safran Foer,Eating Animalsis a passionate testament to vegetarianism and a philosophical, ethical, and moral assessment of our eating habits, with a special focus on our consumption of animal products. Its a provocative reading experience, and its sure to stay with you for a long time. David BellossIs That a Fish in Your Ear?is a witty, informative ode to the practice of literary translation. Bellos, himself a translator, details the individual aspects of style that complicate translation like humor. As a result, he opens readers eyes to the countless artistic microdecisions obscured behind the curtain of translation. This exciting book will inspire you to seek translated books from other languages and open yourself up to new worlds. InLate Bloomers, Rich Karlgaard dispels the assumption that all genius must emerge in days of youth. He argues that our cultures obsession with early achievement discourages older members of society from pursuing their passion and talents, pleading for the world to consider a kinder clock for human development instead. His book presents an alternative outlook that would empower more people among us to follow their dreams, because its never too late! Alexander Chees collection of essays,How to Write an Autobiographical Novel,muses on the subjects of art and identity, as well as the craft of writing itself. This thoughtful and reflective book is an impactful invitation into the interior world of one of Americas most acclaimed essayists. A brutal and honest nonfiction book,The God Delusionis an unapologetic defense of atheism by Richard Dawkins. The author is entirely unconvinced by religion, and explains his reasoning in this detailed and expansive work. His provocative challenge to readers views is sure to prompt spiritual soul-searching for fellow atheists and religious readers alike. European doesnt automatically mean White.Afropean,a captivating documentation of the history and experience of black Europeans, seeks to challenge this common assumption, turning the spotlight onto black communities in several European countries. This Jhalak Prize-winning work is exciting and invigorating, ready to take you along on a journey across Europe. One day, journalist Ted Gup discovered letters addressed to his grandfather from suffering families in Canton, Ohio, from the time of the Great Depression. Following that epistolary trail seventy-five years later, Gup uncovered the story of how his immigrant grandfather secretly helped fellow Cantonians, discovering more about his own grandfather as well as the history of America in the process.A Secret Giftis a masterful and moving tale about the past, and a reminder of the importance of kindness and generosity. Jeanette WallssThe Glass Castleis a tender, humorous account of the authors nomadic childhood, which has been adapted into an acclaimed movie. This astonishing memoir especially focuses on the authors relationship with her bohemian-minded parents, whose flaws and eccentricities are described with deep affection, no matter how difficult they are to live with. Simply written and honestly told, this memoir is a true accomplishment. Have you heard of Chanel Miller? Maybe not but its likely youve heard of the man who sexually assaulted her on Stanford Universitys campus: Brock Turner. InKnow My Name,a searing memoir of trauma and recovery, Chanel writes herself back into the narrative, claiming the right to tell her own story. Brave and enlightening, this is a difficult but important read. The way most history textbooks tell it, Europeans brought civilization to the Americas with the arrival of Columbus in 1492. Not so fast, says Charles C. Manns1491, a book thats here to challenge the accepted version of history. Mann offers an utterly transformative historical account of the Americas, reversing the general assumption that its inhabitants were simple villagers before the arrival of European colonizers. Laura HillenbrandsUnbrokentells the unbelievable story of Louis Zamperini, the rebellious American son of Italian immigrants who found himself a lieutenant in World War II. This breathtakingtale about the Second World Waris sobering, informative, and brilliantly told an essential read for anyone interested in the Wars effect on individual lives. ***Eager for more of the best contemporary reads? Check out our list of the 21 best novels of the 21st century! More posts from across the blog. Looking for some new reads in 2021? Check out these up-and-coming authors in genres ranging from sci-fi to romance to financial satire. Read post We all love reading, but with more people working from home than ever before and screen time at all time high, giving your eyes a break is extra important and thats where audiobooks come in. Read post Question: What do you get when you cross thriller, sci-fi, fantasy, and horror all together? Answer: A killer Dean Koontz novel. The master of genre-bending, Koontz has published a remarkable range of 100+ books sin... Read post Featured Discover Submit Reviewers In this mythological thriller, Anna, a young Native girl, starts investigating missing women from her reservation when her own little sister disappears. But there are strange things happening around the casino, and an ancient entity from tribal myth seems to be haunting her stepsFunny and heartbreaking, this YA book is many readers first introduction to Native literature. When high schooler Junior branches out from his reservation to transfer into an all-white school, he expects it to be anything but kind. However, as he starts to make friends, he grapples with what his identity looks like at his new school and then back home on his reservation. RELATED: Best Books for TeenagersAdvertisement - Continue Reading BelowNatalie Diazs sophomore poetry collection made waves for its stinging lyricism and post-colonial look at love and Native identity. An anthem of desire against erasure, it unearths and illuminates the historic wrongs done to Indigenous peoples, compassionately bringing them into the light to embody a better future.A Mikmaq family works as seasonal blueberry pickers in Maine, but faces tragedy when their four-year-old daughter, Ruthie, mysteriously disappears. As the family struggles for years with what happened, Norma, a young girl, has been troubled by strange dreams that feel "more like memories", may have an answer.Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowIn this volume, Native botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer combines Indigenous beliefs and ecological consciousness. She highlights the reciprocal relationship between all things, and the lessons we can learn from nature by combining science and traditional wisdom to learn how to truly listen to the world.This poignant and moving book follows three generations of Native women and their treasured dolls: Cora, born in 1888 and shipped off to a brutal boarding school to be "civilized;" Lillian, born in 1925, who endures unspeakable horrors inflicted on her by the nuns running the "Indian school" she attends; and Sissy, born in 1961, whose mother's unpredictable anger and mercurial moods keeps her on the edge of danger. Told through alternating perspectives and by turns touching, heartbreaking and even a little scary, this book reminds us of the importance of family and history.RELATED: Discover more must-reads from the GH Book ClubAdvertisement - Continue Reading BelowTraumatized by their years at a remote, church-run residential school, Kenny, Lucy, Clara, Howie and Maisie cling to each other when they're finally released as teens and find themselves in East Vancouver, trying to figure out what to do next. Their paths are, by turns, dangerous, frightening and secretive in this touching story about coming to terms with a past you didn't deserve and creating a future you do. Kit, a young Cherokee girl, gets torn away from what's left of her family and sent to a Christian boarding school just when she's most vulnerable. There, she suffers horrifying abuse but finds solace in her journal, where she records what happens to her and what she remembers about her past. It's a historical reckoning with a hint of mystery that keeps the plot past-your-bedtime propulsive.Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowGhosts, monsters and things that go bump in the night abound in this spooktacular collection of scary stories from Indigenous and Native authors. Whatever your preferred flavor of scariness, theres a story here that will keep you awake long after youve turned off the lights. RELATED: The Best and Most-Anticipated Books of 2023, So FarThis big-hearted novel tells the stories of Justinea mixed-blood Cherokee woman and her daughter, Reney, after Justine's father abandons them and they seek a better life in 1980s oil-boom Texas. What awaits them is a world that wants to strip them of their culture and their will to survive, coming from both natural and human-driven forces. Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowNow 60% OffCredit: Flatiron BooksGet ready for spooky season with this new novel about the importance of family, what it means to be haunted and how our past informs our future. Oh, and there's lots of heavy metal, dive bars and scenes so gritty, you can feel them between your back teeth. Crack open a cold one, pull on a well-worn band T-shirt and get ready for some spine tingles.Now 14% OffCredit: Penguin BooksMost histories of our country are told from the white colonizers' perspectives, just like almost all historical accounts comes from the point of view of the winners. In this beautiful book, we learn about the lives, fates, hopes and dreams of the Native people instead. Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowNow 40% OffCredit: Tin HouseThese searing, devastating and often darkly funny stories introduce us to a community of Native people living on a Maine Penobscot reservation. There's family tragedy, battling drug dependency and poverty, but we also meet plucky children, adults who survive against all odds and an abiding, affecting love. Now 45% OffCredit: CounterpointMemoir fans, look no further than this beautiful elegy for the author's lost parents that explores trauma, family and a fresh perspective on memory and how much of it we can really trust. It's not a light read, but it is an important one. Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowNow 61% OffCredit: One WorldAfter Luz's brother is run out of town by a violent white mob, she's left to navigate 1930s Denver by herself. But before long, she begins to see visions of her ancestors and their lives in the nearby Lost Territory, bearing witness to their struggle, perseverance and how important it is to ensure those stories don't die with her. Now 47% OffCredit: Riverhead BooksHistory buffs won't want to miss this one. It's a balance of memoir and reportage that spans the history of Native American people's rich and varied cultures from first contact with white settlers, and how degradations like land seizures, massacres, forced assimilation and more gave rise to uniquely powerful means of survival. Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowNow 22% OffCredit: Tin House BooksGrab a highlighter, because you're going to want to remember just about every line of Pico's powerful poetry. A multiple-award winning writer, Pico grew up in the Viejas Reservation, near San Diego and writes stirring lines about his intersecting identities as a queer, American Indian, urban-dwelling poet. In this unforgettable book, 12 characters converge at the Big Oakland Powwow as the story speeds toward its shocking conclusion. There's newly sober Jacquie Red Feather, Dene Oxendene, who works at the powwow to honor his uncles memory, Opal Viola Victoria Bear Shield, who's going to watch her nephew perform a traditional Indian dance for the very first time, and so many more.Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowNow 24% OffCredit: Tin House BooksYou may have noticed that the witchy aesthetic is having a moment, with tarot readings, sage burning and crystals featuring prominently on social media. But these ancient tools of the occult are so much more than that. In this series of braided essays, Washuta explores her own cultural context as she finds her way through addiction and mental health struggles to become a powerful witch in her own right. Now 46% OffCredit: BloomsburyAs Hurricane Katrina gathers over the gulf, so do the tensions in a family that's already struggling in poverty. Try to remember to breathe as the story rushes towards its dramatic conclusion. While every book Jesmyn Ward writes is a triumph, this searing National Book Award is a great place to start if you're not familiar with her work. Lizz SchumerSenior EditorLizz (she/her) is a senior editor at Good Housekeeping, where she runs the GH Book Club, edits essays and long-form features and writes about pets, books and lifestyle topics. A journalist for almost two decades, she is the author of Biography of a Body and Buffalo Steel. She also teaches journalism as an adjunct professor at New York University's School of Professional Studies and creative nonfiction at the Muse Writing Center, and coaches with the New York Writing Room.Sarah VincentSarah Vincent (she/her) covers the latest and greatest in books and all things pets for Good Housekeeping. She double majored in Creative Writing and Criminal Justice at Loyola University Chicago, where she sat in the front row for every basketball game. In her spare time, she loves cooking, crafting, studying Japanese, and, of course, reading.Advertisement - Continue Reading Below Trust book recommendations from real people, not robots Prior to 1968, only nine novels by Native American authors had been published in the US and Canada. Thankfully, things are different now: due to the political transformations of the 60s and 70s, Indigenous voices have started reaching a far larger audience. Subsequent social changes have further catalysed waves of Indigenous writing, as Native American writers grapple with increasing urbanisation and integration into mainstream America. Most recently, the events at Standing Rock in 2016 and the tumult of the Trump era have inspired a new generation of Native American voices to pick up the baton and produce brilliant, incisive writing that confront important questions of identity.Though the Native American experience takes many forms in writing a testament to the variety and complexity of Indigenous realities what does unite these authors is a resounding rejection of whitewashed stereotypes. In this list, weve put together the best Native American authors to give you a headstart, from renaissance titans like James Welch and N. Scott Momaday to big hitters like the current poet laureate Joy Harjo and emerging voices like Tommy Orange. Pro-tip: the list is organized chronologically, so you can feel free to pick and mix from the eras that interest you. Lets get started!The First WaveBeginning in 1969 with N. Scott Momadays House Made of Dawn, the first wave of the Native American Renaissance is characterized by a struggle between two worlds for a generation existing both on and off the reservation, a devotion to the land, and a celebration of traditional customs and myths. N. Scott Momaday, a Kiowa Nation member, is often considered the trailblazer behind the Native American Renaissance, thanks to his Pulitzer Prize winning novel, House Made of Dawn.As a powerful voice for Native American concerns, he has spoken at the United Nations and, in 1990, founded the Buffalo Trust to name only a few of his accomplishments. Through his own work as well as his amplification of works of other Native American authors, he ensures that conversations about Native American traditions are not submerged by the forces of modernization. Start with: House Made of Dawn Considered the first Native American Renaissance novel, this book touches on the dilemma of being split between two worlds. Abel, the young protagonist, finds himself torn between the spiritual world that his