

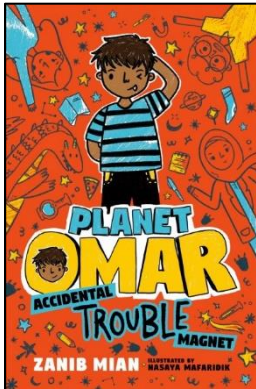
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CHILDREN'S BOOKSLIST

Talking About Race

Books for Grades 3 – 6

Seeing diverse experiences represented in books helps children to explore their own identities and develop empathy for others. These books can offer a starting point for conversations about race and racism.



Accidental Trouble Magnet

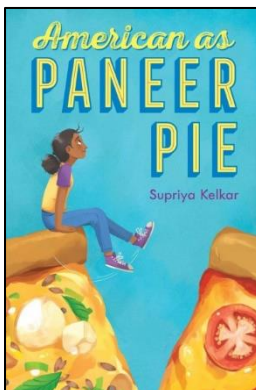
by Zanib Mian; illustrated by Nasaya Mafaridik

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Mian

Omar and his family have just moved, and he is NOT excited about starting at a new school. What if the work is too hard or the kids are mean or the teacher is a zombie alien?! But when Omar makes a new best friend, things start looking up. That is, until a Big Mean

Bully named Daniel makes every day a nightmare! Luckily, Omar's enormous imagination and goofy family help him get through life's ups and downs.

Suggested for ages 8-12



American as Paneer Pie

by Supriya Kelkar

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Kelkar

As the only Indian American kid in her small town, Lekha Divekar feels like she has two versions of herself, Home Lekha, who loves watching Bollywood movies and eating Indian food, and School Lekha, who keeps her head down and tries to avoid harassment

from racist classmates. But when a local politician's xenophobic campaign leads to a racist attack, Lekha must decide whether to stay silent or finally speak up.

Suggested for ages 8-12





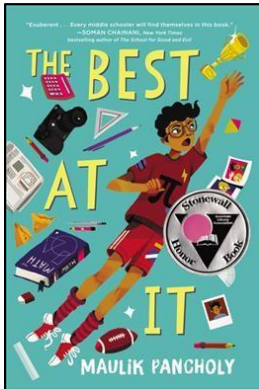
Amina's Voice

by Hena Khan

Middle Grade Novel (2017)
J Khan

Amina has never been comfortable in the spotlight. She is happy just hanging out with her best friend, Soojin. Except now that she's in middle school everything feels different. Soojin is suddenly hanging out one of the "cool" girls in the class, and even talking about changing her name to something more "American." Does Amina need to start changing too? Or hiding who she is to fit in? While Amina grapples with these questions, she is devastated when her local mosque is vandalized.

Suggested for ages 9-13



The Best At It

by Maulik Pancholy

Middle Grade Novel (2019)
J Pancholy

Rahul Kapoor feels anxious about starting seventh grade, so his grandfather gives him some advice: *Find the one thing you're really good at and become the BEST at it.* Well, Rahul is not quite sure what that special thing is, he is convinced that once he finds it, bullies like Brent Mason will stop torturing him at school. And he won't be worried about staring too long at his classmate Justin. With his best friend, Chelsea, by his side, Rahul is ready to crush this challenge... But what if he discovers he isn't *the best* at anything?

Suggested for ages 9-13



Black Brother, Black Brother

by Jewell Parker Rhodes

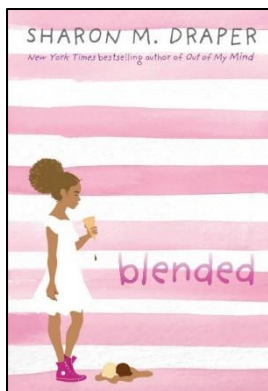
Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J-MS Rhodes

Donte wishes he were invisible. He is one of the few black boys at Middlefield Prep - most of the students don't look like him, and they don't like him, either. Dubbed the "Black Brother," Donte's teachers and classmates make it clear they wish he were more like his lighter skinned brother, Trey. Quiet, obedient. When he is suspended unjustly after an incident involving the school bully, "King" Alan, Donte decides that the only way to get even is to beat the king of the school at his own game: fencing.

Also available as an OverDrive Audiobook.

