

WINTER 2021

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.

***Outside Inside* by LeUyen Pham**

Outside, it was quieter, wilder, and different. Inside, we laughed, we cried, and we grew. We remembered to protect the ones who we love and love the ones who protect us. A moving picture book celebrating essential workers and coming together to face challenges during a global pandemic. Grades P-1

***Yo Soy Muslim: A Father's Letter to His Daughter* by Mark Gonzales and Illustrated by Mehrdokht**

Written as a letter from a father to his daughter, *Yo Soy Muslim* is a celebration of social harmony and multicultural identities. The vivid and elegant verse, accompanied by magical and vibrant illustrations, highlights the diversity of the Muslim community as well as Indigenous identity. Grades P-2

***Maryam's Magic: The Story of Mathematician Maryam Mirzakhani* by Megan Reid and Illustrated by Aaliya Jeleel**

Maryam loved school, but not math. Numbers were not as interesting as the bold, adventurous characters she found in books. She discovered that in geometry, numbers became shapes, each with its own fascinating personality — making every equation a brilliant story waiting to be told. As an adult, Maryam made history by becoming the first woman — and the first Iranian — to win the Fields Medal, mathematics' highest award. Grades K-2

***Juana and Lucas* by Juana Medina**

Juana is a spunky young Colombian girl who loves many things: drawing, living in Bogotá, Colombia, and especially her dog, Lucas, the best amigo ever. She does not love wearing her itchy school uniform, solving math problems, or learning the English. Why is it so important to learn a language that makes so little sense? Hilarious, energetic, and utterly relatable, the book will win the hearts of readers everywhere. Grades K-3

***A Different Pond* by Bao Phi and Illustrated by Thi Bui**

An unforgettable and powerful, honest glimpse into a relationship between father and son — and between cultures. Unlike many other anglers, Bao and his father fish for food, not recreation. Between hope-filled casts, Bao's father tells him about a different pond in their homeland of Vietnam. This book has won numerous awards. Grades 1-3

***William Still and His Freedom Stories* by Don Tate**

Don Tate brings to life the stranger-than-fiction true story of William Still's life and work as a record keeper of enslaved people who fled to freedom. Motivated by his own family's experience, William collected stories of thousands of freedom seekers and reunited many families. Tate's powerful words and artwork will inspire readers in this picture book biography of the Father of the Underground Railroad. Grades 1-4

***Jayla Jumps In* by Joy Jones**

When 11-year-old Jayla finds out that her mother used to be a Double Dutch champion, she's stunned. She decides to follow in her mom's footsteps and finds that Double Dutch is about more than jumping rope. Full of hilarious family dynamics, the book follows one girl's quest to get her mom healthy and find her place in her community. Grades 2-5

Mary and the Trail of Tears: A Cherokee Removal Survival Story

By Andrea L Rogers

Twelve-year-old Mary and her Cherokee family are forced out of their home by U.S. soldiers in 1838. Mary and her family are separated from her father. Facing horrors such as internment, violence, disease, and harsh weather, Mary perseveres and helps keep her family and friends together until they can reach the new Cherokee nation in Indian Territory. Grades 3-6

***Amina's Voice* by Hena Khan**

Now that Amina is in middle school everything feels different. Her best friend, Soojin, is suddenly hanging out with one of the "cool" girls in the class, and even talking about changing her name to something more "American." Must Amina hide who she is to fit in? While grappling with these questions, she is devastated when her mosque is vandalized. The damage is great and the fear palpable but so is the caring from within and outside Amina's community.

Grades 3-7

***Amari and the Night Brothers* by B.B. Alston**

Thirteen-year-old Amari must earn a spot at the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs to find her missing brother—only to discover that her unprecedented levels of potential and power have marked her as a suspect in the ongoing fight against an evil magical threat. With her own classmates thinking she's an enemy, Amari has never felt more alone. But she must stick it out and make it through the tryouts, or she may never find out what happened to her brother. Grades 3-7