father shows him and the exhilarating developments of 20th-century America. James Welch is a member of the Blackfeet and A'aninin tribes whose literary output spans decades and has been translated into nine languages. As a champion of the Native American voice beyond the US context, he soulfully reflects on his dual Indigenous and Irish heritage and aims to remember the world of his ancestors, capturing the poignance of the reality of life for Indigenous people living on and off of the reservation.Start with: Winter in the BloodWelchs debut novel became a seminal piece of Native American literature so its definitely one to keep in your arsenal. Written at a time when Native American voices were largely unheard, it charts the story of a nameless youth from Montana who finds momentarily relief in alcohol as he struggles to find the meaning of life after a family tragedy. The tale drew nationwide attention upon publication and was turned into a film of the same name in 2014. Hale is of Coeur d'Alene, Kootenay, and Cree descent. Known for her sparse, economic writing style, Hale deals with topics such as poverty, colonial oppression, the female condition, and how they collide with the Indigenous identity. The Jailing of Cecelia Capture, her most notable work, was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 1985. A master of different creative writing forms, she has also ventured into Young Adult fiction with The Owls Song, and into poetry with her contributions to The Whispering Wind: Poetry by Young American Indians, a poetry collection published in 1972. Start with: The Jailing of Cecelia Capture This critically acclaimed story is the very best of Hales lyrical and arresting prose. It follows the title character, a mother and law student who has lost her way, and on the eve of her 30th birthday, is arrested and jailed for drunk driving. During her confinement, she reflects on her misspent childhood and teenage years. Not one to bend to the temptation of quick gratification, Leslie Marmon Silko took a decade to write her 800-page epic about the multitudes of life in America, Almanac of the Dead. But her star had started rising long before then: her searing 1977 debut Ceremony earned her the MacArthur Fellowship (also known as the Genius Grant) and led many to consider her the first female Native American novelist. Her experiences growing up in the Laguna Pueblo tribe has been the fuel to her barrier-breaking career, committed to raising awareness about ingrained forms of racism, settler colonialism, and womens issues. Start with: Ceremony Following Tayo, a young soldier who finds himself alienated from society after his return to America as a prisoner of war to the Japanese in World War II, Silkos debut asks big questions. Can a turn towards old traditions and the long-held beliefs of his people prove to be the curative ceremony Tayo needs to overcome his despair? As a pivotal figure in the first wave of the Native American Renaissance, Vizenor a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe has inspired a whole generation of Native American authors and readers across the world. Alongside a lifelong dedication to activism, he has published more than 30 books which defy simple categorizations, drawing on a mixture of Native myth, research, motifs from science fiction, and personal reflections. Start with: Bearheart This is the way to go if youre on the lookout for an original science fiction novel (bonus points if you enjoy trickster characters in your fiction). The story follows a motley crew of pilgrims as government agents descend on their reservation to claim their sacred cedar trees. Reversing Manifest Destiny, they travel south through a world ravaged by fossil fuel consumption, the vivid descriptions of which brings to life the terrifyingly real prospect of environmental dystopia. Bruchacs oeuvre contains an immense 120 books, which channel the traditions and mythologies of this Abenaki roots. Considering himself a storyteller at heart, hes even mastered several Indigenous American instruments (the hand drum, wooden flute, and the double wooden flute, to name a few) to aid his imaginative retellings of native American mythology. He also practices various martial arts and is an educator who has developed programs for maximum security prisons quite the polymath!Start with: Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two A compelling novel thats inspired by the true (and previously marginalized) story of the Navajo marines of World War II, who turned their native language into a code that proved impossible for the enemy to break. Deloria Jr. was a prominent activist and writer belonging to the Standing Rock reservation in South Dakota. As the executive director of the National Congress of American Indians and a key board member of the National Museum of the American Indian, Deloria Jr. spent most of his career tirelessly advocating for the rights of Native American peoples. This work continues in his impressive bibliography as an author, which includes a number of non-fiction titles on Native American education, religion and politics. Start with: Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto Pivotal in drawing attention to Native American socio-political issues alongside the Alcatraz-Red Power Movement, this book implores white people to challenge the racist stereotypes they hold about Indigenous peoples. It also proposes a new framework for better understanding the history of colonialism in the United States. The Second WaveWhile the second round of Native American Renaissance still grappled with the question of identity, this next generation of Native American authors promoted a more integrated experience in which the reservation and the outside world can coexist. nila northSun, of Shoshone and Chippewa heritage, is one of the principal figures of the second wave of the Native American Renaissance. Her poetry deftly applies irony and humor to difficult, emotional topics like alienation, oppression, violence, and the difficulties of life on and off the reservation though she doesnt stop there. In red flags yellow flags, a poem about womanhood and dating in the modern era, she quips, i don't feel like being bored / so i court disaster.. Its not hard to see how shes been able to attract a wide following since her 1977 debut, Diet pepsi and nacho cheese, and was the recipient of the Indigenous Heritage Award in Literature in 2004. Start with: Love at Gunpoint Her latest collection is a testament to a writing style which remains fresh and still attracts the adulation of critics and readers alike, decades after her debut. Indeed, her skills have only been sharpened through years of practice and reflection. David Treuer is an Ojibwe Indian from Leech Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota, and an acclaimed author with an impressive body of work spanning fiction, non-fiction, and literary criticism. Throughout his stories and essays, Treuer strives to map the multidimensionality of the Indigenous experience. His debut novel, Little, written alongside a PhD in anthropology, was published in 1995 to great acclaim. Start with: The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present Fusing personal experience with a scholarly framework to map out the history of the Native American people, Treuers creation is a masterful, intelligent portrait of resilience and survival. If you dont want to just take our word for it, take Barack Obamas: this New York Times Bestseller was among his favorites in 2019. Paula Gunn Allen, a stalwart in Native American scholarship, was much beloved by those who studied under her at UC Berkeley, UCLA, and a number of other schools. Beyond her research, Allens impressive literary oeuvre also includes poetry, short- and long-form prose, many titles of which draw inspiration from the Pueblo mythology of her ancestors, like the Corn Maiden and Grandmother Spider. Her mixed Laguna, Sioux, Scottish, and Lebanese heritage has also led to introspective pieces