Suggested for ages 9-13





Blended

by Sharon M. Draper

Middle Grade Novel (2018)

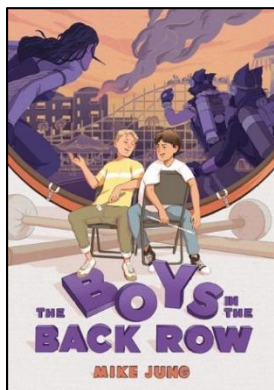
J Jung

“You’re so exotic!” “You look so unusual.” “But what are you really?” Eleven-year-old Isabella is used to these kinds of comments – her father is black, her mother is white – but that doesn’t mean she likes them. And now that her parents are

divorced (and getting along WORSE than ever), Isabella feels more like a push-me-pull-me toy. Being split between Mom and Dad is more than switching houses, nicknames, and backpacks: it’s also about switching identities. If you’re only seen as half of this and half of that, how can you ever feel whole?

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook.

Suggested for ages 10-14



The Boys in the Back Row

by Mike Jung

Middle Grade Novel (2020)

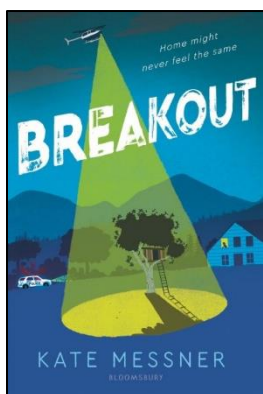
J Jung

Best friends Matt and Eric are hatching a plan for one big final adventure before Eric moves away: during the marching band competition at a Giant Amusement Park, they will sneak away to a nearby comics convention and meet their idol – a famous comics

creator. Without cell phones. Or transportation. Or permission. Make way for hilariously flawed hijinks and geekiness galore!

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook.

Suggested for ages 10-14



Breakout

by Kate Messner

Middle Grade Novel (2018)

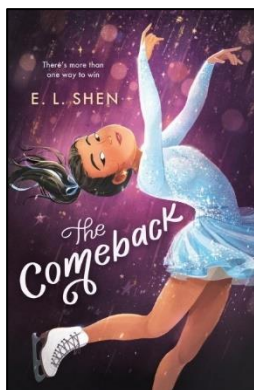
J Messner

Best friends Nora and Lizzie, as well as new girl Elidee, are looking forward to summer vacation in their small town of Wolf Creek. But when two inmates break out of the town’s maximum security prison, tensions begin to rise. Doors are locked, helicopters fly over the

woods, and police patrol the school grounds. Worst of all, everyone is on edge – will life in Wolf Creek ever be the same again?

Suggested for ages 9-14





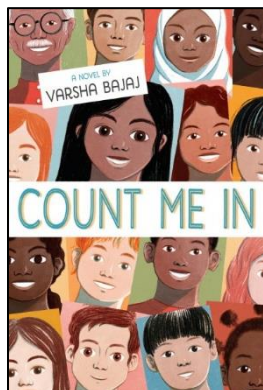
The Comeback

by E. L. Shen

Middle Grade Novel (2021)
J Shen

Maxine is just trying to nail that perfect landing: on the ice, in middle school, and at home, where her parents worry that competitive skating is too much pressure for a budding tween. Maxine isn't concerned, however – she's determined to glide to victory. But then a remarkably talented new girl in the arena and a racist classmate at school test her resolve. Will Maxine crash under the pressure? Or can she power her way to a comeback?

Suggested for ages 8-12



Count Me In

by Varsha Bajaj

Middle Grade Novel (2019)
J Bajaj

Even though seventh-graders Karina and Chris are next-door neighbors, they don't really know each other. But when Karina's grandfather, Papa, starts tutoring Chris, they start to become friends. Then one afternoon something unimaginable happens – the three of them are assaulted by a stranger who targets Indian American Karina and her grandfather because of how they look. With Papa gravely injured, Karina and Chris set out to stand up to racism and bring their community together.

Suggested for ages 9-14



Each Tiny Spark

by Pablo Cartaya

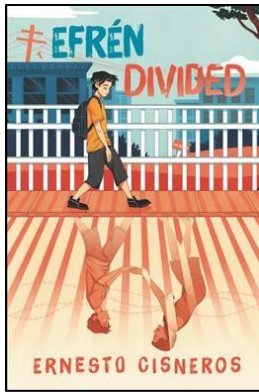
Middle Grade Novel (2019)
J Cartaya

Emilia Torres has a wandering mind. It's hard for her to follow along at school, and sometimes she forgets to do what her mom or abuela asks. But she remembers what matters: a time when her family was whole and home made sense. When Dad returns from deployment, Emilia expects that her life will get back to normal. Instead, it unravels. Can Emilia find a way to repair her family?

Also available as an OverDrive Audiobook.

