



BCALA

BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS PRINCIPLES

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Reading Guide

"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots".
- Marcus Garvey.

INTRODUCTION

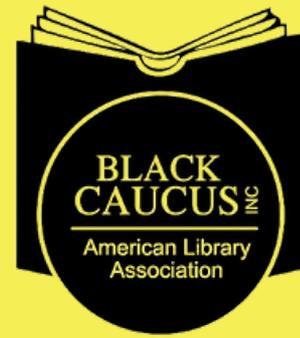
Reawakening of Black Consciousness in Children's & Young Adult Literature

There are moments in time when we as Black people are asked to look at our whole experience. All that we are. Blackness that expands beyond the American shores, around the globe, and Back to Africa. Blackness that is not mired in submission, but is resilient in resistance. Blackness that does not dwell in sadness and The Blues, but expresses itself in joy and The Gospel. Blackness is not only a history of the past, but our place in the future.

With the ever-growing need for diverse books and the world's increased understanding of Black Lives Mattering, it is important that the whole Black experience be brought to light. Black children and teens need literature that will help them build their identities by grounding them in their whole history and being. In addition, books about Black life serve as a window for young people not familiar with Black culture and history, encouraging them to learn, reflect, and take action.

Professor LaGarett King's recent article "Black History is Not American History: Toward a Framework of Black Historical Consciousness" is the foundation of this booklist, which is geared toward young people in grades K-12, along with their parents and educators. We have adapted several of the themes presented in Dr. L. King's framework into categories for children's and young adult literature. It is our hope that the titles selected for this list will illuminate the holistic story of the Black Experience, and encourage engagement with the broader Black community.

- Tiffeni Fontno

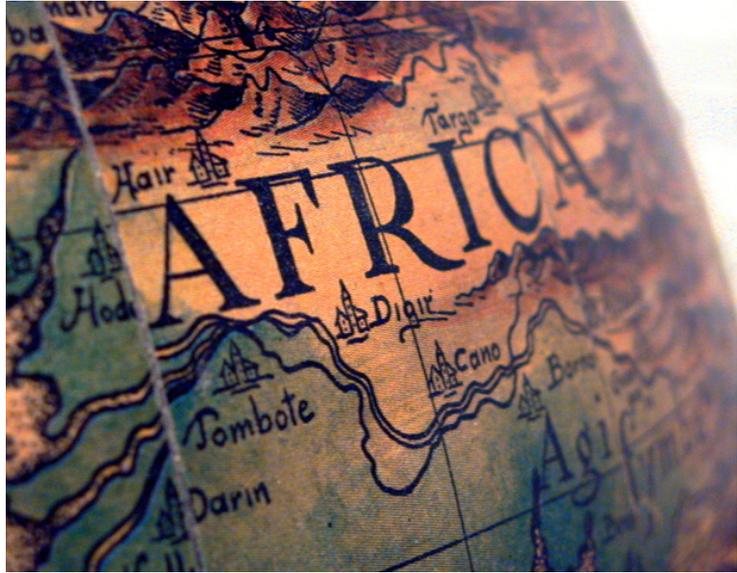


ABOUT BCALA

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association serves as an advocate for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services and resources to the nation's African American community; and provides leadership for the recruitment and professional development of African American librarians.

For more information or to join, visit
www.bcala.org

AFRICA & THE DIASPORA



BLACK HISTORY HAS ITS ROOTS IN AFRICAN HISTORY, AND IS THUS CONNECTED TO THE DIASPORA, OR DISPERSED POPULATIONS, OF AFRICAN PEOPLES THAT HAS SPREAD FROM THE CONTINENT OVER THE CENTURIES. THE BOOKS IN THIS CATEGORY WILL HELP YOUNG READERS LEARN ABOUT THE TRADITIONS, EXPERIENCES, AND ANCIENT ORIGINS OF AFRICAN-DESCENDANT PEOPLES ACROSS THE GLOBE. BLACK CHILDREN WILL BE ENCOURAGED AND EMPOWERED TO TAKE PRIDE IN THE FACT THAT THEY ARE PART OF A DIVERSE, INTERNATIONAL WEB OF BLACKNESS.

Preschool–4th Grade

***Africa, Amazing Africa: Country by Country* by Atinuke**

For those knowledgeable about the continent, looking to learn more, or seeking to introduce their little ones to its wonders, this book is an excellent tool for understanding the diversity of Africa's history. Organized by region, each country is presented with the cultural elements that they are most known for, with trivia throughout. Atinuke's love for the continent shines through, and is sure to rub off on readers.

***African Proverbs for All Ages* by Johnnetta Betsch Cole & Nelda LaTeef**

Anthropologist Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole has curated a superb sampling of the colloquial wisdom that is one of Africa's greatest treasures. Many of the proverbs are just a handful of words, yet they speak volumes on subjects ranging from the mundane struggles of everyday life to meditations on humanity's place in the universe. The beautifully stylistic illustrations by Nelda La Teef create insightful connections between the proverbs, inviting readers to see them from multiple perspectives.

