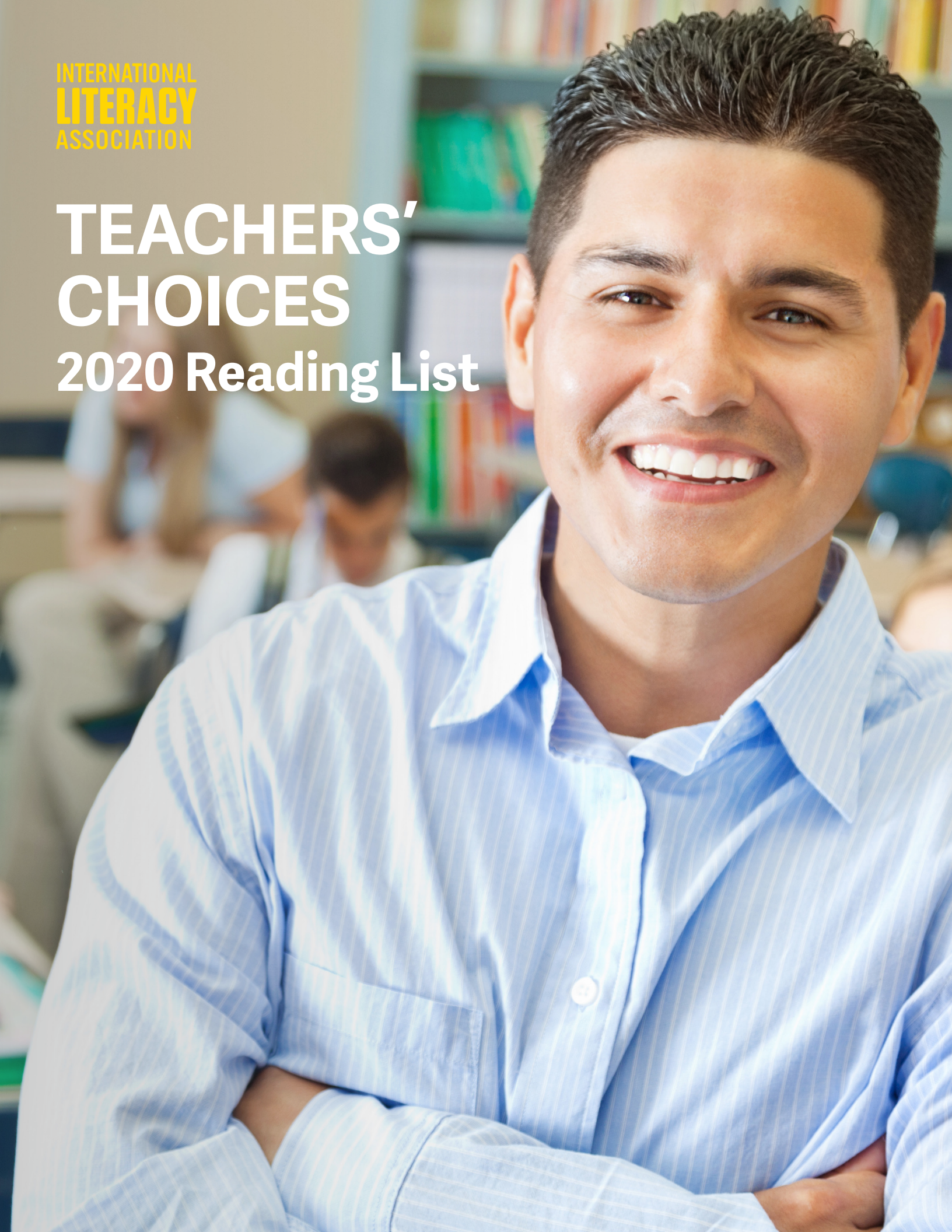


INTERNATIONAL  
**LITERACY**  
ASSOCIATION

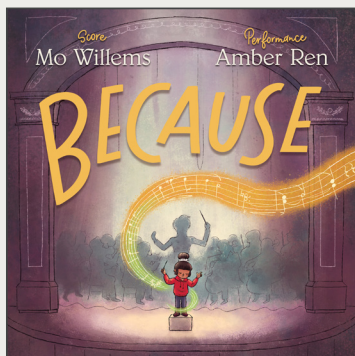
# TEACHERS' CHOICES

## 2020 Reading List



# What Is the Teachers' Choices Reading List?

For teachers looking for the best new titles for ages 5–14 to add to their classroom library, the Teachers' Choices list is the place to start. Since 1989, the International Literacy Association's Teachers' Choices project has identified outstanding trade books published in the previous year that teachers, librarians, and reading/literacy specialists chose as being exceptional for curriculum use. Families and caregivers will also find the list invaluable, as it provides excellent choices for reading aloud or for help answering important questions prompted by children's experiences as they grow up.



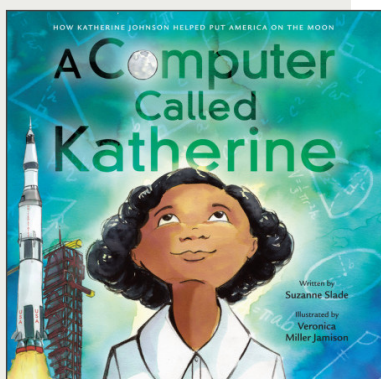
*Because.* Mo Willems. Ill. Amber Ren.

## Primary Readers (Grades K–2, Ages 5–8)

### *Because*

**Mo Willems. Ill. Amber Ren. Disney Book Group/Hyperion Books for Children.**

In a text that is different from Willems's general style, readers find a lyrical story explaining what happens "because" for the little girl featured here. Throughout a journey from spectator to performer, readers understand that one event has an effect on others to follow.



*A Computer Called Katherine.*  
Suzanne Slade. Ill. Veronica Miller Jamison.

### *The Bell Rang*

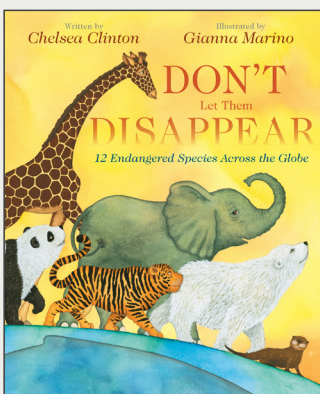
**James E. Ransome. Atheneum Books for Young Readers.**

This book tells the simplistic story of an enslaved family's rhythm of life. Every day when the bell rings, each family member has specific jobs to undertake. The same pattern is followed until the bell rings and Ben is missing. Readers gain insight into the family's thoughts when their loved one is gone.

### *A Computer Called Katherine*

**Suzanne Slade. Ill. Veronica Miller Jamison. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.**

Katherine Johnson was wise beyond her years. As a young child, she understood that one should not be treated differently because of skin color or have limited choices because of gender. She proved this by finishing college at a young age and playing a vital role with NASA.



*Don't Let Them Disappear.* Chelsea Clinton. Ill. Gianna Marino.

### *Don't Let Them Disappear*

**Chelsea Clinton. Ill. Gianna Marino. Philomel Books.**

Most readers will know that our world is filled with millions of animals, but do you know which ones are in danger of extinction? Clinton shares clear information about what makes the animals special, what threatens them, and how soon they could each become extinct if nothing changes.

## ***I Didn't Stand Up***

**Lucy Falcone. Ill. Jacqueline Hudon. Clockwise Press.**

Based on a poem first written in response to Nazi oppression, this story gives a picture of common methods of oppression and how children may feel as a bystander or victim.