Suggested for ages 10-14





Efrén Divided

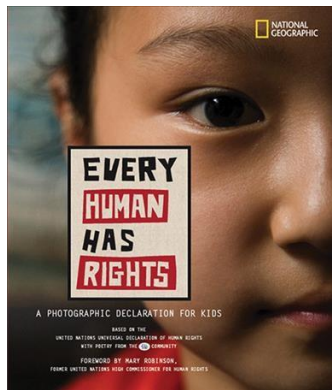
by Ernesto Cisneros

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Cisneros

Efrén Nava's parents work hard all day to provide for the family, making sure Efrén and his younger siblings Max and Mía feel safe and loved. But Efrén worries about his parents; although he's American-born, his parents are undocumented. His worst nightmare comes true one day when Amá doesn't return from work and is deported across the border to Tijuana, México. Now more than ever, Efrén must find his inner superhero so that he can help take care of and try to reunite his family.

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook.

Suggested for ages 9-13



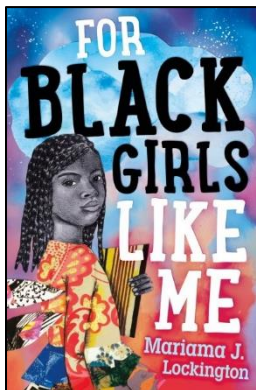
Every Human Has Rights: A Photographic Declaration for Kids

by National Geographic

Nonfiction Photo-Essay Book (2009)
J323 Every

This full-color photo-essay volume celebrates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, set down by the United Nations in 1948. *Every Human Has Rights* offers kids an accessibly written list of these rights, commentary – much of it deeply emotional – by other kids, and richly evocative photography illustrating each right.

Suggested for ages 10-14



For Black Girls Like Me

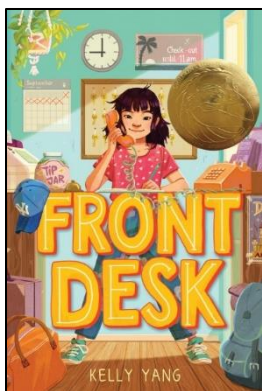
by Miriama J. Lockington

Middle Grade Novel (2019)
J Lockington

Makeda is eleven years old, adopted, and black. Her parents and big sister are white, and even though she loves her family very much, Keda struggles with feeling different and left out. When her family moves from Maryland to New Mexico for her father's new job, it is a hard transition for everyone. Keda desperately misses her best friend Lena, and her sister acts like she's too cool to hang out with her anymore. Through it all, Makeda can't help but wonder: will she ever find her place in the world?

Suggested for ages 8-13





Front Desk

by Kelly Yang

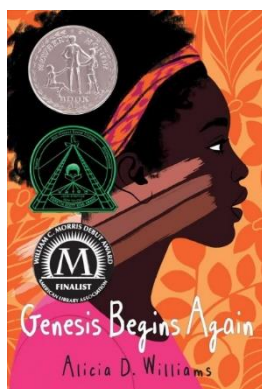
Middle Grade Novel (2018)

Nutmeg J Yang

Recent immigrants from China and desperate for work and money, ten-year-old Mia Tang's parents take a job managing a rundown motel in Southern California, even though the owner, Mr. Yao, is a nasty skinflint who exploits them. While her mother (who was an engineer in China) does the cleaning, Mia works the front desk and tries to cope with demanding customers and other recent immigrants – not to mention being one of only two Chinese Americans in her fifth-grade class.

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook & OverDrive Audiobook.

Suggested for ages 8-12



Genesis Begins Again

by Alicia D. Williams

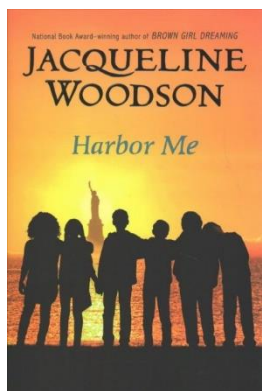
Middle Grade Novel (2019)

J-MS Lockington

There are ninety-six things Genesis hates about herself. She knows the exact number because she keeps a list. Like #95: Because her skin is so dark, people call her charcoal and eggplant; even her own family. And #61: Because her family is always being put out of their house, belongings laid out on the sidewalk for the world to see. When Genesis reaches #100 on the list of things she hates about herself, will she continue on, or can she find the strength to begin again?

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook & OverDrive Audiobook.

