Children’s Comics, Graphic Novels & Picture Books

The Adventures of Sparrowboy
by Brian Pinkney
A paperboy discovers he has superpowers like his hero Falconman.
Ages 0-8

Black Heroes of the Wild West: Featuring Stagecoach Mary, Bass Reeves, and Bob Lemmons
by James Otis Smith
Introduction by Kadir Nelson
This nonfiction graphic novel brings to life the tales of three African American historical figures who made an impact on the Western expansion of the United States and were known for their success as a stagecoach driver, deputy marshal, and horseman.
Ages 8-12

The Crossover (Graphic Novel)
by Kwame Alexander
Art by Dawud Anyabwile
Adapted from the Newbery award-winning novel in verse, this coming-of-age story features twin brothers and their relationships to each other, to their father, and to basketball.
Ages 9-12

Dream Big, Little One
by Vashti Harrison
This beautifully illustrated board book edition of instant bestseller Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History showcases eighteen women who changed the world and is the perfect goodnight book to inspire big dreams.
Ages 0-8

The Little Rock Nine and the Fight for Equal Education
by Gary Jeffrey
Art by Nana Li
This graphic nonfiction follows the African American students chosen to integrate a high school in Little Rock, Arkansas, after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down school segregation.
Ages 9-12

New Kid
by Jerry Craft
When seventh-grader Jordan Banks starts attending a private school that is primarily white, he has to learn how to navigate microaggressions, tokenism, and not fitting in. New Kid won the Coretta Scott King Award (2020) and is the first graphic novel to win the Newbery Medal Award (2020).
Ages 9-12

Shortcut
by Donald Crews
A group of children encounter a freight train after taking a shortcut on the tracks.
Ages 0-8

Bessie Stringfield: Tales of the Talented Tenth, No. 2
by Joel Christian Gill
Imagine a five-foot-two-inch-tall woman riding a motorcycle eight times across the continental United States. Now imagine she is Black and is journeying across the country in the pre-Civil Rights era of the 1930s and ‘40s.
Ages 9-12

Twins
by Varian Johnson
Art by Shannon Wright
Best friends and twin sisters, Maureen and Francine Carter start to grow apart when they enter the 6th grade.
Ages 8-12

When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop
by Laban Carrick Hill
Art by Theodore Taylor III
The beginnings of hip hop in the 1970s and 1980s is introduced through this biography of DJ Kool Herc, starting on the island of Jamaica and moving to the Bronx, NY.
Ages 6-10

Woke Baby
by Mahogany Browne
Art by Theodore Taylor III
Woke babies are up early. Woke babies raise their fists in the air. Woke babies cry out for justice. Woke babies grow up to change the world. This lyrical and empowering book is both a celebration of what it means to be a baby and what it means to be woke. With bright, playful art, Woke Baby is an anthem of hope in a world where the only limit to a skyscraper is more blue.
Ages 0-8

Young Adult
Comics & Graphic Novels

Aya: Life in Yop City
by Marguerite Abouet
Art by Clément Oubrerie
Translated by Helge Dascher
Aya and her friends navigate the paths of womanhood available to them in the Ivory Coast during the late 1970s.
Collects volumes 1-3.

Bingo Love
by Tee Franklin
Art by Jenn St-Onge and Joy San
Two young women meet at church bingo in 1963 and fall in love. They are forced apart and both marry men. Decades later, they meet again at church bingo and rekindle their romance.

Colorblind: A Story of Racism
by Johnathan Harris
Art by Donald Hudson and Fahriza Kamaputra
A fifteen-year-old African American boy relays his experiences with racism and the lessons he learned in this autobiographical story.
Colored: The Unsung Life of Claudette Colvin
by Émilie Plateau
This biography follows Claudette Colvin, who was arrested at the age of 15 when she refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, a short time before Rosa Parks.

E.X.O.: The Legend of Wale Williams, Part One: A Superhero Graphic Novel
by Roye Okupe
Art by Sunkanmi Akinboye
In 2025 Nigeria, superpowered Wale Williams investigates his father’s disappearance.

(H)afrocentric Comics, Volumes 1–4
by Juliana “Jewels” Smith
Art by Ronald Nelson and Mike Hampton
This critical, wry assessment discusses topics such as gentrification, the housing crisis, and systemic racism.

I Am Alfonso Jones
by Tony Medina
Art by Stacey Robinson and John Jennings
Alfonso Jones, a young Black teen, is only trying to buy a suit when an off-duty cop mistake a clothes hanger for a gun and shoots him on sight.

Icon: A Hero’s Welcome
by Dwayne McDuffie
Art by M.D. Bright
This reprint collects adventures 1-8 of Milestone Comics’ flagship character Augustus Freeman, a superpowered alien being who crash lands on Earth and is raised by enslaved individuals in pre-Civil War America.

Malcolm X: A Graphic Biography
by Andrew Helfer
Art by Randy DuBurke
Malcolm X’s life, from his youth as Malcolm Little to the national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam, is charted in this nonfiction biography.

