



FALL 2020

*Color your  
world  
with  
words*

A list of books by authors of color  
for educators so they can provide students  
with books that reflect their backgrounds and  
cultures.

### ***Mommy's Khimar* by Jamilah Thomkins-Bigelow**

A young Muslim girl spends a busy day wrapped up in her mother's colorful headscarf, called a khimar, in this sweet and fanciful picture book. P-1

### ***Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story* by Kevin Noble Maillard**

Fry bread is food. It is warm and delicious, piled high on a plate. Fry bread is time. It brings families together for meals and new memories. Fry bread is nation. It might look or taste different, but it is still shared by many, from coast to coast and beyond. Fry bread is us. It is a celebration of old and new, traditional, and modern, similarity and difference. *Fry Bread* is a story told in lively and powerful verse by Seminole Nation member Kevin Noble Maillard, with vibrant art from Pura Belpre Award winner Juana Martinez-Neal. Grades P-2

### ***Nana Akua Goes to School* by Tricia Elam Walker and April Harrison**

It is Grandparents Day at Zura's elementary school, and the students are excited to introduce their grandparents and share what makes them special. Aleja's grandfather is a fisherman. Bisou's grandmother is a dentist. But Zura's Nana, who is her favorite person in the world, looks a little different from other grandmas. Nana Akua was raised in Ghana, and, following an old West African tradition, has tribal markings on her face. Zura is hesitant to bring her to school. Nana Akua knows what to do. Grades P-2

### ***Evelyn del Rey is Moving Away* by Meg Medina**

Evelyn del Rey is Daniela's best friend. They do everything together and even live in twin apartments across the street from each other: Daniela with her mami and hamster, and Evelyn with her mami, papi, and cat. But not after today—not after Evelyn moves away. Until then, the girls play amid the moving boxes until it's time to say goodbye, making promises to keep in touch, because they know that their friendship will always be special. Meg Medina is a Newberry Award medalist and New York Times best-selling author. Book illustrated by Sonia Sánchez. Grades K-2

### ***Sadiq and the Bridge Builders* by Siman Nuurali**

Author Siman Nuurali has written a series of books about Sadiq, an 8-year-old Somali-American boy growing up in the United States. In this book, Sadiq and his friends decide to join a building club. When there is a lot of flooding in their own community he and his friends try to come up with a solution. Grades 1-3

### ***Crossing Bok Chitto: A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom* by Tim Tingle**

While searching for blackberries, young Choctaw Martha breaks her village's rules against crossing the Bok Chitto to the plantation on the other side. She befriends the slaves, and later helps a family escape across the river to freedom. This is a moving story of friendship across cultures in 1800s Mississippi. This moving and original story about the intersection of Native and African Americans received many awards. Jeanne Rorex Bridges' illustrations mesmerize readers. *Publishers Weekly* noted that her "strong, solid figures gaze squarely out of the frame, beseeching readers to listen, empathize and wonder." Grades 2-8

### ***The Most Beautiful Thing* by Kao Kalia Yang**

Drawn from author Kao Kalia Yang's childhood experiences as a Hmong refugee, this moving picture book portrays a family with a great deal of love and little money. Weaving together Kalia's story with that of her beloved grandmother, the book moves from the jungles of Laos to the family's early years in the United States. When Kalia becomes unhappy about having to do without and decides she wants braces to improve her smile, it is her grandmother—a woman who has just one tooth in her mouth—who helps her see that true beauty is found with those we love most. Award winning author. Beautifully illustrated by Khoa Le. Grades 3-6

### ***Strange Birds: A Field Guide to Ruffling Feathers* by Celia C. Pérez**

When three very different girls find a mysterious invitation to a lavish mansion, the promise of adventure and mischief is too intriguing to pass up. Ofelia Castillo (a budding journalist), Aster Douglas (a bookish foodie), and Cat Garcia (a rule-abiding birdwatcher) meet Lane DiSanti, and it isn't love at first sight. But they soon bond over a shared mission to get their local Scouts group to ditch an outdated tradition. The story explores what it means to belong to a community while being willing to stage small but significant revolutions, all the while reveling in the joy of childhood. Grades 3-6

### ***The Brave* by James Bird**

Collin has a unique condition that finds him counting every letter spoken to him. It's a quirk that makes him a prime target for bullies. When the principal says Collin is no longer a fit at school, his dad decides to send him to live with the mom he's never met. She is Ojibwe, and lives on a reservation. Collin finds his mother and his new home to be warm and tolerant. His own oddity is matched by that of his neighbor, Orenda, a girl who spends time in her treehouse and believes she is turning into a butterfly. Soon, Collin's own challenges take a back burner to stepping up for his only friend and trusting his new family. Grades 3-6

### ***A Legendary Alston Boys Adventure #2: The Last Mirror on the Left* by Lamar Giles**

Otto and Sneed must embark on their most dangerous journey yet, bringing a fugitive to justice in a world that mirrors their own but has its own rules to play by. Missus Nedraw of the Rorrim Mirror Emporium remembers that the boys took her mirrors without permission to fix their mess last summer. She's willing to overlook the cousins' misdeeds if they help her with a problem of her own. Grades 3-7

### ***Class Act* by Jerry Craft**

Eighth-grader Drew Ellis is not a stranger to the saying, "You have to work twice as hard to be just as good." But lately he's been thinking: Even if he works 10 times harder, he may never get the same opportunities as his privileged classmates at Riverdale Academy Day School. After a visit to his friend Liam's house, Drew realizes that Liam is one of those privileged kids. He wants to pretend like everything is okay, but even his best friend, Jordan, can tell that something is up. Can Drew find a way to bridge the divide so he and his friends can truly accept each other? And more importantly, will he finally be able to accept himself? Jerry Craft is a Newberry Award winner and New York Times best-selling author for *New Kid*. Grades 3-7

### ***On These Magic Shores* by Yamile Saied Méndez**

Minerva Soledad Miranda is determined to reach her goals, despite shouldering more responsibility than the other kids at school. One night, Minerva's mom doesn't come home, and she must figure out what to do. Was Mamá snapped up by immigration enforcement? Minerva and her sisters can't let anyone know Mamá has disappeared. As the days pass and Minerva grows ever more worried about her mother, something magical seems to be watching out for them. Eventually, Minerva must make the hardest choice of her life. Grades 4-7

### ***Some Places More Than Others* by Renée Watson**

All Amara wants for her birthday is to visit her father's family in Harlem. She can't wait to finally meet her Grandpa Earl and cousins in person and stay in the brownstone where her father grew up. But New York City is not what Amara imagined. It's crowded, with confusing subways, suffocating sidewalks, and her father is too busy with work to spend time with her and too angry to spend time with Grandpa Earl. This is a powerful story about family, the places that make us who we are, and how we find ways to connect to our history across time and distance. Newberry Honor author explores the past, the present, and the places we call home. Grades 6-8

### ***Free Lunch* by Rex Ogle**

Instead of giving him lunch money, Rex's mom has signed him up for free meals. As a poor kid in a wealthy school district, better-off kids crowd impatiently around him as he tries to explain to the cashier that he's on the free meal program. The lunch lady has difficulty hearing so Rex must shout. *Free Lunch* is a memoir about Rex's efforts to navigate his first semester of sixth grade. It's a story of hardship threaded with hope and moments of grace. Author Rex Ogle's voice is compelling and authentic, and *Free Lunch* is a true, timely and essential work illuminating the lived experience of poverty in America. Winner of the 2020 Young Adult Library Services Association nonfiction award. Grades 6-9