Suggested for ages 10-14



Harbor Me

by Jacqueline Woodson

Middle Grade Novel (2018)

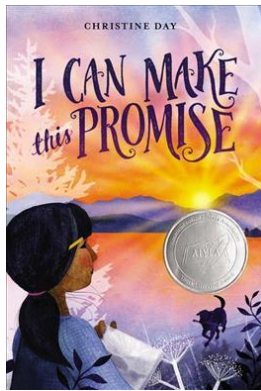
J Woodson

It all starts when six kids have to meet for a weekly chat – by themselves, with no adults to listen in. There, in the room they soon dub the ARTT Room (short for “A Room to Talk”), they discover it's safe to share the feelings and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world. Together, they can grow braver and more ready for the rest of their lives.

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook, OverDrive Audiobook & Audiobook on CD.

Suggested for ages 10-14





I Can Make This Promise

by Christine Day

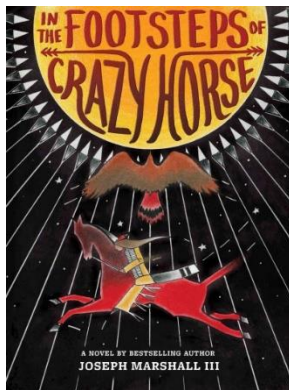
Middle Grade Novel (2019)

J Day

All her life, Edie has known that her mom was adopted by a white couple. So, no matter how curious she might be about her Native American heritage, Edie is sure her family doesn't have any answers. Until the day when she and her friends find a box hidden

in the attic – a box filled with letters and photographs that throw everything she believes about her family into question.

Suggested for ages 8-12



In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse

by Joseph Marshall III; illustrated by Jim Yellowhawk

Middle Grade Novel (2015)

J Marshall

Jimmy McClean is a Lakota boy, though you wouldn't guess it by his name. His mother is Lakota, and his father is half white and half Lakota. He struggles with fitting in on the reservation, teased for his fair hair and blue eyes. Over the summer his grandfather

decides to take Jimmy on a road trip and introduce him to another Lakota who had fair hair and light skin – the famous Crazy Horse.

Suggested for ages 9-14



King and the Dragonflies

by Kacen Callender

Middle Grade Novel (2020)

J Callender

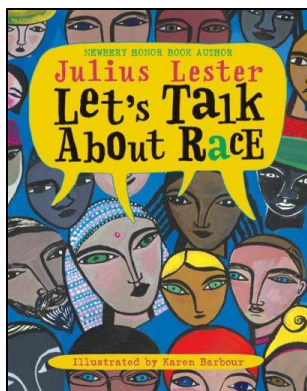
Twelve-year-old Kingston James is weighed down by grief and secrets. It's been three months since his beloved older brother, Khalid, died unexpectedly. King wishes he could talk things over with his best friend, Sandy Sanders. But just days before he died,

Khalid told King to end their friendship after overhearing a secret about Sandy – that he thinks he might be gay. "You don't want anyone to think you're gay too, do you?" But when Sandy goes missing, sparking a town-wide search, King is forced to confront questions about himself and the reality of his brother's death.

Also available as an OverDrive Audiobook.

Suggested for ages 9-14





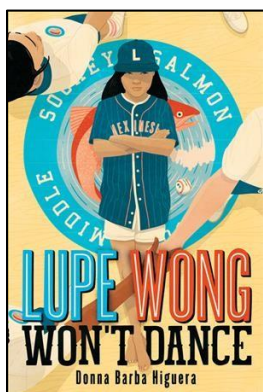
Let's Talk About Race

by Julius Lester; illustrated by Karen Barbour

Nonfiction Picture Book (2005)
J305.8 Lester

"I am a story. So are you. So is everyone." In this acclaimed book, Lester focuses on the sharing of personal stories to explore similarities and differences. He uses a friendly, conversational tone to explore the topic of race in a way that is clear and accessible to young children. Karen Barbour's dramatic, vibrant paintings speak to the heart of Lester's unique vision, truly a celebration of all of us.

Suggested for ages 4-10



Lupe Wong Won't Dance

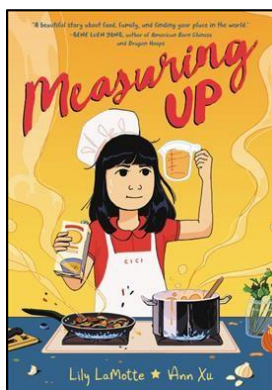
by Donna Barba Higuera

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Higuera

Lupe Wong is a baseball fanatic, and the one thing she wants more than anything is to meet her favorite pitcher, Fu Li Hernandez, who is Chinacan/Mexinese just like her. Her uncle, who works for Fu Li's team, has promised to take her to meet him as long as she gets all A's in school. This *should* be a breeze... but then a square dancing unit in gym class threatens to destroy everything!