## ***Just Ask!***

**Sonia Sotomayor. Ill. Rafael Lopez. Philomel Books.**

Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor uses her childhood experience of having diabetes as the impetus for this book about differences among children. She shows that even though you might be different from others, you can work together to achieve great things, and if you are confused about someone or something, you should *just ask!*

## ***Meet Miss Fancy***

**Irene Latham. Ill. John Holyfield. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers.**

Frank is obsessed with elephants and wants only to visit Miss Fancy, but his skin color prohibits this. When his carefully constructed plan to get close is protested, he is doubly heartbroken. When Miss Fancy escapes and Frank has the chance to save her, he knows that skin color does not affect whether he should help.

## ***\*Moon! Earth's Best Friend***

**Stacy McAnulty. Ill. Stevie Lewis. Henry Holt Books for Young Readers.**

Young readers are introduced to this nonfiction "autobiography" told from the moon's perspective. Moon explains why she and Earth will always stick together and how she never turns her back on Earth. This is a wonderful explanation of the moon's purpose and relationship to our planet.

## ***Snowman - Cold = Puddle: Spring Equations***

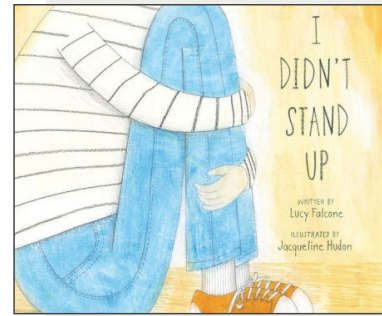
**Laura Purdie Salas. Ill. Micha Archer. Charlesbridge.**

Do math and science relate? Sure they do, in this exploration of spring equations. Although each equation seems simple, the informative sidebars explain the relationship between the two and how there is science behind the various signs we see each spring.

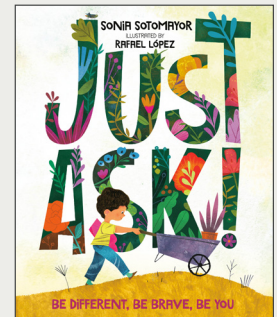
## ***What Is Given From the Heart***

**Patricia C. McKissack. Ill. April Harrison. Random House Children's Books/Schwartz & Wade.**

James Otis's mother shares the importance of giving, even when there seems to be little to give. He struggles with choosing something to place in the "love" box for a family who has lost everything. When his mother reminds him that choosing something from the heart makes a difference, James figures out what to give.



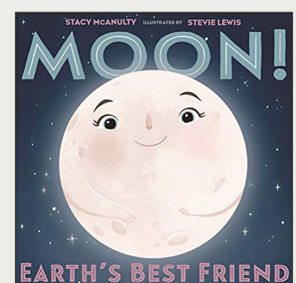
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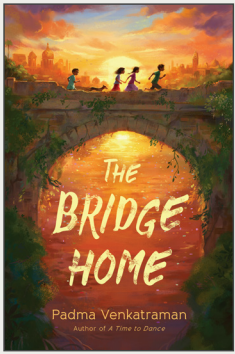
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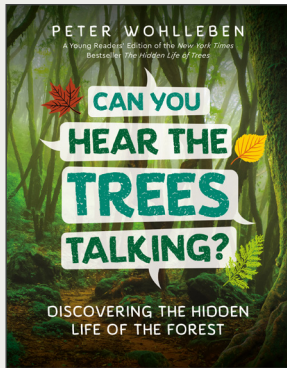
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*The Bridge Home.* Padma Venkatraman.



*Can You Hear the Trees Talking? Discovering the Hidden Life of the Forest.* Peter Wohlleben.



*The Disaster Days.* Rebecca Behrens.



*Mario and the Hole in the Sky: How a Chemist Saved Our Planet.* Elizabeth Rusch. Ill. Teresa Martinez.

## Intermediate Readers (Grades 3–5, Ages 8–11)

### ***The Bridge Home***

**Padma Venkatraman.** Penguin Young Readers/Nancy Paulsen Books.

The poverty and homelessness prevalent in contemporary India are the focus of this story of friendship and perseverance for four children attempting to survive on their own in urban squalor. Young readers gain cultural insight into and awareness of others in less fortunate circumstances.