***VIP: Lewis Latimer: Engineer Wizard* by Denise Lewis Patrick**

The son of escaped slaves, Lewis Latimer was also an engineer who transformed the lightbulb at Thomas Edison's company. Featuring underappreciated historical figures and groups, with a focus on leaders in science and technology, the nonfiction biographies in the VIP series are fun and engaging. Just looking at the cover will make kids want to learn more about these VIPs, and once they dive in they will zoom through stories that read like adventures. Grades 3-7

***Proud: My Fight for an Unlikely American Dream* by Ibtihaj Muhammed**

Growing up in New Jersey as the only African American Muslim at school, Ibtihaj Muhammad had to find her own way. She discovered fencing and she had to defy expectations in a sport she loved. As the only woman of color and the only religious minority on Team USA's saber fencing squad, Ibtihaj charted her own path to success and Olympic glory. Grades 4-7

***Rain is Not My Indian Name* by Cynthia Leitich Smith**

It has been six months since Cassidy Rain Berghoff's best friend died. When controversy arises around Aunt Georgia's Indian Camp in their mostly white midwestern community, Rain decides to face the outside world, with a new job photographing the campers for her town's newspaper. In a voice that resonates with insight and humor the author tells the story of a teenage girl who must face down her grief and reclaim her place in the world with the help of her intertribal community. Grades 4-8

***Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in 10 Blocks* by Jason Reynolds**

This story begins like all the best stories: A school bus falls from the sky. But everyone is too busy to notice. The 10 tales are about what happens after the dismissal bell rings, and brilliantly weaves them into one wickedly funny, piercingly poignant look at the detours we face on the walk home, and in life. Grades 5-8

Please note: Young Adult titles may contain mature content.

One of the Good Ones by Maika Moulite and Maritza Moulite

When social activist Kezi Smith is killed under mysterious circumstances after attending a social justice rally, her devastated sister, Happi, and family are left reeling. As Kezi becomes another immortalized victim in the fight against police brutality, Happi begins to question the idealized way her sister is remembered. There's a twist to Kezi's story that no one could've ever expected — one that will change everything all over again. Grades 7-9

Children of the Blood and Bone by Tomi Adeyemi

They killed my mother. They took our magic. They tried to bury us. Now we rise. Zélie Adebola remembers when the soil of Orisha hummed with magic. Everything changed the night the magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, Zélie is without a mother and her people without hope. Danger lurks in Orisha, but the greatest danger may be Zélie herself as she struggles to control her powers and her growing feelings for an enemy. Grades 7-12

Not So Pure and Simple by Lamar Giles

Del has had a crush on Kiera Westing since kindergarten, but she's always been coupled up with someone else. During their junior year, she's finally single. When Kiera volunteers for a heart-changing opportunity at their church, Del's not far behind. He realizes he inadvertently joined a Purity Pledge. Edgar Award finalist Lamar Giles delivers an eye-opening novel that confronts toxic masculinity, and asks what does it mean to be a "real man"? Grades 8-10

Please note: Young Adult titles may contain mature content.

A Universe of Wishes: A We Need Diversity in Books Anthology Various authors

Fifteen award-winning and diverse authors deliver stories about a princess without need of a prince, a monster long misunderstood, memories that vanish with a spell, and voices that refuse to stay silent in the face of injustice. This powerful and inclusive collection contains a universe of wishes for a braver and more beautiful world. Grade 8-12

How it all Blew Up by Arvin Ahmadi

Eighteen-year-old Amir Azadi always knew coming out to his Muslim family would be messy — he just didn't think it would end in an airport interrogation room. But when faced with a failed relationship and bullies, running away to Rome is his only option. Late nights with new friends start to feel like second nature until his old life comes knocking on his door. Now, Amir must tell the whole truth to a U.S. Customs officer, or risk losing his hard-won freedom. Grades 9-12

Concrete Rose by Angie Thomas

One thing 17-year-old Maverick Carter knows is that a real man takes care of his family. With money he makes from dealing drugs, he helps his mom, who works two jobs while his dad's in prison. Mav's got everything under control until he finds out he's a father. In a world where he's expected to amount to nothing, maybe Mav can prove he's different. He'll have to figure out for himself what it really means to be a man. Grades 9-12

Websites with more ideas

First Book Marketplace: 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: colorfulpages.org/

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

Epic Reads: 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, washingtonea.org, under "WE Are WEA."