***African: A Children's Picture Book* by Peter Tosh**

Though he never achieved the monumental fame of his former bandmate Bob Marley, reggae pioneer Peter Tosh made more than his fair share of iconic contributions to the genre. His best known song is "African," an empowering anthem of Pan-Africanism. In this creative picture book, artist Rachel Moss breathes new life into the reggae classic, pairing the simple yet affirming lyrics with beautiful illustrations.

***Anansi and the Magic Stick* by Eric Kimmel**

A classic folktale of the lazy trickster Anansi looking for a way out of work and getting in over his head. Anansi and the magic stick is a playful take on the age-old character and a great introduction to African folktales for young readers.

***Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions* by Margaret Musgrove, Leo & Diane Dillon**

The beauty, complexity and rich heritage of the African continent shine to the fullest in this alphabet book. A variety of customs, including songs, art, naming traditions, recipes and more are used to highlight the traditions among the continent's myriad ethnic groups. The detailed pictures and description of the customs spark discussion for a variety of readers.

***Before There Was Mozart: The Story of Joseph Boulogne de Saint-George* by Lesa Cline-Ransome**

The remarkable life of a little-known figure in Black history is spotlighted in this engaging picture book biography. Born a mixed-raced enslaved man in Guadeloupe, Joseph Boulogne gained fame as a violinist and fencer, becoming the first (known) composer of classical music with Black ancestry. The sensitive, introspective text and illustrations play with subtle themes of isolation while serving as a necessary supplement to common history books featuring more well known figures.



AFRICA & THE DIASPORA



***Born on the Water*—Nikole Hannah by Jones & Renee Watson**

A child's sadness over her inability to trace her family's lineage back more than three generations is converted to pride once she learns the history of Black people in America. A direct line is drawn from the rich prehistory of Africans in America to the contributions of the enslaved to American prosperity. An unflinchingly honest portrayal of the kidnapping and enslavement of Africans is presented in an accessible manner that underscores the foundational resiliency of Black people.

***Cornrows* by Camille Yarbrough**

Family elders weave history, culture, and pride into the heads and minds of their progenitors in this intergenerational tale about the significance of cornrow hairstyles in Africa. Detailed black and white illustrations depict style patterns and illuminate the beauty of African culture, the strength of Africans in America, and the honor in heritage.

***Down by the River* by Grace Hallworth**

This picture book warmly presents the rhymes and songs of a Trinidadian childhood to a young audience. From market songs to playground chants, each entry reflects the joys of children in each other's company, while introducing readers to the rich elements of Black Caribbean culture through its bright, detailed illustrations. Hallworth's inclusion of older songs creates a sense of recollection and recognition for a variety of readers, including those who may have carried them abroad.

***Olu & Greta* by Diana Ejata**

This beautiful picture book introduces two cousins who live in different countries (Nigeria and Italy), and playfully explains that they are too far apart to see each other. The artwork makes creative use of black paper contrasted with a few simple colors, especially in the character designs. *Olu & Greta* is a delightful way to introduce toddlers to the concept of the African diaspora, and is likely to resonate with children in immigrant families.

5th–8th Grade

***Timelines From Black History: Leaders, Legends, Legacies* by DK Publishing**

This book features 100 world-changing figures from the black diaspora. Reaching back to ancient icons like Mansa Musa and ending with modern pioneers such as Barack Obama, this volume covers both the familiar and the forgotten. Readers will learn about the mental, physical, and political battles these Black leaders fought to make a difference.

***African Icons: Ten People Who Built a Continent* by Traci Baptiste**

Thoroughly researched and expertly crafted, this collection of short biographies sheds light on some of the most impactful yet under-celebrated figures in world history. Baptiste's poetic prose may make you forget that this is a work of nonfiction, but the thoughtfully integrated maps, portraits, and graphics serves as reminders of how deeply informative this title is.

***African Princess: The Amazing Lives of Africa's Royal Women* by Joyce Hansen**

This vibrant book is a fine introduction to several of Africa's most historically significant royal women. Hansen spotlights six unique, bold, and powerful figures from across the continent, many of whom were young when they ruled, an inspiring detail that will help young readers to draw connections between the women and themselves. Historical facts such as the princesses' notable achievements and the social conditions of their environments are well balanced with insights into their personal perspectives.



BLACK AGENCY & PERSEVERANCE



THIS HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS PRINCIPLE FOCUSES ON THE STORIES AND EXPERIENCES THAT SHOWCASE THE CONCEPTS OF BLACK AGENCY THROUGH INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE CHOICE THROUGHOUT HISTORY. THE BOOKS HIGHLIGHTED HERE INCLUDE STORIES OF RESISTANCE TO OPPRESSIVE STRUCTURES, THE CREATION AND ENDURANCE OF BLACK POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND STORIES OF BARRIER-BREAKING BLACK ACHIEVEMENT.