about the nuances and struggles of belonging to multiple minorities, such as The Woman Who Owned The Shadows. Start with: The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions A seminal feminist text within the currents of Indigenous political writing, Allens research is a reclaiming of voices for the marginalized. Applying an anthropological framework, she argues that the dominance of Western thought has misinterpreted Native society and obscured the prominence of women within it. Joy Harjo, a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, is the current US poet laureate and became, with her 2019 election, the first Indigenous writer to ever hold that title. Her eloquent verses have been featured in the best poetry books of all time, winning her multiple literary awards. Shes also ventured into other literary forms, producing several plays, two childrens books, and a transcendent, haunting memoir that all draw on First Nation myths, symbols and values, as well as poetic traditions within feminism and social justice. Fun fact: Harjo is also an accomplished saxophonist, though she chose to pursue poetry upon encountering other Native poets during the renaissance of the 1960s and 70s. Start with: An American Sunrise: Poems Harjos 2019 acclaimed poetry collection follows her return to her familys lands, where she confronts its history of forcible removals to remember and celebrate the healing that can come after crisis and brokenness. The title poem sets up the central motifs of remembrance and connection to a generational pain caused by injustice: We were running out of breath, as we ran out to meet ourselves. We were surfacing the edge of our ancestors fights, and ready to strike. As a bonus, because Harjo is so exquisite that we cant just recommend one of her books, consider picking up For a Girl Becoming as well. Its a childrens book, but the ode to the cyclical nature of birth, innocent youth, and blooming adulthood, completed with stunning illustrations, can be appreciated by readers of all ages. Linda Hogan is a poet, essayist and as of this publication date the Chickasaw Nations Writer in Residence. We could write a whole post dedicated to her accomplishments, but here are a few standouts: her debut novel, Mean Spirit, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Literature; she was nominated for the International Impact Award twice; and herSolar Stormswas named a New York Times Notable Book of the Year. Beyond amplifying the hidden voices of women and Native Americans, Hogan's work actively engages in questions concerning the destruction and preservation of our environment. Start with: A History of Kindness If you want to meditate on the relationship between humans and the environment, let this gentle collection of poetry be a reminder of our inextricable connection to the land we walk on. Take it as an invitation to kindness and living in harmony with the world around us. Simon J. Ortiz is a prominent Acoma Kerese Pueblo author committed to promoting and retaining the culture and mythology of his people. Even as a child, his solemn enthusiasm for the stories of his elders earned him the nickname The Reporter. Carrying this earnestness and a strong sense of awareness into his career, Ortiz combines a confident, expressive writing style with a focus on the politically marginalized voices and stories of Native American peoples.Start with: From Sand Creek Rising in This Heart Which Is Our AmericaThis collection of poems recounts Ortiz's modern-day experiences at a veterans recovery center, weaving them into America's history of violence against Plains Native Americans. Originally a small-press publication in 1981, its powerful reflections on American colonialism inside and outside the continent called for large-scale reprint in 2000. Louise Erdrich is one of most prolific and best-known contemporary novelists on this list. Shes an enrolled member of the Anishinaabe Nation (Chippewa), and much of her writing reflects the mixed heritage of her German-American father and half-Ojibwe, half-French mother. She often writes of romance, filial ties, and the complexities of interpersonal relationships. As you make your way through her body of work, keep an eye out for her postmodernist writing style and use of multiple narrators within one story: theyre considered trademarks of her work. Start with: Love Medicine Erdrichs first novel is part of a trilogy which follows the intertwining fates of the Kashpaw and Lamartine families. An epic family drama akin to E. M. Forsters Howards End, it blends dark humor with betrayal, loyalty, and a touch of magic on a North Dakota Ojibwe reservation. LeAnne Howe is a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Her experiences growing up on a reservation and listening to her grandmothers stories, she once said in a short film, set her on a path towards a career as a playwright, a poet, and a novelist. Speaking of the challenges that Indigenous writers face, she has pointed to a tribalography a rhetorical space in which overlooked perspectives and stories get their time to shine. Start with: Shell Shaker Immerse yourself in the parallel tales of two Choctaw leaders separated by over 200 years. As much as its about the perceived reality of this Native culture, Shell Shaker is also about the abuse of power and its consequences, which is a relevant concern for readers of any background. That said, for a taste of Howes skill as a critic and editor, check out Seeing Red Hollywoods Pixeled Skin. Its an accessible anthropology of movie reviews that critically assesses the cinematic representations of Indigenous peoples. Susan Power is an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Tribe of the Dakotas and a descendant of Sioux Chief Mato Nupa. A Harvard alumna, Power first started out in the legal profession. She quickly veered to an editing and technical writing career path, in which creative writing was only enthusiastically pursued outside of work hours. But what began as a hobby soon became a lifelong calling, as she found a national audience for her short stories, which were featured in a number of prestigious literary magazines, from The Paris Review to Atlantic Monthly. Start with: The Grass Dancer Powers debut novel is a tour-de-force of historical fiction with a twinge of magical realism. Set between 1864 and 1986, this multilayered work follows four generations of Native Americans as they each struggle with the cultural and familial legacies they are given as well as the ones they leave behind. It received the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award for Best First Fiction in 1995, and is the perfect read for those who enjoyed Yaa Gyasis recent African American hit, Homegoing. Thomas King is an author of Cherokee descent, whose writing career has been devoted to the representation and rights of North American Natives in both Canada and the US. Much of his career is devoted to the representation and protection of the rights of North American Natives in both countries. Through his novels and children's books, he has strived to portray Canadian Natives in a more nuanced light, sharply criticizing the place that has been mindlessly assigned to them in literature and fiction. For this activism and his humorous and poignant writing, he's been made a Member of the Order of Canada, and was twice nominated for the Governor General's Award.Start with: The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America Watch King candidly unpick what it meant throughout history to be Indian in North America. This richly subversive book centers the issue around land, using knowledge gleaned from film, pop culture, and Kings own experiences as an activist as evidence to support this core factor. Eddie Chuculate is an American fiction writer of Cherokee descent whos enrolled in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. He found his beginnings as a sports journalist and editor before deciding to dedicate his lucid and forthright prose to a flourishing literary career. It's not just us that love his work commenting on Galveston Bay, 1826, the short story that won him the PEN/O. Henry Award in 2007, novelist and panelist Ursula Le Guin wrote: Galveston Bay, 1826 won me first, and last, by surprising me: every sentence unexpected, yet infallible. On rereading, both qualities remain. The calm, beautiful, unexplaining accuracy of description carries us right through the madness of the final adventure. Start with: Cheyenne Madonna This is Chuculates first work of published fiction, and according to poet laureate Joy Harjo, its the work that helped him emerge as an important new talent in his generation of storytellers. It tells the story of a Cherokee (Creek) man who writes a series of letters to his father throughout his journeys across the Southwest. The book serves as a moving investigation of the transformation from boyhood to manhood, from hopeful expectations to a return to ancestral roots. If you think Erdrich looks familiar, youre not mistaken she's the sister of Louise Erdrich. Anaccomplished poet and writer in her own right, Heid E. Erdrich has published several volumes of poetry and contributed to various anthologies of Native American writing. Going beyond written authorship, Erdrich is also a pioneer when it comes to using video poetry as a means of self-expression. Her recent efforts have involved collaborations with other Native American digital media artists and poets on politically and socially imperative projects like the Idle No More movement. Start with: New Poets of Native Nations Erdrichs poetry is truly stunning, though the essence of her work lies in the support she lends to others. Which is why we recommend you check out the latest poetry anthology that she edited, where she champions a diverse assortment of Native writing by the young authors of the 21st century. ContemporaryThe turn of the 21st century marked the advent of a literary scene more explicitly focused on the realms of the intimate and the personal. Writers discussed life on and off the rez, and grappled with the intertwinement of Indigenous identity, class, gender and sexuality. In her poem The First Water Is the Body, Natalie Diaz writes:Let me tell you a story about water: / Once upon a time there was us. / Americas thirst tried to drink us away. / And here we still are.Addressing the scorched terrain of American race relations, the writing of this decorated poet and MacArthur Foundation fellow disrupts the white gaze and put the Native experience front and center. As a Mojave enrolled in the Gila River Indian Tribe, Diaz pens incisive lines on Native culture and mythos with a strong personal voice, irrigating the land with her words.Start with: When My Brother Was an Aztec Diazs 2012 award-winning debut collection deals with a host of issues, namely her brothers meth addiction, the complexities of family ties, and queer romance all in the context of the Mojave life. In this memoir, the violence directed towards Native bodies is never far away but nor is the ability to reclaim what the colonizers have taken. Melissa Feboss Native American heritage remained a mystery until she got to visit her fathers people, the Wampanoag tribe, as a teenager. Then, she started learning about a group of people that had until that point been far removed from her own understanding of family and identity. Combined with her love of literature and the creative arts, she has used this eye-opening journey to produce lyrical nonfiction books that reflect on the development of contemporary identities. Start with: Whip Smart Feboss first memoir, which brings to life her time as a student and a professional dominatrix struggling with substance abuse in New York City. If you like her engaging and pacy prose as much as we do, keep an eye out for her latest publication, Girlhood! Cherie Dimaline made waves with the publication of her YA title, The Marrow Thieves, in 2017. The combining of Indigenous knowledge with science fiction to create an apocalyptic world not too different from our own proved to be a bestselling combination that allowed this debut to climb the ranks as one of the best YA books

reservation who embarks on a dangerous mission to track down the source of a heroin influx.Virgil Wounded Horse is the local enforcer on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. When justice is denied by the American legal system or the tribal council, Virgil is hired to deliver his own punishment, the kind thats hard to forget...Publication Date: August 25, 2020mystery thriller botm See it on AmazonWinter in the BloodWhat It's About: A contemporary classic from a major writer of the Native American renaissance "Brilliant, brutal and, in my opinion, Welch's best work." Tommy Orange, The Washington PostDuring his life, James Welch came to be regarded as a master of American prose, and his first novel, Winter in the Blood , is one of his most enduring works...Publication Date: July 29, 2008native american classics indigenous See it on AmazonTwo Old Women: An Alaskan Legend of Betrayal, Courage and SurvivalWhat It's About: Based on an Athabascan Indian legend passed along for many generations from mothers to daughters of the upper Yukon River Valley in Alaska, this is the suspenseful, shocking, ultimately inspirational tale of two old women abandoned by their tribe during a brutal winter famine.Though these women have been known to complain more than contribute, they now must either survive on their own or die trying...Publication Date: January 1, 1993historical fiction alaska book club See it on AmazonOne Thousand White WomenWhat It's About: One Thousand White Women is the story of May Dodd and a colorful assembly of pioneer women who, under the auspices of the U.S. government, travel to the western prairies in 1875 to intermarry among the Cheyenne Indians. The covert and controversial "Brides for Indians" program, launched by the administration of Ulysses S...Publication Date: March 15, 1998historical fiction book club historical See it on AmazonThirteen MoonsWhat It's About: At the age of twelve, an orphan named Will Cooper is given a horse, a key, and a map and is sent on a journey through the uncharted wilderness of the Cherokee Nation. Will is a bound boy, obliged to run a remote Indian trading post. As he fulfills his lonesome duty, Will finds a father in Bear, a Cherokee chief, and is adopted by him and his people, developing relationships that ultimately forge Wills character...Publication Date: October 3, 2006historical fiction books i own historical See it on AmazonSolar StormsWhat It's About: Publication Date: October 1, 1994native american historical fiction indigenous See it on AmazonCaleb's CrossingWhat It's About: A bestselling tale of passion and belief, magic and adventure from the Pulitzer Prizewinning author of Marchand The Secret Chord, coming from Viking in October 2015Bethia Mayfield is a restless and curious young woman growing up in Martha's vineyard in the 1660s amid a small band of pioneering English Puritans...Publication Date: May 1, 2011historical fiction book club historical See it on AmazonFool's CrowWhat It's About: The 25th-anniversary edition of a novel that in the sweep and inevitability of its eventsis a major contribution to Native American literature. (Wallace Stegner)In the Two Medicine Territory of Montana, the Lone Eaters, a small band of Blackfeet Indians, are living their immemorial life...Publication Date: October 25, 2011historical fiction native american classics See it on AmazonThe Grass DancerWhat It's About: Publication Date: January 1, 1994historical fiction native american fantasy See it on AmazonIndian HorseWhat It's About: Saul Indian Horse has hit bottom. His last binge almost killed him, and now hes a reluctant resident in a treatment centre for alcoholics, surrounded by people hes sure will never understand him. But Saul wants peace, and he grudgingly comes to see that hell find it only through telling his story...Publication Date: January 27, 2012historical fiction indigenous canadian See it on AmazonPanther in the Sky: A Novel Based on the Life of TecumsehWhat It's About: Rich, colorful and bursting with excitement, this remarkable story turns James Alexander Thom's power and passion for American history to the epic story of Tecumseh's life and give us a heart-thumping novel of one man's magnificent destiny--to unite his people in the struggle to save their land and their way of life from the relentless press of the white settlers.Publication Date: January 1, 1984historical fiction native american history See it on AmazonThe Way to Rainy MountainWhat It's About: First published in paperback by UNM Press in 1976, The Way to Rainy Mountain has sold over 200,000 copies."The paperback edition of The Way to Rainy Mountain was first published twenty-five years ago. One should not be surprised, I suppose, that it has remained vital, and immediate, for that is the nature of story...Publication Date: September 1, 1976poetry native american history See it on AmazonDances with WolvesWhat It's About: Ordered to hold an abandoned army post, John Dunbar found himself alone, beyond the edge of civilization. Thievery and survival soon forced him into the Indian camp, where he began a dangerous adventure that changed his life forever.Set in 1863, the novel follows Lieutenant John Dunbar on a magical journey from the ravages of the Civil War to the far reaches of the imperiled American frontier, a frontier he naively wants to see "before it is gone".Publication Date: November 1, 1997historical fiction western classics Young Adult Native American FictionSee it on AmazonIsland of the Blue DolphinsWhat It's About: Publication Date: February 8, 2010See it on AmazonWalk Two MoonsWhat It's About: "How about a story? Spin us a yarn."Instantly, Phoebe Winterbottom came to mind. "I could tell you an extensively strange story," I warned."Oh, good!" Gram said. "Delicious!"And that is how I happened to tell them about Phoebe, her disappearing mother, and the lunatic.As Sal entertains her grandparents with Phoebe's outrageous story, her own story begins to unfold the story of a thirteen-year-old girl whose only wish is to be reunited with her missing mother...Publication Date: January 1, 1994young adult middle grade childrens See it on AmazonThe Marrow ThievesWhat It's About: In a futuristic world ravaged by global warming, people have lost the ability to dream, and the dreamlessness has led to widespread madness. The only people still able to dream are North America's Indigenous people, and it is their marrow that holds the cure for the rest of the world. But getting the marrow, and dreams, means death for the unwilling donors...Publication Date: May 22, 2017young adult dystopian indigenous See it on AmazonThe Sign of the BeaverWhat It's About: Twelve-year-old Matt is left on his own in the Maine wilderness while his father leaves to bring the rest of the family to their new settlement. When he befriends Attean, an Indian chief's grandson, he is invited to join the Beaver tribe and move north. Should Matt abandon his hopes of ever seeing his family again and go on to a new life?Publication Date: April 27, 1983historical fiction childrens young adult See it on AmazonA Yellow Raft in Blue WaterWhat It's About: Michael Dorris has crafted a fierce saga of three generations of Indian women, beset by hardships and torn by angry secrets, yet inextricably joined by the bonds of kinship. Starting in the present day and moving backward, the novel is told in the voices of the three women: fifteen-year-old part-black Rayona; her American Indian mother, Christine, consumed by tenderness and resentment toward those she loves; and the fierce and mysterious Ida, mother and grandmother whose haunting secrets, betrayals, and dreams echo through the years, braiding together the strands of the shared past.Publication Date: January 1, 1987book club native american classics See it on AmazonThe Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time IndianWhat It's About: Bestselling author Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot...Publication Date: September 12, 2007young adult contemporary realistic fiction See it on AmazonFlightWhat It's About: Sherman Alexie is one of our most gifted and accomplished storytellers and a treasured writer of huge national stature. His first novel in ten years is the hilarious and tragic portrait of an orphaned Indian boy who travels back and forth through time in a charged search for his true identity. With powerful and swift, prose, Flight follows this troubled foster teenager--a boy who is not a "legal" Indian because he was never claimed by his father--as he learns that violence is not the answer...Publication Date: April 17, 2007young adult native american fantasy See it on AmazonIf I Ever Get Out of HereWhat It's About: Lewis "Shoe" Blake is used to the joys and difficulties of life on the Tuscarora Indian reservation in 1975: the joking, the Fireball games, the snow blowing through his roof. What he's not used to is white people being nice to him -- people like George Haddonfield, whose family recently moved to town with the Air Force...Publication Date: July 30, 2013young adult historical fiction native american Discover the finest writing contests of 2025 for fiction and non-fiction authors including short story competitions, essay writing competitions, poetry contests, and many more. Updated weekly, these contests are vetted by Reedsy to weed out the scammers and time-wasters. If youre looking to stick to free writing contests, simply use our filters as you browse. Why you should submit to writing contests Submitting to poetry competitions and free writing contests in 2025 is absolutely worth your while as an aspiring author: just as your qualifications matter when you apply for a new job, a writing portfolio that boasts published works and award-winning pieces is a great way to give your writing career a boost. And not to mention the bonus of cash prizes! That being said, we understand that taking part in writing contests can be tough for emerging writers. First, theres the same affliction all writers face: lack of time or inspiration. Entering writing contests is a time commitment, and many people decide to forego this endeavor in order to work on their larger projects instead like a full-length book. Second, for many writers, the chance of rejection is enough to steer them clear of writing contests. But were here to tell you that two of the great benefits of entering writing contests happen to be the same as those two reasons to avoid them. When it comes to the time commitment: yes, you will need to expend time and effort in order to submit a quality piece of writing to competitions. That being said, having a hard deadline to meet is a great motivator for developing a solid writing routine. Think of entering contests as a training session to become a writer who will need to meet deadlines in order to have a successful career. If theres a contest you have your eye on, and the deadline is in one month, sit down and realistically plan how many words youll need to write per day in order to meet that due date and dont forget to also factor in the time youll need to edit your story! For tips on setting up a realistic writing plan, check out this free, ten-day course: How to Build a Rock-Solid Writing Routine. In regards to the fear of rejection, the truth is that any writer aspiring to become a published author needs to develop relatively thick skin. If one of your goals is to have a book traditionally published, you will absolutely need to learn how to deal with rejection, as traditional book deals are notoriously hard to score. If youre an indie author, you will need to adopt the hardy determination required to slowly build up a readership. The good news is that theres a fairly simple trick for learning to deal with rejection: use it as a chance to explore how you might be able to improve your writing. In an ideal world, each rejection from a publisher or contest