MARCH
by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin
Art by Nate Powell
U.S. Congressman John Lewis recounts the history of the Civil Rights Movement and his experiences as a civil rights leader.

Monster: A Graphic Novel
by Walter Dean Myers
Adapted by Guy A. Sims
Art by Dawud Anyabwile
Teen Steve Harmon records his experience of awaiting trial for robbery and murder in this graphic adaptation of the award-winning Walter Dean Myers novel.

Pitch Black
by Anthony Horton and Youme Landowne
Art by Youme Landowne
Writer and artist Horton tells his story of living homeless six stories below city streets in New York City’s subway tunnels.

Quincredible, Vol. 1: Quest to Be the Best!
by Rodney Barnes
Art by Selina Espiritu and Kelly Fitzpatrick
Quin is a normal teen just trying to fit in. But Quin discovers a secret superpower: invulnerability. Can Quin use his new super-ability to save his family and his New Orleans community?

Race to Incarcerate: A Graphic Retelling
by Marc Mauer
Adapted by Sabrina Jones
Art by Sabrina Jones
Explore the causes of the exponential growth of the U.S. prison system and how the country has produced the highest rate of incarceration in the world.

Showtime at the Apollo: The Epic Tale of Harlem’s Legendary Theater
by Ted Fox
Adapted by James Otis Smith
Art by James Otis Smith
This graphic adaptation of the 1983 prose work depicts the history of the Apollo theater, as well as legendary artists that performed there.

Victor LaValle’s Destroyer
by Victor LaValle
Art by Dietrich Smith
A modern spin on Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, Victor LaValle’s Destroyer brings forth two monsters—the original and the one created through a mother’s grief over her son’s murder. Who is the real monster and what makes us human?

Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty
by G. Neri
Art by Randy Duburke
This fictional retelling of the life of 11-year-old Robert “Yummy” Sandifer attempts to explain the circumstances that turned a young boy from candy-loving child to gun-wielding gang member.

Adult Comics & Graphic Novels

APB: Artists against Police Brutality: A Comic Book Anthology
Edited by Bill Campbell, Jason Rodriguez, and John Jennings
Comics, essays, art, and stories about police brutality are collected in this powerful anthology.

Are You at Risk for “Empathy Myopia”? http://www.ezracdaniels.com/empathymypia
by Ezra Claytan Daniels
Upgrade Soul author and BTTM FDRS writer Daniels offers readers a “thought experiment” to consider the narratives we tell about ourselves, the world we live in, and how a critical evaluation of these stories might break us free. Also available in print.

Big Black: Stand at Attica
by Frank “Big Black” Smith and Jared Reinmuth
Art by Ameziane
Big Black chronicles his time as a prisoner in Attica State Prison and the 1971 rebellion against injustices in the prison system.
Bitter Root
by David F. Walker and Chuck Brown
Art by Sanford Greene
The Sanger family is racing the clock to save 1920s New York from supernatural forces threatening to infect the community with hate.

Black
by co-creators Kwanza Osajyefo and Tim Smith 3
Art by Jamal Igle
When a young man survives being shot by police, he discovers that he’s a part of a small group of Black people who possess superpowers.

The Harlem Hellfighters
by Max Brooks
Art by Caanan White
This fictionalized story of the all-Black 369th Infantry follows members from World War I France and never shies away from the prejudice they encountered along the way.

From Truth With Truth
by Lawrence Lindell
In this “Kinda a Graphic Memoir,” Lindell shares insight into his childhood and adolescence and learns to come to terms with depression, PTSD, and bipolar disorder in concert with his identity.

Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation
by Octavia Butler
Adapted by Damian Duffy
Art by John Jennings
Octavia Butler’s Kindred comes to life in this graphic retelling of an African American woman transported back to her family’s antebellum beginnings and the ties that bond them together.

The Life of Frederick Douglass: A Graphic Narrative of a Slave’s Journey from Bondage to Freedom
by David F. Walker
Art by Damon Smyth and Marissa Louise
An abolitionist, a runaway slave, an esteemed orator, a prolific writer, a progressive leader—whether you only know of Frederick Douglass by name or are already familiar with his storied life, this graphic novel biography will pull you in and leave you with an intimate appreciation of the man behind the name.

The Massacre of Black Wall Street
by Natalie Chang
Art by Clayton Henry and Marcelo Mailo
This scrolling digital comic, commissioned as a companion piece to HBO’s Watchmen series, tells the true and untold story of the 1921 Massacre of Black Wall Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma, during which as many as 300 Black Tulsans were murdered, thousands were left homeless, and the economic prosperity of Black Wall Street obliterated. This nonfiction comic features extensive source material links and resources.

Three-Fifths a Man: A Graphic History of the African American Experience
by Sid Jacobson
Art by Ernie Colón
From the Atlantic slave trade to the Black Lives Matter movement, Jacobson and Colón explore the history of African Americans and their indelible mark on America’s landscape.

Yellow Negroes and Other Imaginary Creatures
by Yvan Alagbé
Set in a French context among Beninese immigrants, the title story in this collection explores life as a member of an overly scrutinized minority.

Suggestions for further reading: