



❖ Teens ❖ Best Books of 2021



[We aim to provide high quality lists featuring books of different genres, interests, maturity levels, and content for children & teens. You and your parents/guardians are the best judge of what's appropriate for you.]

Best Books lists from previous years may be obtained by request at the Youth Services desk.

***Additional formats available from other libraries and/or downloadable from OverDrive/Libby.**

Àbíké-Íyímídé, Faridah – *Ace of Spades*

YA Abike-Iyimide, Fiction*

At Niveus Private Academy, Devon and Chiamaka are the only students chosen to be Senior Prefects who are also black, which makes them targets for a prank that reveals their secrets to the entire student body and quickly turns dangerous.

Aleman, Daniel – *Indivisible*

YA Aleman, Fiction*

Mateo dreams of becoming a Broadway star in NYC, but his life is transformed after his parents are deported to Mexico.

Arnold, David – *The Electric Kingdom*

YA Arnold, Fiction

After a deadly Fly Flu spreads throughout the world, survivors Nico, her dog, young artist Kit, and the mysterious Deliverer roam the earth, seeking to evade the Flies and find a place where life and love can thrive again.

Asphyxia – *The Words in My Hands*

YA Asphyxia, Fiction*

Piper is smart, artistic, rebellious, and struggling to conform to what her mom wants: for her to pass as hearing and get a good job. But with food scarcity, environmental collapse, and political corruption, she is more concerned with survival.

Bayron, Kalynn – *This Poison Heart*

YA Bayron, Fiction*

Teenaged Briseis, who possesses a supernatural power over plants, even poisonous ones, inherits a dilapidated estate in rural New York and must protect herself and her family from centuries-old secrets that threaten their lives.

Becker, Harmony – *Himawari House*

YA Becker, Graphic Novels

Nao, Hyejung, and Tina become fast friends living together in Tokyo and attending the same Japanese cram school. But will they stay friends as life tests them with new loves, old heart breaks, and the challenges of being fish out of water?

***Blackout* (various authors)**

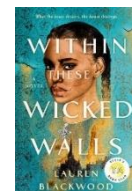
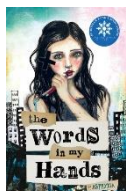
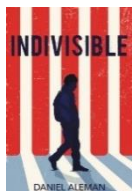
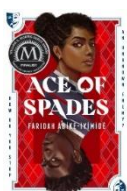
YA Blackout SC, Fiction*

Six critically acclaimed, bestselling, and award-winning authors bring the glowing warmth and electricity of Black teen love to this interlinked novel of charming, hilarious, and heartwarming stories that shine a bright light through the dark.

Blackwood, Lauren – *Within These Wicked Walls*

YA Blackwood, Fiction*

As a debtera, nineteen-year-old Andromeda performs exorcisms to cleanse households of the Evil Eye, but when she agrees to work for handsome, young heir Magnus Rorschach, her job becomes truly terrifying.



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Boulley, Angeline – *Firekeeper’s Daughter* **YA Boulley, Fiction; YA Boulley, Digital Audio Players***
Daunis, who is part Ojibwe, defers attending the University of Michigan to care for her mother and reluctantly becomes involved in the investigation of a series of drug-related deaths.

Bowen, Natasha – *Skin of the Sea* **YA Bowen, Fiction***
Transformed by the goddess Yemoja into a Mami Wati, an African mermaid charged with collecting the souls of those who die at sea, Simi goes against the gods to save a living boy, Kola, from drowning.

Bowman, Erin – *Dustborn* **YA Bowman, Fiction; YA Bowman, CD-Audio Books**
Delta of Dead River sets out to rescue her family from a ruthless dictator rising to power in the Wastes and discovers a secret that will reshape her world.

Bracken, Alexandra – *Lore* **YA Bracken, Fiction***
Every seven years, Greek gods come to Earth as mortals, hunted by the descendants of ancient heroes. These descendants have the chance to seize their immortality, and after the murder of her family, it’s Lore’s turn.

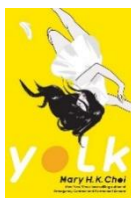
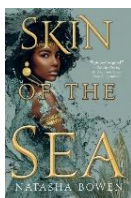
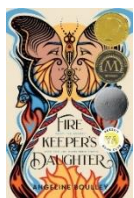
Cameron, Sharon – *Bluebird* **YA Cameron, Fiction***
In 1946, Eva leaves behind the rubble of Berlin for New York City. Stepping from the fiery aftermath of one war into another one, where lies are more plentiful than the truth, she holds the key to a deadly secret: Project Bluebird.