### ***Say Her Name: Poems to Empower* by Zetta Elliott**

Say her name and solemnly vow/ Never to forget or allow/ Our sisters' lives to be erased;/ Their presence cannot be replaced. / This senseless slaughter must stop now. Award-winning author Zetta Elliott engages poets from the past two centuries to create a chorus of voices celebrating the creativity, resilience, and courage of Black women and girls. Inspired by the #SayHerName campaign launched by the African American Policy Forum, these poems pay tribute to victims of police brutality as well as the activists championing the Black Lives Matter cause. This compelling collection reveals the beauty, danger, and magic found at the intersection of race and gender. Grades 6+

***Young Adult titles may contain mature content. Please review titles carefully while making selections for students.***

### ***Every Body Looking by Candice Iloh***

When Ada leaves home for her freshman year at a Historically Black College, it's the first time she's ever been so far from her family – and the first time that she's been able to make her own choices and to seek her place in this new world. As she stumbles deeper into the world of dance and explores her sexuality, she also begins to wrestle with her past – her mother's struggle with addiction, her Nigerian father's attempts to make a home for her. Ultimately, Ada discovers she needs to brush off the destiny others have chosen for her and claim full ownership of her body and her future. National Book Award finalist. Grades 7+

### ***Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds***

A haunting cautionary tale in which 15-year-old Will is forced to consider the potential consequences of his actions as he, armed with a gun and seeking revenge, waits for the elevator in his building to reach the ground floor. Told in short, fierce staccato narrative verse, *Long Way Down* is a fast and furious, dazzlingly brilliant look at teenage gun violence, as could only be told by author Jason Reynolds. Newberry Honor, Printz Honor, and Coretta Scott King Honor – winning, #1 New York Times best seller with haunting artwork by Danica Novdorodoff. Grades 9+

### ***Dear Justyce by Nic Stone***

In the stunning sequel to *Dear Martin*, Stone delivers an unflinching look into the flawed practices and silenced voices in the American juvenile justice system. Incarcerated teen Quan Banks writes letters to Justyce McCallister, with whom he grew up a block apart in Atlanta. Years later, though, Justyce walks the illustrious halls of Yale University and Quan sits behind bars at the Fulton Regional Youth Detention Center. Grades 9+

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***All Boys Aren't Blue: A Memoir Manifesto by George M Johnson***

In a series of personal essays, prominent journalist and LGBTQIA+ activist George M. Johnson explores his childhood, adolescence, and college years. From the memories of getting his teeth kicked out by bullies at age five, to going to flea markets with his loving grandmother, to his first sexual relationships, this young-adult memoir weaves together the trials and triumphs faced by Black queer boys. Both a primer for teens eager to be allies as well as a reassuring testimony for young queer men of color. Grades 9+

***The Stars and the Blackness Between Them by Janauda Petrus***

Sixteen-year-old Audre is despondent, having just found out she's going to be sent to live in America with her father because her strictly religious mother caught her with her secret girlfriend, the pastor's daughter. Audre's grandmother, Queenie (a former dancer who drives a white convertible Cadillac and who has a few secrets of her own) tries to reassure her granddaughter that she won't lose her roots, not even in some place called Minneapolis. Told in two distinct and irresistible voices, the Coretta Scott King Honor Book is the story of two Black girls from very different backgrounds finding love and happiness in a world that seems determined to deny them both. Grades 9+

## **Websites with more ideas**

### **First Book Marketplace: <https://www.fbmarketplace.org/new-to-marketplace>**

This non-profit organization believes that education is the best way out of poverty for children in need. It makes new high-quality books and other resources affordable to its member network. This link takes you to the newest books.

### **Colorful Pages: <https://colorfulpages.org/>**

Founded and directed by WEA Board member Kaitlin Kamalei Brandon, this website features multicultural books and lessons.

### **Epic Reads: <https://www.epicreads.com/blog/ya-books-poc-writers/>**

Features Young Adult books by people of color

**For a more complete list of books, podcasts and other resources, visit WEA's Racial and Social Justice page on the WEA website, <https://www.washingtonea.org>, under WE are WEA.**