Preschool–4th Grade

***ABCs of Black History* by Rio Cortez**

Black heroes and accomplishments are presented in this alphabet book about Black culture. Young readers learn about the people, movements, and concepts that helped make the Black experience in America a source of pride and hope for the future. An index of notable Black Americans and moments in history is included to spark further inquiry.

***Before She Was Harriet* by Lesa Cine–Ransome**

Written in poetic verse and beautifully illustrated, this biography for young readers chronicles the achievements of Harriet Tubman in reverse, beginning with her emancipation work and ending with her childhood. In this fresh take on biographies for young readers, children are given the message that they too can impact the world with their bravery.

***Black is a Rainbow Color* by Angela Joy**

Although the color black is not in the traditional rainbow, the beauty of the color and the people is highlighted in this gorgeous tribute to Black culture. From the literal and cultural blackness of African American hair to the significance of Thurgood Marshall’s robe, this book celebrates the Black experience in America. Historical and cultural notes, in addition to a timeline, add to the depth of this beautifully illustrated picture book.

***Freedom in Congo Square* by Carole Boston Weatherford**

Poetic narrative and rhymes take readers through a week on a Louisiana Plantation and the many chores the enslaved Africans had to complete. They would count down the days until Sunday, a day of rest when they could gather in Congo Square to talk, sing, dance, play instruments, sell goods, and share news.

***I Am Every Good Thing* by Derrick Barnes**

Stunning watercolor illustrations capture the reader’s attention as the text metaphorically describes the attributes that the main character holds. Narrated by a young Black boy and written in a positive tone, this title serves as a book of affirmations for all children.

***Jump at the Sun: The True Life Tale of Unstoppable Storycatcher Zora Neale Hurston* by Alicia D. Williams**

In this picture book biography, readers will follow celebrated Harlem Renaissance author Zora Neale Hurston through the trials and tribulations of her youth to her ascendance to legendary status in the world of literature. Fueled by her inherent love of storytelling and the encouragement of her mother, Hurston’s story is one of compelling agency, endurance, and perseverance.



BLACK AGENCY & PERSEVERANCE



Let The Children March by Monica Clark Robinson

In 1963, the African American community in Birmingham, Alabama were fighting for their civil rights, but many parents were rightfully afraid that they would lose their jobs if they were to participate in the protests. The remarkable solution they found was to send children to march instead. This magnificently illustrated story beautifully highlights those children, and reminds readers that peacefully demonstrating can be extraordinarily powerful no matter the age of the demonstrators.

Nina: A Story of Nina Simone by Traci N. Todd

Before she was Nina Simone, she was a little girl named Eunice— but she always had a musical gift. Nina Simone's evolution into jazz icon and civil rights activist comes alive in this picture book biography, aided by Christian Robinson's vibrant illustrations. This intricate portrayal tells the story of her experiences in an oppressive and unjust system while sharing her love, resilience and passion for her craft with young readers.

The People Remember by Ibi Zoboi

The tribulations of enslaved Africans is told through the seven principles of Kwanzaa—a week-long African American holiday that emphasizes unity, self-determination, collective work, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. Written in rhyming verse and vibrantly illustrated, this picture book highlights the historical moments and cultural movements that encapsulate the Black experience in the United States.

Sing a song: How Lift Every Voice and Sing inspired generations by Kelly Starling Lyons

The amazing story of the song "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which has been widely adopted as the Black National Anthem. Written by two brothers, James Weldon and John Rosamond Johnson, it has become a symbol of resistance and resilience for the many generations who have sung it. This beautiful account of the powerful spiritual's creation sheds light on how it came to be so universally revered.

Uncle Jed's Barbershop by Margaree King Mitchell

Uncle Jed's dream is to save enough money to open his own barbershop; however, numerous obstacles continue to get in his way, one of the biggest being the Great Depression. Despite these setbacks, Uncle Jed never gives up hope, and through his tenacity he helps his niece Sarah Jean learn the value of determination and hard work.

The Undefeated by Kwame Alexander

Featuring activists, athletes, musicians and other icons from past to present, Alexander's poetic tribute showcases some of the key leaders and moments in Black history. Stunning oil paintings bring these unforgettable figures and events to life, often speaking louder than the text. *The Undefeated* succeeds in demonstrating that Black lives are full of determination, resilience, and strength. Includes an afterword and back matter on each of the figures.

We Can: Portraits of Power by Tyler Gordon

Renowned artist Tyler Gordon overcame considerable challenges to cultivate his talent, having been born with varying degrees of deafness, blindness, and intellectual disability. But overcome he did, and he channels that spirit of tenacious achievement into these 30 portraits of inspiring icons. Artists, musicians, civil rights leaders, writers, athletes, and more are celebrated through these beautiful paintings accompanied by brief biographies.

When We Say Black Lives Matter by Maxine Beneba Clark

Written in a poetic, almost lullaby-like tone, this title explains the real meaning of the words "Black lives matter". Not only is it beautifully written; it is also gorgeously illustrated with complimentary pictures that jump from the page.



BLACK AGENCY & PERSEVERANCE



***Stacey Abrams and the Fight to Vote* by Traci N. Todd**

This biography of politician and Nobel prize nominee Stacey Abrams focuses on her fight to make voting fair for all Americans. A modern day civil rights leader, Abrams continues the work carried out by generations before her with inspiring determination, perseverance, and courage. The stunning artwork of Coretta Scott King Honoree Laura Freeman further illuminates Abrams' powerful story.

5th–8th Grade

***American Girl: Addy Series* by Connie Porter**

This beloved collection, which debuted as part of the "American Girl" series in 1993, focuses on the escape from enslavement and subsequent life in freedom of nine-year-old Addy Walker. Through her determination to learn, shaped by the love of her family and sense of self-worth, Porter's heroine shows that her life, and the lives of others like her, are integral parts of the American story that deserve to be told.

***Elijah of Buxton* by Christopher Paul Curtis**

Curtis' first-person novel depicts the life of Elijah Freeman, the first freeborn child in an all-Black Canadian town of formerly enslaved people. This unusual perspective, coupled with Elijah's reputation as a "fragile" child, invites discussions about the true nature of freedom, while following a special young boy's awakening to the complexities of the world around him.

***Rebels Against Slavery: American Slave Revolts* by Patricia & Fredrick McKissack**

An excellent introduction to the history of slave revolts in North America and the Caribbean regions. Starting with the first 20 Africans forcibly brought to the "New World" in 1620, the McKissacks highlight the underrepresented perspectives of Africans and Indigenous peoples in Early American history.

***Tristan Strong Trilogy* by Kwame Mbalia**

African American folklore and African mythology converge in this fantasy series about a Chicago middle schooler who is catapulted into a world straight from the stories his grandmother taught. With the help of folklore legends Gum Baby, Brer Rabbit, John Henry, and the trickster Anansi, Tristan uses his griot powers to stop history from repeating itself.

***Twins* by Varian Johnson**

A delightful story about Maureen and Francine, twin sisters and best friends who have always done everything together. But as they start middle school, they find that their interests are branching in different directions. The girls are challenged to overcome their fear of growing apart, realizing that there is always more to learn and understand about one another.

9th–12th Grade

***Angel of Greenwood* by Randi Pink**

Set around the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, this story follows teenagers Angel and Isaiah as they fall in love—unaware that their world is about to fall apart around them. Their happy discovery of romance is countered by the shocking realization that some of their peers are involved in the horrible massacre.

***The Autobiography of Malcom X* by Malcolm X**

This seminal work, which forever changed the nature of the autobiography, details the complex, and ultimately triumphant, evolution of the remarkable man known as Malcolm X. From his troubled youth to his journey with, and away from, the Nation of Islam, X's testimony shows a man's awakening to the deeply rooted racism of American society, and subsequent fight against it. The subtle brilliance of X's thought processes, and his gradual self-actualization, continues to resonate with readers.



BLACK AGENCY & PERSEVERANCE



***Black Panther Party: A Graphic Novel* by David Walker**

The history and legacy of this iconic yet misunderstood activist group is presented in this powerful and engaging graphic novel. Organized by chapters with meticulous analysis, Walker's portrayal dispels myths while using cultural context to trace the origins, goals, and influences of the Black Panther Party, including the contributions of various Black historical figures. The book doesn't shy away from depicting how the government relentlessly targeted the Party's members from the beginning. Ultimately, readers will be encouraged to learn more and reflect on the Panthers' impact.

***Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* by Jeff Chang**

Chang's sweeping coverage of hip-hop's origins and major developments up to the year 2000 is packed with intimate details, extensive contextualization, and utter respect for the art and artists. Even the writing style is undeniably hip-hop, mixing, rapping, breaking, and tagging the history in engaging and flowing prose. A must read for anyone looking to understand the complex cultural roots of the world's most popular music genre.

***Evicted!: the Struggle for the Right to Vote* by Alice Faye Duncan & Charley Palmer**

This book chronicles the struggles of Blacks in the late night 1950s (in Fayette County, Tennessee), as told through the eyes of a child. Middle-grade students navigating the book pages, will learn about one of the country's lesser-known, yet impactful, civil rights movements.

***Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America: The young adult adaptation* by Candacy Taylor**

As Americans fell in love with automobiles and road trips in the 1930's, major hurdles remained for African American travelers. Segregation was the harsh reality, threatening them with physical harm and leaving few establishments that would serve them. However, in 1936 Victor Hugo Green published his Green Book, listing safe places to eat, sleep, and rest. Including rare photographs and interviews, this adaptation brings the "Black travel guide" to life for young adult audiences.

***March (Books 1-3)* by John Lewis**

Legendary activist and politician Jon Lewis chronicles the Civil Rights movement from an intimately personal perspective. The Woolworth sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, Montgomery Marches, and countless other historic moments come to life in moving first-hand accounts, along with Lewis' own inspiring life story. Nate Powell's expressively realistic artwork gives the story a cinematic flow appropriately rife with emotion.



BLACK AGENCY & PERSEVERANCE



***Revolution in Our Time: The Black Panther Party's Promise to the People* by Kekla Magoon**

Award-winning author Kekla Magoon dove deep in her research for this comprehensive and engaging history of the revolutionary black power activist organization. Readers will learn the details of the party's creation, beliefs, accomplishments, and community activism, as well as the effects its legacy continues to have decades after its unfortunate demise.

***Robert Smalls: Tales of the Talented Tenth No. 3* by Joel Christian Gill**

This graphic novel biography depicts the amazing story of real-life hero Robert Smalls – an enslaved African who seized a Confederate ship (the CSS Planter) during the Civil War, escaped to freedom along with his shipmates, and became a groundbreaking Reconstruction-era American politician.

***Troublemaker for Justice: the Story of Bayard Rustin, the Man Behind the March on Washington* by Jacqueline Houtman, et. al**

The little-known story of Bayard Rustin, a foundational figure of the Civil Rights movement who mentored Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is brought to light in this revelatory biography. A man ahead of his time, he made significant contributions not only in the realm of racial activism, but in the fight for gay rights, as well. Readers will be in awe of the perseverance, determination, and innovation of this unsung hero.

***When They Call You A Terrorist: A Story of Black Lives Matter and the Power to Change the World* by Patrisse Khan-Cullors & Asha Bandele**

Part memoir and part social commentary, this powerful and timely work denotes the power of protest and recounts the making of an activist. In this adaptation for young adults, readers will discover the inspiring story that founded a worldwide movement.

BLACK JOY



HISTORY IS RIFE WITH STORIES ABOUT THE UNSPEAKABLE HORRORS OF SUFFERING AND OPPRESSION ENDURED BY BLACK PEOPLE IN AMERICA AND GLOBALLY, DUE TO NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES ASSOCIATED WITH BLACKNESS. HOWEVER, BLACK PEOPLE ACROSS THE DIASPORA FOUND A WAY TO CREATE AND EXPRESS JOYFULNESS AS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE. THE TITLES HIGHLIGHTED HERE ILLUMINATE THE JOY AND PRIDE IN THE TRIUMPHANT HISTORY, CULTURE AND BEAUTY OF BLACKNESS.

Preschool–4th Grade

***A History of Me* by Andrea Theodore**

A young girl, the only Black child in her class, experiences feelings of negativity and racism from her classmates. Through her mother’s affirmations and guidance, the girl finds strength and pride in her reflection, as well as her family history. Familial love, validation, and the role that this plays in countering negative self-perception adds an important reminder to both adults and children.

***Baby Young, Gifted, and Black: With a Mirror!* by Jamia Wilson**

This empowering board book is a survey of trailblazers in black history. The affirming text tells children that they have the same remarkable qualities as the inspiring activists, authors, politicians, and other pioneers. Many of the subjects will be familiar, but Wilson also features less well known figures such as author Zadie Smith. Pippins’ colorful, afrocentric illustrations are a perfect fit, and the mirror in the back lets readers see themselves alongside the icons.

***The Blacker The Berry* by Joyce Carol Oates**

In this moving celebration of Black phenotypes, all complexions and skin tones are celebrated, from the darkest to the lightest. Thomas’ free verse poems, each told from the perspective of one child, highlight the joy and pride that they feel in how they look, while immediately and emphatically dismissing any negativity that others might try to send their way. Cooper’s beautifully detailed illustrations show the character of each child and a variety of environments.

***Bronzeville Boys and Girls* by Gwendolyn Brooks**

This collection of poetry by Gwendolyn Brooks—Pulitzer Prize winner and progeny of the Chicago Black Renaissance—celebrates black joy and the unbridled freedom of childhood. Alongside the thirty-four poems are illustrations by Caldecott Honor artist Faith Ringgold, wonderfully augmenting the scenes of Black urban life.

***Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* by Derrick Barnes**

Told from the perspective of a young Black boy, *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* celebrates the cultural contribution of barbershops as well as the individual impact of, well, a fresh haircut. With a playful exuberance, this picture book invites you to consider the endless opportunities that open up when you feel good about yourself and how the world sees you.

***Daddy Speaks Love* by Leah Henderson**

The secure, deep abiding love between fathers and children is captured perfectly in this picture book. Gentle watercolor illustrations show children and their fathers engaged in a series of activities in which their time with each other is treasured, from playing sports to sitting quietly in each other’s company. The book also demonstrates the variety of ways that fathers show their affection, through words and emotional cues as well as actions.



BLACK JOY



***Hey You!: an Empowering Celebration of Growing Up Black* by Dapo Aeola**

Utterly gorgeous, beautiful, and inspirational picture book with positive and affirming messages for Black children. The amazing illustrations are contributed by 18 very talented Black artists, giving readers a wide range of styles to enjoy.

***Honey, I Love* by Eloise Greenfield**

First published as a series of poems in 1978, this standalone poem celebrates the sheer delight of love. Greenfield's distinctive, emotive text and Gilchrist's perfectly matched illustrations show a Black child's recollection of all the things, people and sensations that they love, from the familiar to the uncommon. Children of various ages and interests can find common ground in the list of things to be loved, while adding ideas of their own.

***Let's Clap, Jump, Sing & Shout; Dance, Spin & Turn It Out! Stories & Songs from an African* by American Childhood by Patricia McKissack**

A thorough and loving ode to Black children's chants, rhymes, and other childhood games. The collection creates great opportunities to foster cross-generational connections, prompting caregivers to (re)discover rhymes and chants they may recall from childhood as they introduce them to the children in their lives. Pinkney's warm, free-flowing illustrations and historical notes about the songs' origins add to the beauty and utility of the text.

***The Me I Choose to Be* by Natasha Tarpley**

With a nod to afrofuturism, *I Love My Hair!* author Natasha Tarpley and the husband/wife team behind CreativeSoul Photography, Regis and Kahran Bethencourt, join forces to bring us a beautiful ode to the endless possibilities of childhood. Whimsical, futuristic photographs of Black children accompany poetic and affirming text in this breath-taking testament to the power of visual-telling.

***Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* by John Steptoe**

A classic Zimbabwean folktale of two beautiful sisters with opposite temperaments: one gentle and kind, the other selfish and rude. When the king calls for a wife, both sisters must present themselves and prepare for the possibility of leaving their father. Unbeknownst to them, the king's call is a test of their characters, through which they learn a valuable lesson about humanity. The beautiful watercolors bring this time-honored tale to vibrant life.

***New Year Be Comin': A Gullah Year* by Katherine Boling & David Minter**

A warm, colorful and necessary introduction to the diversity of Black American ethnic groups. Written in the language of the Gullah Geechie people of the South Carolina Lowcountry, this picture book of months follows a series of children throughout the year as they learn, play and explore the world around them, while looking forward to the new year. A glossary of terms and pronunciations is also included.

***Nigel and the Moon* by Antwon Eady**

Nigel has dreams of being a dancer, astronaut, and superhero, but he's too afraid to share them with anyone except the moon. When career week comes around at school, he worries that his classmates won't understand him or his parents' middle class jobs. But his parents' encouragement to dream big helps Nigel find the courage to overcome his fears. With its lovely watercolor illustrations, this one speaks to dreams, confidence, and pride.



BLACK JOY



***Soul Food Sunday* by Winsome Bingham**

This vibrant picture book celebrates a large family getting together for Sunday soul food dinner with a switch up in the routine. This week the young narrator learns how to make classic dishes including chicken, mac 'n cheese, and greens with guidance from his loving grandmother. The bright, oil-painted illustrations bring the food and family to life in this wonderfully relatable story celebrating a familiar family tradition. Includes recipes for mac 'n' cheese and sweet tea!

***When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop* by Carrick Hill Laban**

This picture book biography follows Clive Campbell, also known as DJ Kool Herc, and his contributions to the global movement known as Hip Hop. Nicknamed "Hercules" or "Herc," Clive is amplified for his pioneering introduction of the "breakbeat," the musical foundation for the four elements of Hip Hop – deejaying, break dancing, graffiti, and rapping. Expressive, colorful illustrations and a timeline provide context for readers of all ages seeking a primer on the origins of Hip Hop.

***The World Belonged to Us* by Jacqueline Woodson**

Two award-winning veterans of children's literature come together to create an ode to summertime fun. Set in Brooklyn, New York, this book celebrates old-school street play, including Double Dutch, hide-and-seek, and chasing the ice cream truck from sunup until the street light comes on. The exciting games and vibrant illustrations are sure to engage young readers, and the nostalgic setting is likely to put a smile on the faces of caregivers, as well.

5th–8th Grade

***Black Boy Joy: 17 Stories Celebrating Black Boyhood* edited by Kwame Mbalia**

Black boys of all backgrounds will enjoy seeing themselves reflected in this anthology. Featuring acclaimed Black authors and written in a variety of styles, the book's affirming text celebrates the multifaceted thoughts and experiences of Black boys, validating their lives while encouraging them to seek, and delight in, elements of joy throughout. The volume's intentional prioritization of happiness, even in the midst of pressures towards the opposite, sends a welcome and inviting message.

***Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis**

This heartwarming and humorous novel follows the adventures of Bud Caldwell, a 10-year-old orphan searching for answers about his life during the Great Depression. Tired of a series of unpleasant foster homes, Bud sets out for Grand Rapids, Michigan, in search of his father, with unexpected results. Bud's quirky, slightly offbeat way of looking at the world masks a deep desire for a real home and what it symbolizes, which makes his journey both believable and relatable.

***New Kid* by Jerry Craft**

An award-winning middle grade graphic novel about Jordan Banks, the newest student at a prestigious prep school in the suburbs of New York City. As one of the few kids of color, Jordan struggles to cope with his new environment, learning to overcome micro-aggressions and prejudice.

9th–12th Grade

***The Skin I'm In* by Sharon G. Flake**

Flake's classic young adult novel spotlights the painful, unrelenting issue of colorism. Maleeka Madison, a brilliant teenager who contains multitudes, is frequently bullied for her dark complexion. Her perspective and self-image are forever changed by a new teacher who is also an outsider. As Maleeka's confidence grows, she begins to confront the issues around her and unapologetically asserts that what she has to say deserves to be heard.

***What Momma Left Me* by Renee Watson**

A young Black girl grapples with her faith after experiencing a terrible loss: the death of her beloved mother at her father's hands. Serenity and her brother Danny are sent to live with their maternal grandparents, who are loving but essentially strangers to them. Through her introspection, caring, and growing connections with those around her, Serenity lives up to her name as she uses her newfound lessons to walk into her future—one of her choosing.



POWER & OPPRESSION



THE STORY OF BLACK PEOPLE IN THE DIASPORA IS A COMPLEX HISTORY THAT CAN ONLY TRULY BE TOLD THROUGH THE WORDS OF THOSE WHO HAVE CREATED IT. POWER AND OPPRESSION PLAY VITAL ROLES IN THESE NARRATIVES AS THEY REFLECT THE RACISM, WHITE SUPREMACY, AND ANTI-BLACK SENTIMENT LACED THROUGH THE LIVES OF BLACK PEOPLE.

Preschool-4th Grade

***Juneteenth for Mazie* by Floyd Cooper**

A little girl learns about Juneteenth from her Dad, who recounts their ancestor's road from slavery to freedom when the Emancipation Proclamation made it to Texas.

A gentle introduction to Juneteenth for young readers, highlighting both the celebration and the significance of Black America's journey from then until now to gain freedom and opportunity.

***Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre* by Carole Boston Weatherford**

This picture book illustrates a hidden truth marred in devastation, hate, and death, traces the history of African Americans in the Tulsa Greenwood District and chronicles the events that occurred when a white mob attacked their community. The Tulsa Race Massacre is one of American history's most violent racial incidents and is vividly captured in this title through noteworthy illustrations and word choice.

***Your Legacy: A Bold Reclaiming of Our Enslaved History* by Schele Williams**

This bright, bold book serves as a direct and much-needed challenge to the feelings of shame surrounding the history of African-Americans' enslaved ancestors. Beginning in Africa and following the journey to America, Williams' text emphasizes the people and their inherent dignity over the inhumane circumstances forced upon them. The book also celebrates the continued survival of their descendants in the present-day as a miraculous circumstance to take pride in.

5th-8th Grade

***Freewater* by Amina Luqman-Dawson**

Homer and Ada are separated from their mother during a treacherous journey to escape the plantation where they were enslaved. They are rescued by Suleman, who takes them deep into the swamp to a thriving community of people who have escaped slavery, along with their freeborn children. *Freewater*, both a well-researched historical fiction narrative and a harrowing adventure story, attests to the harm caused by American slavery as well as the heroic resistance of enslaved people.

***The Power Book* by Claire Saunders, et. al**

An essential item for any young reader's library, this thorough yet accessibly written survey of power as theoretical concept addresses a numerous topics, ranging from authority within families and schools to broader issues such as nationhood, war, racism, sexism, and homophobia. Young people are also taught to understand their own power, and prompted to use it for positive change. Bright, upbeat illustrations compliment the relatable, discussion-based text.

***Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds & Ibram Kendi X**

A remix of the National Book Award Winning adult title *Stamped* from the Beginning to tweens and teens, this adaptation speaks the complex but honest truth about racism in America. Written in accessible language by YA favorite Jason Reynolds, *Stamped* explains the roots of racism and the work towards anti-racism.

POWER & OPPRESSION



9th-12th Grade

***Dear Martin* by Nic Stone**

Justyce is a top prep-school student bound for the Ivy League, yet wherever he goes there seems to be no way to outsmart racism. Shaken after being racially profiled by the police, Justyce starts a journal of letters to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., sorting out his emotions about race relations and police brutality. This gripping novel chronicles a journey all too familiar for many Black teenagers unsure of their futures and their safety.

***The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas**

Between her PWI (predominantly white institution) private school, her crazy extended family, and her white boyfriend, 16-year-old Starr Carter is already juggling a complicated life. Unfortunately, her ability to cope is pushed to the extreme when she witnesses the fatal police shooting of a childhood friend. Thomas's debut YA novel is an incredibly authentic, impactful, and intelligent exploration of police brutality, as well as numerous other issues Black teenagers face today.

***Lifting As We Climb: Black Women's Battle for the Ballot Box* by Evette Dionne**

Evette Dionne has done a fantastic job of discussing the role of black women during the fight for women's suffrage in the early 20th century, explaining concepts like intersectionality and examining the exclusion of Black voices from the white-dominated movement. Eye-opening, uplifting, inspirational, and expertly tailored to young readers.