Carson, Rae – *Any Sign of Life* **YA Carson, Fiction***
Paige Miller fears she is the only person left alive in Ohio until she meets a handful of other survivors, and together they struggle with the knowledge that their new reality is the first part of an alien invasion.

Choi, Mary H. K. – *Yolk* **YA Choi, Fiction; YA Choi, CD-Audio Books***
Struggling with emotional problems and an eating disorder, Jayne, a Korean American college student living in New York City, is estranged from her accomplished older sister June, until June gets cancer.

Colbert, Brandy – *Black Birds in the Sky: The Story and Legacy of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre* **976.6 Col YA, Non-Fiction***
The Tulsa Race Massacre is one of the most devastating acts of racial violence in US history. How did it come to pass?

Edgmon, H. E. – *The Witch King* **YA Edgmon, Fiction***
Wyatt, a transgender witch, hides in the human world after he loses control of his magic, but his fiancé, Emyr, a fae prince, is at risk of losing his throne if he does not find and marry Wyatt.



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Elle, J. – *Wings of Ebony*

YA Elle, Fiction*

Half-god, half-human Rue is snatched from her Houston home to Ghazan, a secret land of gods, by her estranged father, then must face an evil determined to steal everything from her.

Elhillo, Safia – *Home is Not a Country*

YA Elhillo, Fiction*

Nima, a Muslim teen, daughter to an immigrant, feels like an outsider. But the life Nima has, and wishes were someone else's, is what she may have to fight for with a fierceness she never knew she had. A searingly honest verse novel.

Gaddy, K. R. – *Flowers in the Gutter: The True Story of the Edelweiss Pirates, Teenagers Who Resisted the Nazis*
940.5343 Gad YA, Non-Fiction*

Fitzsimons, Isaac – *The Passing Playbook*

YA Fitzsimons, Fiction

Love, Simon meets *Bend It Like Beckham* in this feel-good contemporary romance about a trans athlete who must decide between fighting for his right to play and staying stealth.

Foody, Amanda – *All of Us Villains*

YA Foody, Fiction; YA Foody, Digital Audio Players*

Every generation, seven families select a champion to compete in a tournament to the death for control of high magick, but this year, some of the champions are determined to thwart their destinies and rewrite their stories.

Forna, Namina – *The Gilded Ones*

YA Forn, Fiction*

Inspired by the culture of West Africa, a feminist fantasy debut traces the experiences of an intuitive girl who is invited to leave her discriminatory village to join the emperor's army of near-immortal women warriors.

Frasier, Crystal – *Cheer Up! Love and Pompoms*

YA Frasier, Graphic Novels

A sweet, queer teen romance for fans of *Heartstopper!* Annie, a smart, antisocial lesbian pressured to join cheerleading and her former friend Bebe, a trans girl with good grades, rekindle a friendship and find more between them.

Goffney, Joya – *Excuse Me While I Ugly Cry*

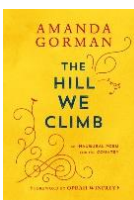
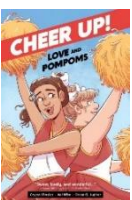
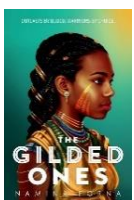
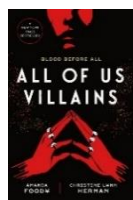
YA Goffney, Fiction*

A story of an overly enthusiastic list maker who is blackmailed into completing a to-do list of all her worst fears. It's a heartfelt, tortured, contemporary YA high school romance.

Gorman, Amanda – *The Hill We Climb*

811.6 Gor YA, Non-Fiction*

On January 20, 2021, Amanda Gorman became the sixth and youngest poet, at age twenty-two, to deliver a poetry reading at a presidential inauguration, and this is her poem.



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Grann, David – *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*

This essential book introduces young readers to the Reign of Terror against the Osage people, one of history's most ruthless and shocking crimes.

976.6 Gra YA, Non-Fiction*

Gray, Ayana – *Beasts of Prey*

Sixteen-year-old indentured beastkeeper, Koffi, and seventeen-year-old warrior candidate, Ekon, forge an unusual alliance and venture into the Greater Jungle to hunt down a monster that has been menacing their city for a century.

YA Gray, Fiction*

He, Joan – *The Ones We're Meant to Find*

In a near future when life is harsh outside of Earth's last unpolluted place, Cee tries to leave an abandoned island while her sister, STEM prodigy Kasey, seeks escape from the science and home she once trusted.