would come with a detailed letter, offering construction feedback and pointing out specific tips for improvement. And while this is sometimes the case, its the exception and not the rule. Still, you can use the writing contests you dont win as a chance to provide yourself with this feedback. Take a look at the winning and shortlisted stories and highlight their strong suits: do they have fully realized characters, a knack for showing instead of telling, a well-developed but subtly conveyed theme, a particularly satisfying denouement? The idea isnt to replicate what makes those stories tick in your own writing. But most examples of excellent writing share a number of basic craft principles. Try and see if there are ways for you to translate those stories strong points into your own unique writing. Finally, there are the more obvious benefits of entering writing contests: prize and publication. Not to mention the potential to build up your readership, connect with editors, and gain exposure. Resources to help you win writing competitions in 2025 Every writing contest has its own set of submission rules. Whether those rules are dense or sparing, ensure that you follow them to a T. Disregarding the guidelines will not sway the judges opinion in your favor and might disqualify you from the contest altogether. Aside from ensuring you follow the rules, here are a few resources that will help you perfect your submissions. Free online courses On Writing: "How to Craft a Killer Short Story" (Click here) "The Non-Sexy Business of Writing Non-Fiction" (Click here) "How to Write a Novel" (Click here) "Understanding Point of View" (Click here) "Developing Characters That Your Readers Will Love" (Click here) "Writing Dialogue That Develops Plot and Character" (Click here) "Stop Procrastinating! Build a Solid Writing Routine" (Click here) On Editing: "Story Editing for Authors" (Click here) "How to Self-Edit Your Manuscript Like a Pro" (Click here) "Novel Revision: Practical Tips for Rewrites" (Click here) Blog posts "How to Write a Novel: Steps From a Bestselling Writer" (Click here) "How to Write a Short Story in 9 Simple Steps" (Click here) "100 Literary Devices With Examples: The Ultimate List" (Click here) "20 Writing Tips to Improve Your Craft" (Click here) "How to Write Fabulous Dialogue [9 Tips + Examples]" (Click here) "8 Character Development Exercises to Write 3D Characters" (Click here) Bonus resources After you submit to a writing competition in 2025 Its exciting to send a piece of writing off to a contest. However, once the initial excitement wears off, you may be left waiting for a while. Some writing contests will contact all entrants after the judging period whether or not theyve won. Other writing competitions will only contact the winners. Here are a few things to keep in mind after you submit: Many writing competitions dont have time to respond to each entrant with feedback on their story. However, it never hurts to ask! Feel free to politely reach out requesting feedback but wait until after the selection period is over. If youve submitted the same work to more than one writing competition or literary magazine, remember to withdraw your submission if it ends up winning elsewhere. After you send a submission, dont follow it up with a rewritten or revised version. Instead, ensure that your first version is thoroughly proofread and edited. If not, wait until the next edition of the contest or submit the revised version to other writing contests. Email It! November is Native American Heritage Month, a celebration meant to give recognition to the significant contribution the native peoples have made to the history, culture, and growth of the United States. One way to get into the spirit of things is by reading works by some of the greatest Native American authors from the past century. Some of their works will shed light on activism, culture, and history, some expose the challenges of living on reservations or establishing an identity in the modern world, and all are beautiful, well-written pieces of poetry, prose, and non-fiction that are excellent reads, regardless of the heritage of their authors. This list touches on just a few of the amazing Native American authors out there and can be a great starting point for those wanting to learn more throughout this month and the rest of the year. Sherman Alexie is one of the best known Native American writers today. He has authored several novels and collections of poetry and short stories, a number of which have garnered him prestigious awards, including a National Book Award. In his work, Alexie draws on his experiences growing up on the Spokane Indian reservation, addressing sometimes difficult themes like despair, poverty, alcoholism, and Native American identity with humor and compassion. As a result, no survey of Native American literature is complete without Alexie's work. A key figure in the first wave of the "Native American Renaissance" (a term fraught with controversy, but that's another discussion), Silko is an accomplished writer who has been the recipient of MacArthur Foundation Grants and a lifetime achievement award from the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas. Her most well-known work is the novel Ceremony, in which she draws on her Laguna heritage to tell the story of a WWII veteran returning home from the war to his poverty-striken reservation. She has written numerous novels, short stories, and poems in the years since, and remains a powerful figure in American literature. Growing up on reservations helped inspire some of the work of this writer and professor, and she honed her gift for the written word at UC Berkeley while earning her M.A. in English. Her novel The Jailing of Cecelia Capture was nominated for a Pulitzer and is perhaps her best-known work, though her Bloodlines: Odyssey of a Native Daughter is a close runner up, earning her the American Book Award. Both novels, one fiction and one non-fiction, are essential reads for anyone trying to understand the modern Native American experience. Paula Gunn Allen made an impact on both fiction and poetry, and on the anthropological understanding of Native American culture, making her a must-read for anyone exploring Native American literature. Among her fictional work, The Woman Who Owned the Shadows, her only novel, is a must-read, as is her collection of poems, Life Is a Fatal Disease. Both were inspired by Pueblo oral traditions and stories. Allen also produced impressive non-fiction work, perhaps most notably her book The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions, a controversial work in which she argues that women played a much larger role in Native societies than was recorded by the largely patriarchal Europeans in their writings. One of the most outspoken voices in Indian affairs for decades, Vine Deloria's writings helped to redefine Native activism in the 60s and 70s. He is perhaps best-known for his book Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto, which upon its publication in 1969 generated unprecedented attention to Indian issues. He would go on to write more than 20 books, addressing stereotypes, challenging accepted ideas of American history, and helping the American Indian Movement to gain momentum. A writer, teacher, artist, and storyteller, N. Scott Momaday is one of the most celebrated Native American writers of the past century. His novel, House Made of Dawn, is widely credited with helping Native American writers break into the mainstream and won Momaday the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1969. Since then, he has published several more novels, collections of short stories, plays, and poems and has been honored with numerous awards, including a National Medal of Arts and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas. He was also made Poet Laureate of Oklahoma. Professor Duane Niatum has dabbled in everything from playwriting to essay writing, but he is best known for his poetry. His epic lyric poems draw on both the