***The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B DuBois**

This brilliant collection of essays by Black Studies pioneer W. E. B. Du Bois is one of the field's most foundational works, introducing concepts that have retained poignancy for over 100 years. Du Bois eloquently melds together existential philosophy, historical analysis, political commentary, and old-fashioned storytelling to create a call to action that is as moving as it is informative.

***Their Eyes were Watching God* by Zora Neal Hurston**

Persistence over adversity in pursuit of "Black joy" is the overarching theme of this seminal work by acclaimed Harlem Renaissance author Zora Neale Hurston. Originally published in 1937 and written in African American Vernacular English (AAVE), *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is the fictional story of Janie Crawford, a strong southern woman who refuses to embrace a life of bitter unhappiness as the way things are for Black women of her time.



PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Opetoritse "Ritse" Adefolalu received his MLS from the iSchool of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2017. He is currently the Children's Librarian at the Lower Mills Branch of the **Boston Public Library**, and previously headed Teen Services for the Inglewood Public Library. Black History has long been at the forefront of Ritse's studies and work. He believes libraries are uniquely equipped to make underrepresented narratives accessible and engaging for youth.

Tamela Chambers is currently the branch manager of the Beverly Branch of the **Chicago Public Library**. Her decades-long career has afforded her the opportunity to work with children, teens and their families as both a school and public librarian. Tamela is a graduate of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with a M.S in Library Science and a graduate of National Louis University with a M.Ed in Early Childhood Curriculum and Instruction and Certificate of Advanced Studies in Education Technology.

Tiffeni Fontno is the Director of the **Peabody Library at Vanderbilt University**. A former classroom teacher and school librarian, Tiffeni's areas of educational interest are Curriculum & Instruction, Children & Young Adult Literature, and Educational Technology.

Taryn Fouche is a Children's Librarian at the Rochdale Village branch of the **Queens Public Library**. In 2016, Taryn received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Baruch College where she majored in Creative Arts Marketing and minored in Religion and Culture. She is a graduate of Queens College where she received a Master of Library and Science degree with a Certificate in Children's and Young Adult Services in the Public Library in May 2020. Her goal as a Children's Librarian is to advocate for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services and resources to children in communities of color and encourage literacy to all.

Tiffany James has worked for The **New York Public Library** for 25+ years in various roles. Currently she works as a School Outreach Specialist at NYPL's Center for Educators & Schools. She is a big advocate for early literacy and parents being involved in their children's learning and development. Her current role allows her to work with students, educators, administrators and families, connecting them to the vast and wonderful resources of The New York Public Library. Tiffany is a native New Yorker and completed her education here as well, with her MLS obtained at Pratt Institute.

Mariel Matthews has been a Children's Librarian with The **New York Public Library** since 2016. Previously, Mariel was an educator with Long Beach Schools, Baltimore City Public Schools and Anne Arundel County Public Schools. While Mariel was in graduate school, she was a Graduate Assistant in The Instructional Media Center with Long Island University's B. Schwartz Library. Mariel holds a Masters of Education in Elementary Education with a minor in Special Education from Dowling College, NY and a Masters in Library and Information Science with a Minor in School Media from Long Island University, Post, NY. Mariel's Bachelors is in Mass Communication from The University of Bridgeport, CT.

Jordan McKenna is a children's librarian in **Chicago, IL**. She currently serves on the BCALA Services to Children and Families of African Descent committee and the executive board of the Chicago Chapter of BCALA. She is an alumna of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and received her MLIS from Dominican University. She believes that libraries are instrumental in empowering children as young historians and researchers, helping them connect the past to the present and offering them the tools to find their own place in the world.

Annelisa J. Purdie received her BA in History from New York University, her MS in American Studies from Columbia University, and her MLIS from St. John's University. A former senior children's librarian at the historic Countee Cullen branch of the New York Public Library, she currently works as a research librarian in the private sector. Forming lasting connections with youth through outreach and the power of literature has always been a major focus of her work. She enjoys researching and sharing the history of Black children's literature, and collaborating with colleagues to raise awareness of the role that librarianship plays in continuing that work.

Fallon White received her BS in Business Administration from Chicago State University and an MLIS from Wayne State University in 2016. She is currently an Adult Librarian/First Assistant at **Chicago Public Library**. Fallon began her career as a Library Page and worked her way up through the ranks, serving all ages. Fallon has also been active in several organizations and committees within Chicago Public Library as well as the Illinois Library Association, and the Black Caucus of the American Library Association.

Wayne Anthony Walters is a Senior Children's Librarian at the **New York Public Library** and currently serves on the BCALA committee for Services to Children and Families of African Descent. Wayne believes that libraries are gems within our communities and is passionate about helping to inspire, guide and build a foundation for children to become lifelong learners and library users. He is a current member of ALA, PLA, ALSC, NYLA and has an MLS degree and certificate in Children and Young Adult Services in the Public Library from the Queens College Graduate School of Library and Information Studies. In addition, Wayne holds a MA degree in Corporate Communications, BA degree in Media & Communication Arts and a certificate in Publishing.