YA He, Fiction; YA He, Digital Audio Players

Henley, Ariel – *A Face for Picasso: Coming of Age with Crouzon Syndrome*

At only eight months old, identical twin sisters Ariel and Zan were diagnosed with Crouzon syndrome, a rare condition where the bones in the head fuse prematurely. They were the first twins known to survive it. This is Ariel's memoir.

Henley YA, Biographies*

Henry, Katie – *This Will Be Funny Someday*

The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel comes to high school in this story about a girl who accidentally falls into the world of stand-up comedy, and needs a new plan when her controlling boyfriend and former best friend become suspicious.

YA Henry, Fiction*

Hur, June – *The Forest of Stolen Girls*

In 1426 in Joseon, a year after her father vanishes while investigating the disappearance of thirteen girls, eighteen-year-old Min Hwani returns to the island of Jeju to pick up his trail with the help of her estranged sister.

YA Hur, Fiction*

Hutchinson, Shaun David – *A Complicated Love Story Set in Space*

Sixteen-year-olds Noa, DJ, and Jenny awake on a spaceship, unaware of how they got there or what is coming, but soon Noa and DJ are falling in love.

YA Hutchinson, Fiction*

Jackson, Tiffany D. – *White Smoke*

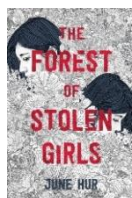
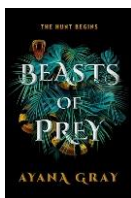
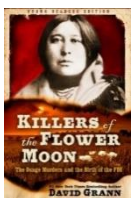
Believing her new home to actually be alive, especially when her brother almost dies, Marigold and her new blended family won't be safe until she brings the truth to light once and for all.

YA Jackson, Fiction; YA Jackson, Digital Audio Players*

Johnston, E. K. – *Aetherbound*

After escaping her abusive family's interstellar merchant ship, seventeen-year-old Pendt lands on a remote space station run by the Brannick twins, and together they make plans to thwart the destinies they never wanted.

YA Johnston, Fiction



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Keil, Michelle Ruiz – *Summer in the City of Roses*

YA Keil, Fiction

In 1990s Portland, Oregon, 17-year-old Iph, aided by George, a modern-day Robin Hood, seeks her sensitive 15-year-old brother, Orr, while Orr has escaped wilderness boot camp and is residing with The Furies, an all-girl punk band.

Larson, Hope – *Salt Magic*

+Larson, Graphic Novels*

Twelve-year-old Vonceil Taggart, willing to risk everything to set things right, leaves her family's Oklahoma farm in 1919 seeking the salt witch who cast a spell that turned their spring to saltwater.

Lee, Emery – *Meet Cute Diary*

YA Lee, Fiction*

Felix Ever After meets Becky Albertalli in this swoon-worthy, heartfelt rom-com about how a transgender teen's first love challenges his ideas about perfect relationships.

Lesperance, Nicole – *The Wide Starlight*

YA Lesperance, Fiction

Eli was six when her mother disappeared off a frozen fjord in Norway under the Northern Lights and now, at age sixteen, she returns, determined to discover what really happened.

Lewis, Jessica – *Bad Witch Burning*

YA Lewis, Fiction

Sixteen-year-old Katrell uses her witchy powers to talk to the dead and escape her home life. When she disregards the dead's warnings to stop, dark forces begin to close in, forcing Katrell to make some hard decisions.

Lim, Elizabeth – *Six Crimson Cranes*

YA Lim, Fiction*

The exiled Princess Shiori must unravel the curse that turned her six brothers into cranes. She is assisted by her spurned betrothed, a capricious dragon, and a paper bird brought to life by her own magic.

Little Badger, Darcie – *A Snake Falls to Earth*

A 16-yr-old Lipan Apache girl from Texas and a cottonmouth person from the spirit world connect when both need help. An atmospheric, world-straddling, dual-narrative tale laced with themes of climate change, family, and identity.

YA Little Badger, Fiction; YA Little Badger, Digital Audio Players*

Lo, Malinda – *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*

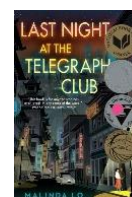
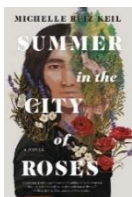
YA Lo, Fiction*

In Chinatown in 1954, McCarthyism and the Red Scare are very real threats to Chinese American Lily's family. She could lose everything for dating anyone white, let alone Kathleen Miller, but could lose herself if she isn't true to her feelings.

Lord, Emma – *You Have a Match*

YA Lord, Fiction; YA Lord, Digital Audio Players*

A DNA test reveals that Abby has a sister she never knew about and they head off to summer camp together to uncover family secrets. A bright summer tale of connection and self-discovery with a touch of romance.



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Mafi, Tahereh – *An Emotion of Great Delight*

YA Mafi, Fiction*

In the wake of 9/11, Shadi, a child of Muslim immigrants, tries to navigate her crumbling world of death, heartbreak, and bigotry in silence, until finally everything changes.

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

322.42 Mag YA, Non-Fiction*

With passion and precision, Kekla Magoon relays an essential account of the Black Panthers, as militant revolutionaries and as human rights advocates working to defend and protect their community.

Marshall, Kate Alice – *Our Last Echoes*

YA Marshall, Fiction*

In 1973, the thirty-one residents of Bitter Rock disappeared. In 2003, so did my mother. Now, I've come to Bitter Rock to find out what happened to her, and to me. Because Bitter Rock has many ghosts. And I might be one of them.

McBride, Amber – *Me (Moth)*

YA McBride, Fiction*

Moth, who lost her family in an accident, and Sani, who is battling ongoing depression, take a road trip that has them chasing ghosts and searching for ancestors. A surprising, powerful and unforgettable novel in verse.

McLemore, Anna-Marie – *The Mirror Season*

YA McLemore, Fiction*

After Ciela and Lock are sexually assaulted at the same party, they develop a cautious friendship through her family's possibly-magical pastelería and his secret forest of otherworldly trees.

Meyer, Marissa – *Gilded*

YA Meyer, Fiction*

When one of Serilda's outlandish tales draws the attention of the sinister Erlking and his undead hunters, she is swept away into a grim world where ghouls and hollow-eyed ravens track her every move. A Rumpelstiltskin retelling.

Moldavsky, Goldy – *The Mary Shelley Club*

YA Moldavsky, Fiction*

When a prank at Manchester Prep puts Rachel on the radar of a mysterious student society, "The Mary Shelley Club," they subject her to a number of escalating Fear Tests which eventually puts them on the radar of a serial killer.

Morris, Brittney – *The Cost of Knowing*

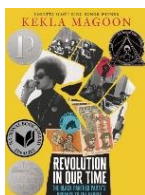
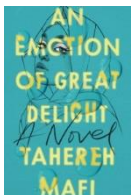
YA Morris, Fiction; YA Morris, CD-Audio Books

Sixteen-year-old Alex Rufus's curse of seeing the future distracts him from being and doing his best, but when he sees his little brother Isaiah's imminent death, he races against time, death, and circumstances to save him.

Narváez-Varela, Alessandra – *Thirty Talks Weird Love*

YA Narváez-Varela, Fiction

In Ciudad Juárez, Mexico in 1999, where kidnapping of girls and women is common, a woman approaches thirteen-year-old Anamaria claiming to be her future self, offering advice and requesting help.



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Ostertag, Molly – *The Girl from the Sea*

YA Ostertag, Graphic Novels*

After her parents' divorce and realizing she's gay, Morgan Kwon is drowning. Figuratively and literally, when she bumps her head and falls into the ocean. She's saved by a teenage girl who is actually a selkie, and sweet romance blossoms.

Owen, Margaret – *Little Thieves*

YA Owen, Fiction*

A scrappy maid must outsmart palace nobles and Low Gods in a new fantasy by the author of the *Merciful Crow* series.

Polydoros, Aden – *The City Beautiful*

YA Polydoros, Fiction*

Chicago, 1893. For Alter, this is the land of opportunity, but then his best friend, Yakov, becomes the latest of murdered Jewish boys. Now possessed by Yakov's dybbuk, he must track down the killer, before the killer claims them both.

Quindlen, Kelly – *She Drives Me Crazy*

YA Quindlen, Fiction*

After an embarrassing loss to her ex-girlfriend in basketball, Scottie gets into a fender bender with her nemesis, Irene, the head cheerleader. The girls are forced to carpool, and fake dating hijinks to make the ex-girlfriend jealous ensue.

Rivera, Lilliam – *We Light Up the Sky*

YA Rivera, Fiction; YA Rivera, Digital Audio Players

Three Latinx teenagers struggle to deal with encounters with an alien, and try to warn the world of the possibility of an alien invasion. But should they save a world that doesn't want to save them?