Also available as a Hoopla Ebook.

Suggested for ages 8-13



Measuring Up

by Lily LaMotte; illustrations, Ann Xu; colors by Sunmi

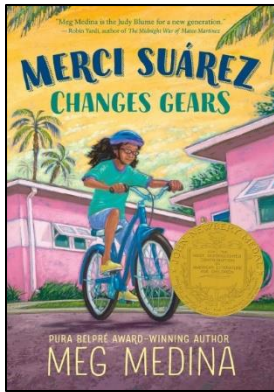
Middle Grade Graphic Novel (2020)
Graphic J LaMotte

Twelve-year-old Cici has just moved from Taiwan to Seattle, and the only thing she wants more than to fit in at her new school is to celebrate her grandmother, A-má's, seventieth birthday together. Since she can't go to A-má, Cici cooks up a plan to bring A-má to her by winning the grand prize in a kids' cooking contest to pay for A-má's plane ticket. There's just one problem: Cici only knows how to cook Taiwanese food! Can Cici find a winning recipe, a way to fit in with her new friends, and somehow find herself, too?

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook.

Suggested for ages 8-12





Merci Suárez Changes Gears

by Meg Medina

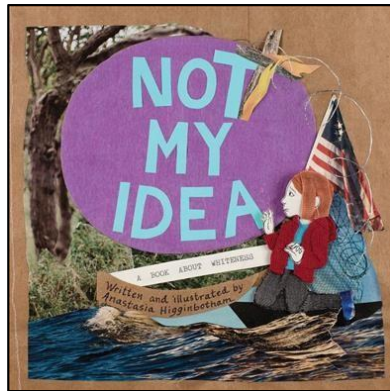
Middle Grade Novel (2018)

J Medina

Merci Suárez begins the sixth grade and knows that things will change, but she did not count on her grandfather acting strangely, not fitting in at her private school, and having to deal with popular girl Edna Santos' jealousy.

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook & Audiobook on CD.

Suggested for ages 9-13



Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness

by Anastasia Higginbotham

Nonfiction Picture Book (2018)

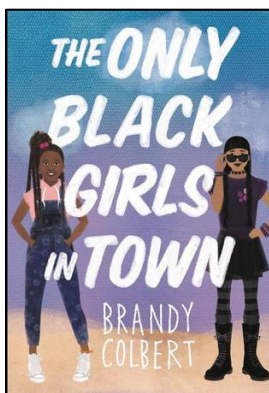
J305.8 Higginbotham

A white child sees a TV news report of a white police officer shooting and killing a black man. "In our family, we don't see color," his mother says, but he sees the colors

plain enough. An afternoon in the library's history stacks uncover the truth of white supremacy in America. Racism was not his idea and he refuses to defend it.

Also available as a Hoopla Ebook.

Suggested for ages 6-12



The Only Black Girls in Town

by Brandy Colbert

Middle Grade Novel (2020)

J Colbert

Beach-loving surfer Alberta is the only Black student in her grade. Which is why she is so excited to learn that the family taking over the bread and breakfast next door have a daughter her own age, and they're Black. On the surface, Alberta and new girl Edie could

not be more different – Edie wears all black, loves Edgar Allen Poe and desperately misses New York City. But they're curious about one another. When the girls discover a box of old journals in Edie's attic, they team up to solve a 50-year-old mystery.

Suggested for ages 9-13





Other Words for Home

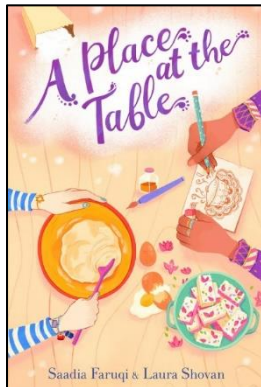
by Jasmine Warga

Middle Grade Novel (2019)
J Warga

Sent with her mother to the safety of a relative's home in Cincinnati when her Syrian hometown is overshadowed by violence, Jude worries for the family members who were left behind. At first, everything in America seems too fast and too loud. But this new life brings unexpected surprises – there are new friends, a whole new family, and a school musical that Jude might just try out for. Maybe America, too, is a place where Jude can be seen as she really is.

Also available as a Hoopla Ebook.