work of great Western poets and his native S'Klallam cultural heritage. Some of his best work can be found in his collections The Crooked Beak of Love and Song for the Harvester of Dreams (which won the American Book Award). Gerald Vizenor is one of the most prolific Native American writers, having published more than 30 books to date. In addition to teaching Native American Studies at UC Berkeley for several years, Vizenor has produced numerous screenplays, poems, novels, and essays. His novel Griever: An American Monkey King in China, a story that takes Native mythology overseas into a Chinese setting, won him the American Book Award in 1988. His latest novel, Shrouds of White Earth, also won him the same award, and he continues to be a leading figure in Native American literature today. During her long literary career, Louise Erdrich has produced thirteen novels, as well as books of poetry, short stories, children books, and a memoir. Her first novel Love Medicine won her the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1984, and would set the stage for her later work, The Plague of Doves, which was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize. Erdrich's work centers on Native American characters, but draws on the literary methods and narrative style pioneered by William Faulkner. Considered one of the founding authors in the Native American Renaissance, Welch was one of the best-known and respected Native American authors during his lifetime. The author of five novels, his work Fools Crow won an American Book Award in 1986 and Winter in the Blood has been named as an inspirational work by many other authors. Welch also published works of non-fiction and poetry, and even won an Emmy for the documentary he penned with Paul Stekler called Last Stand at Little Bighorn. Bush is an author, creative writing professor, and musician. During the 1960s, Bush was a well-known activist in the American Indian Movement, protesting, organizing, and writing to bring attention to Indian issues. Yet Bush is best known for his poetry, much of which is musical and spoken. His poems touch on themes like identity, cultural conflict, social struggle, and the disintegration of traditional values, and can be found in both recorded and written forms. While Harjo has written memoirs, screenplays, and children's books (as well as numerous musical works), she's primarily known as a poet. She honed her poetic skills at Iowa's prestigious Writers' Workshop and is one of the most lauded Native American poets working today. Some of her best-known collections of poetry include In Mad Love and War, which won the American Book Award and the William Carlos Williams Award, The Woman Who Fell from the Sky, and A Map to the Next World: Poetry and Tales. While Harjo's work does address her native culture, she also explores her struggles as an individual and a woman, which makes her work accessible to readers from any background. Another notable Native American poet working today is Simon J. Ortiz. Ortiz has published short fiction and non-fiction prose, but his poetry is perhaps his most evocative and well-known work. Much of Ortiz's work focuses on modern man's alienation, from others, himself, and his environment. His work From Sand Creek: Rising In This Heart Which Is Our America received the Pushcart Prize in poetry, though his 1992 book of prose and poetry, Woven Stone, is also among his more important publications. northSun is a celebrated Native American poet and activist who has won numerous accolades during her career. She has published five collections of poetry and one non-fiction book documenting tribal history. Her poetry can be characterized as both funny and brutally honest, focusing on native life both on and off the reservation. Those looking to learn more about her work should check out one of her most recent collections, love at gunpoint, as well as her earlier work Diet pepsi and nacho cheese. While thus far all of the writers featured on this list have been modern, it wouldn't be a complete list without including Eastman, whose early works on Native American history helped to redefine how Americans looked at the past. Eastman was the first author to address American history from a native point of view, writing a number of books that detailed his own past as well as Native American culture and history. Must-reads include Deep Woods to Civilization and The Indian Today: The Past and Future of the First American. Another early standout among Native American authors is John Joseph Mathews. A historian and novelist, he would become an important voice for the Osage people. His first book, Wa'kon-tah: The Osage and The White Man's Road would become an instant bestseller, but he is best known for Sundown, a semi-autobiographical novel about a young man who feels estranged from tribal life after returning from college and military service. Mathews also played a key role in helping to preserve the culture of the Osage people, documenting numerous stories and oral histories in his The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters. Diane Glancy is another Iowa Writers' Workshop grad, today teaching Native American literature and creative writing as well as devoting much of her time to writing. She has penned a large number of poetry, plays, non-fiction, and novels over her career, several of which have won prestigious awards, including the American Book Award, the Pushcart Prize, and the Capricorn Prize for Poetry. Glancy uses realistic language and vivid imagery in her work to address subjects such as spirituality, family ties and her identity as a person of mixed blood. Those who are new to Glancy's work should start with Claiming Breath, Lone Dog's Winter Count, Primer of the Obsolete, or Iron Woman. Winona LaDuke is an author, speaker, economist, and activist who after graduating from Harvard has dedicated much of her life to protecting native culture. While she is perhaps best known for her activism and political involvement (LaDuke was the vice presidential candidate with Ralph Nader in 1996 and 2000), she's also an accomplished author. Among her works are one novel, Last Standing Woman, and two non-fiction books, All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life, an excellent primer on the movement to reclaim tribal lands, and Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming, which looks at traditional beliefs and practices. Wendy Rose is an artist, writer, and anthropologist, currently working as a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. Rose's work tends to focus on her mixed heritage, which often made her feel both alienated from the Hopi people and whites, as well as issues of ecology, feminism, and politics. One of Rose's best known and most analyzed poems is "Truganinny," the tale of a young aboriginal woman who was the last of her kind. That poem can be read online, but fans of Rose would be remiss not to also explore her collection of poems Lost Copper, which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. David Treuer, a professor of literature and creative writing at the University of Southern California, is known for stories that defy the stereotypes of Native American literature. His first novel, Little, was published in 1995, and he has since written several works of fiction, non-fiction essays, and short stories. Treuer gained recognition in 2006 for The Translation of Dr. Appelles. The novel focuses on a Native American scholar who lives alone, translating an unnamed language, and trying to make sense of his own personal history. Truer is also known for a controversial collection of essays titled Native American Fiction: A User's Manual, which challenges the work of great Native American writers like Sherman Alexie and Louise Erdrich. Treuer argues that the genre of Native American literature should be viewed as part of the larger canon of American literature rather than an artifact of historic Native culture.

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