Saft, Allison – *Down Comes the Night*

YA Saft, Fiction

Talented healer Wren Southerland unknowingly accepts a request to cure the kingdom's most powerful enemy soldier, Hal Cavendish, only to find herself torn between duty and her heart when they uncover a sinister plot.

Schneider, Robyn – *The Other Merlin*

YA Schneider, Fiction

Emry, the daughter of the famed wizard Merlin, must disguise herself as her twin brother to learn magic in Prince Arthur's court, where she finds scandal, danger, and romance.

Sharpe, Tess – *The Girls I've Been*

YA Sharpe, Fiction*

When Nora, the daughter of a con artist, is taken hostage in a bank heist, every secret she has begins to unravel.

Sheinkin, Steve – *Fallout: Spies, Superbombs, and the Ultimate Cold War Showdown*

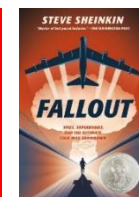
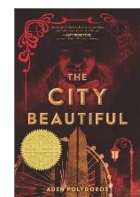
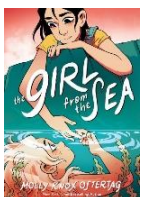
972.91 She YA, Non-Fiction*

In 1961, the world almost came to an end when U.S. and Soviet nuclear weapons were armed and ready. Sheinkin offers an intense narrative that captures the terrifying tensions of the Cold War.

Smart, Ciannon – *Witches Steeped in Gold*

YA Smart, Fiction*

Two enemy witches enter into a deadly alliance to take down a tyrant who threatens both their worlds.



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Stork, Francisco X. – *On the Hook*

YA Stork, Fiction*

Hector has always minded his own business, but when Joey, affiliated with the Discípulos gang, tells Hector that he's going to kill him, Hector is frozen with fear. A fight escalates, and Hector must take a stand and face the consequences.

Sutherland, Krystal – *House of Hollow*

YA Sutherland, Fiction*

Iris and Vivi work to uncover their dark, dangerous, and possibly magical past when their older sister Grey goes missing.

Thomas, Aiden – *Lost in the Never Woods*

YA Thomas, Fiction*

When children start to go missing in the local woods, eighteen-year-old Wendy Darling must face her fears and a past she cannot remember to rescue them in this novel based on Peter Pan.

Thomas, Angie – *Concrete Rose*

YA Thomas, Fiction; YA Thomas, Digital Audio Players*

Son of a former gang legend, Mav supports his family by dealing for the King Lords. Life's not perfect, but with a fly girlfriend and a cousin who always has his back, Mav's got everything under control. Until he finds out he's a father.

Vasquez Gilliland, Raquel – *How Moon Fuentes Fell in Love with the Universe*

YA Vasquez Gilliland, Fiction*

When 17-year-old Star reaches social media stardom, her opposite twin, Moon, becomes "merch girl" on a tour bus full of beautiful influencers and the grumpy, but attractive, Santiago Philips.

Williams-Garcia, Rita – *A Sitting in St. James*

YA Williams-Garcia, Fiction*

In 1860 Louisiana, eighty-year-old Madame Sylvie decides to sit for a portrait, as horrific stories that span generations from the big house and the slave fields are revealed.

Wong, Alice – *Disability Visibility: 17 First-Person Stories for Today*

305.9 Dis YA, Non-Fiction*

Thought-provoking essays written by disabled people with keen insight into the complex and rich disability experience. The authors ask readers to think of them as members of a community with its own history, culture and movements.

Yoon, Nicola – *Instructions for Dancing*

YA Yoon, Fiction; YA Yoon, Digital Audio Players*

Yvette, who has given up on love, gains the ability to see how other people's romantic relationships will end.

Zentner, Jeff – *In the Wild Light*

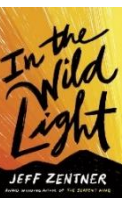
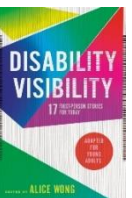
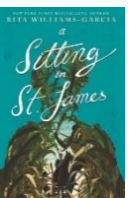
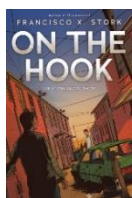
YA Zentner, Fiction*

Attending an elite prep school with his best friend (and secret love), science genius Delaney Doyle, sixteen-year-old Cash Pruitt struggles with emotional pain and loss until his English teacher suggests writing poetry.

Zhao, Xiran Jay – *Iron Widow*

YA Zhao, Fiction*

Offering herself up as a concubine-pilot to assassinate the man responsible for her sister's death, Zetian discovers her true destiny as an Iron Widow and must use her strength to force her society to stop failing its women and girls.



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