Suggested for ages 9-14



A Place at the Table

by Saadia Faruqi & Laura Shovan

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Faruqi

Sixth graders Sara, a Pakistani American, and Elizabeth, a Jewish girl, connect in an after-school cooking class and bond over food and their mothers' struggles to become United States citizens. Can they overcome the differences between them and become not just cooking partners but true friends?

Suggested for ages 9-13



Stand Up, Yumi Chung!

by Jessica Kim

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Kim

One day Yumi stumbles on an opportunity that will change her life: a comedy camp for kids taught by one of her favorite YouTube stars. The only problem is that the instructor and all the students think she's a girl named Kay Nakamura – and Yumi doesn't correct them. As this case of mistaken identity unravels, Yumi must decide to stand up and reveal the truth or risk losing her dreams and disappointing everyone she cares about.

Suggested for ages 9-13





Strange Birds: A Field Guide to Ruffling Feathers

by Celia C. Pérez

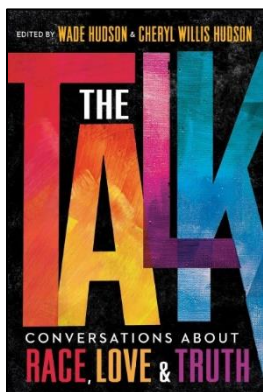
Middle Grade Novel (2019)

J Pérez

After Ofelia, Aster, Cat, and Lane fail to persuade a local girls club to change an outdated tradition, they form an alternative group that shakes up their sleepy Florida town. Includes tips for beginning

birders, characteristics of crystals, a cookie recipe, tips for aspiring journalists, directions for creating badges, and facts about the killing of birds for fashion.

Suggested for ages 8-12



The Talk: Conversations About Race, Love & Truth

edited by Wade Hudson & Cheryl Willis Hudson

Nonfiction Book (2020)

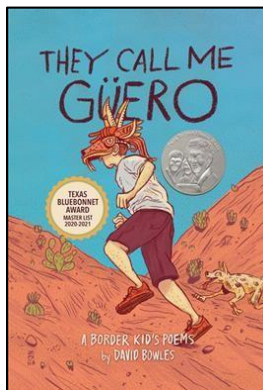
J305.8 Hudson

As long as racist ideas persist, families will continue to have the difficult and necessary conversations with their young ones on the subject. In this inspiring collection, thirty diverse and award-winning

authors and illustrators use powerful prose and images to engage in frank conversations about race, identity, and self-esteem.

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook & OverDrive Audiobook.

Suggested for ages 10-14



They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid's Poems

by David Bowles

Middle Grade Novel (2018)

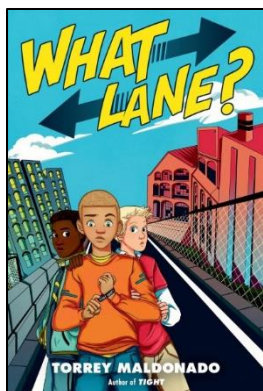
J Bowles

Twelve-year-old Güero is Mexican American, at home with Spanish or English and on both sides of the river. He's starting 7th grade with a woke English teacher who knows how to make poetry

cool.

Suggested for ages 10-14





What Lane?

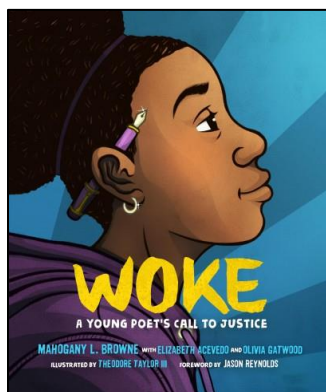
by Torrey Maldonado

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J-MS Maldonado

“STAY IN YOUR LANE.” Stephen doesn’t want to hear that – he wants to have no lane. Anything his friends can do, Stephen should be able to do too, right? As a mixed kid, he feels like he’s living in two worlds with different rules – and he’s noticing that strangers treat him differently than his white friends. Hold on tight as Stephen swerves in and out of lanes to find out which are his – and who should be with him.

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook & OverDrive Audiobook.

Suggested for ages 10-14



Woke: A Young Poet's Call to Justice

by Mahogany L. Browne, with Elizabeth Acevedo
& Olivia Gatwood; illustrated by Theodore Taylor III;
forward by Jason Reynolds

Poetry Picture Book (2020)
J811 Browne

Woke is a collection of poems that reflects the joy and passion in the fight for social justice, tackling topics from discrimination to empathy, and acceptance to speaking out.

Suggested for ages 8-12



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