### ***Can You Hear the Trees Talking? Discovering the Hidden Life of the Forest***

**Peter Wohlleben.** Greystone Kids.

The science and intricate relationship of trees within forests are beautifully shared in this engaging work filled with photographs. Young readers will be fascinated and enlightened as they learn more about this intriguing element of nature.

### ***The Disaster Days***

**Rebecca Behrens.** Sourcebooks Young Readers.

What to do in the face of a crisis? Hannah Steele has no worries about babysitting, until the earth starts shaking and disaster strikes. What to do when she is all alone and no way to reach help? Readers will find suspense and adventure awaiting them in this book.

### ***Even More Lesser Spotted Animals***

**Martin Brown.** Scholastic/David Fickling Books.

In a cartoon-like and humorous style, Martin Brown informs and entertains young readers with intriguing facts about creatures that are not so well known. Fans of nonfiction and nature will be delighted with these anecdotes to broaden their knowledge of animals.

### ***Mario and the Hole in the Sky: How a Chemist Saved Our Planet***

**Elizabeth Rusch. Ill. Teresa Martinez.** Charlesbridge.

Mexican American Mario Molina helped solve the ozone crisis of the 1980s. As a young child, Molina studied everything he could about the world, and when he was a little older, he discovered the harm that chlorofluorocarbons were causing our planet. His quick action and education of this issue has helped save our ozone.

## ***Our Flag Was Still There***

**Jessie Hartland. Paula Wiseman Books.**

In 1812, Mary Pickersgill was tasked with sewing a very large American flag. It ended up being 30 feet long and 42 feet wide. Hartland crafts the story so readers can see the immense task of creating this flag and how it had an impact on the United States national anthem.

## ***Room on Our Rock***

**Kate Temple & Jol Temple. Ill. Terri Rose Baynton. Kane Miller: A Division of EDC Publishing.**

This clever work provides opportunities for discussion in its creative perspective on the treatment of others. Using a group of seals to convey the message, the work evokes compassion after first reading forward and then in reverse.

## ***\*Thurgood***

**Jonah Winter. Ill. Bryan Collier. Random House Children's Books/Schwartz & Wade.**

Known for being the loudest talker, a joke teller, and best arguer, it is no wonder that Thurgood Marshall became a lawyer. As intricate illustrations combine with the powerful story, readers learn how Thurgood became known as Mr. Civil Rights and the first black Supreme Court justice.

## ***The Undefeated***

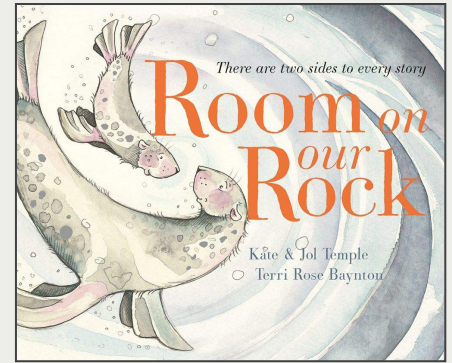
**Kwame Alexander. Ill. Kadir Nelson. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt/Versify.**

With beautifully illustrated details, Alexander's poem, originally written for ESPN, shows the trauma of slavery, the Civil Rights movement, and the perseverance of the black community. Alexander brings in the words of Martin Luther King Jr., Langston Hughes, and Gwendolyn Brooks while giving readers a glimpse of the strength exhibited through history.

## ***What a Waste: Trash, Recycling, and Protecting Our Planet***

**Jess French. DK Publishing.**

Thought-provoking facts and statistics provide readers with profound evidence for living a greener lifestyle. Ideas for positive change for minimizing waste and lessening our impact on the environment offer lasting lessons for readers.



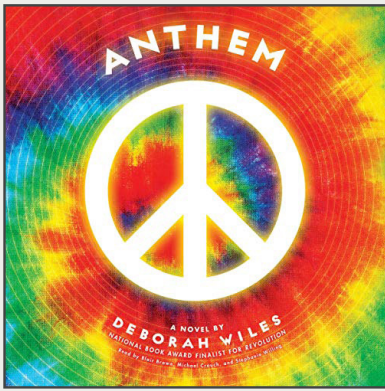
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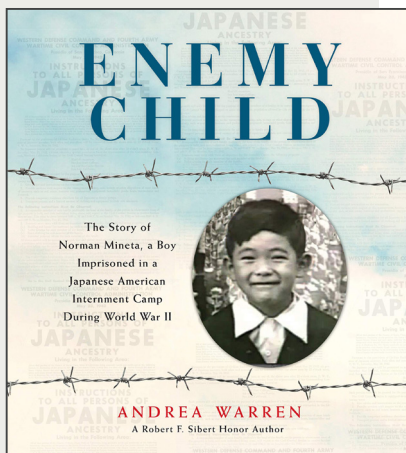
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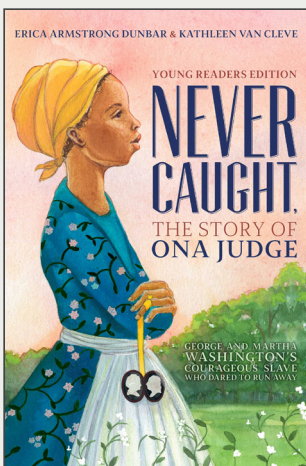
*What a Waste: Trash, Recycling, and Protecting Our Planet.* Jess French.



Anthem. Deborah Wiles.



Enemy Child: The Story of Norman Mineta, a Boy Imprisoned in a Japanese American Internment Camp During World War II. Andrea Warren.



Never Caught, the Story of Ona Judge. Erica Armstrong Dunbar.

## Advanced Readers (Grades 6–8, Ages 11–14)

### **Anthem**

**Deborah Wiles. Scholastic Press.**

This documentary novel captures the uncertain times of America in 1969 as two cousins travel through the country with an important family mission at hand. The content of the book is set with the culture, music, and images relevant to the times and provides poignant references for this historical fiction.

### **Enemy Child: The Story of Norman Mineta, a Boy Imprisoned in a Japanese American Internment Camp During World War II**

**Andrea Warren. Margaret Ferguson Books.**

This important biography of Norman Mineta's life experiences as a Japanese American focuses on his family's forced internment in a camp in World War II. The work enlightens readers with an informative story of resilience and perseverance set in context of this lesser known side of U.S. history.

### **Genesis Begins Again**

**Alicia D. Williams. Atheneum Books for Young Readers.**

Teenager Genesis battles her negative self-image as a dark-skinned African American and her emotional struggles in search of friendship and acceptance. Her personal challenges are compounded by her unstable home life set with addiction, abuse, and economic uncertainty.

### **Never Caught, the Story of Ona Judge**

**Erica Armstrong Dunbar. Aladdin.**

As a slave in the household of George and Martha Washington, Ona was a valued worker until her escape in 1796. This nonfiction look at the Washingtons' persistent search for her return provides a necessary glimpse of another element of early American history.

### **Reaching for the Moon**

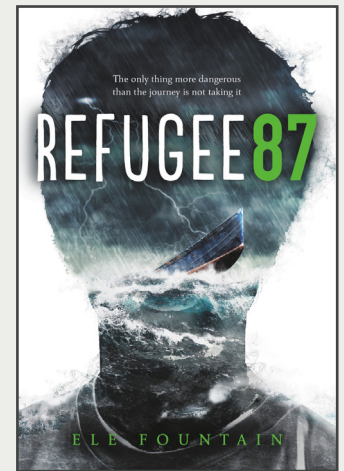
**Katherine Johnson. Atheneum Books for Young Readers.**

Katherine Johnson relates her story of perseverance and success as an African American woman thriving as a mathematician at NASA despite the challenges of racism and sexism in the mid-20th century. Her skills led to her contributions as a valued team member of the U.S. space program.

## Refugee 87

**Ele Fountain. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.**

Suspense drives this story as a young refugee's life is upended and he struggles to flee a controlling government's power and cruelty. Shif's journey to seek freedom is filled with danger and fear with the undertones of hope and kindness.



Refugee 87. Ele Fountain.

## The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise

**Dan Gemeinhart. Henry Holt Books for Young Readers.**

Coyote and her father travel the country in a school bus in an attempt to escape from grief in the aftermath of a devastating loss. When Coyote realizes she has the chance for some closure, their journey changes in purpose and allows for empathy to positively affect their lives.

## Roll With It

**Jamie Sumner. Atheneum Books for Young Readers.**

The limits and concerns that impart Ellie's life with cerebral palsy accompany the new stresses of moving to help care for her ailing grandpa. Ellie's struggle for acceptance and quest for friendship accompany the narrative of her quest to become a skilled baker.



Roll With It. Jamie Sumner.

## \*Song for a Whale

**Lynne Kelly. Random House Children's Books/Delacorte BFYR.**

As a deaf child, Iris becomes fascinated with the plight of a whale being studied for its unique song, which causes a communication gap for reaching others within its pod. Iris's talent with radio repair and her connection to the whale's situation inspires her to research a way to help.

## White Bird: A Wonder Story

**R.J. Palacio. Random House Children's Books/Alfred A. Knopf BFYR.**

The important message of the powers of friendship and hope shine through in this graphic novel depiction that elaborates on the story of Julian's grandmother in Palacio's *Wonder* as she seeks to survive as a Jew in Nazi-occupied France in World War II.



Song for a Whale. Lynne Kelly.

\* Titles that received the most votes

# Teachers' Choices 2020 Reading List

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- Don't Let Them Disappear.* Chelsea Clinton. Ill. Gianna Marino. Philomel Books.
- I Didn't Stand Up.* Lucy Falcone. Ill. Jacqueline Hudon. Clockwise Press.
- Just Ask!* Sonia Sotomayor. Ill. Rafael Lopez. Philomel Books.
- Meet Miss Fancy.* Irene Latham. Ill. John Holyfield. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers.
- \*Moon! Earth's Best Friend.* Stacy McAnulty. Ill. Stevie Lewis. Henry Holt Books for Young Readers.
- Snowman – Cold = Puddle: Spring Equations.* Laura Purdie Salas. Ill. Micha Archer. Charlesbridge.
- What Is Given From the Heart.* Patricia C. McKissack. Ill. April Harrison. Random House Children's Books/Schwartz & Wade.

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To learn more about the Teachers' Choices project, please visit [literacyworldwide.org/choices](https://literacyworldwide.org/choices).

The 2020 Teachers' Choices titles can be purchased through our partner Booksource, a leading provider of classroom libraries for school districts and classroom teachers. They are available in four grade-banded collections at: [booksource.com/ila-collections](https://booksource.com/ila-collections)



# Thank You to the 2019–2020 Teachers' Choices Teams

Project cochairs: April Hoying, Russia, OH, and Heather Jones, Smyrna, DE

## AREA 1

**Tracey MacLachlan (team leader), Washougal, WA**

Canyon Creek Middle School (Washougal, WA)  
▪ Columbia River Gorge Elementary School (Washougal, WA) ▪ Gause Elementary School (Washougal, WA) ▪ Hathaway Elementary School (Washougal, WA) ▪ Heritage High School (Vancouver, WA) ▪ Jemtegaard Middle School (Washougal, WA)  
▪ Prune Hill Elementary School (Camas, WA)  
▪ Woodburn Elementary School (Camas, WA)

## AREA 2

**Tammy Parker (team leader), Claymont, DE**

Brandywine High School (Wilmington, DE)  
Carrcroft Elementary School (Wilmington, DE)  
Claymont Elementary School (Wilmington, DE)  
Concord High School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Forwood Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Hanby Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Harlan Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Lancashire Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Las Americas Aspira Academy (Newark, DE) ▪ Lombardy Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Maple Lane Elementary School (Claymont, DE) ▪ Mount Pleasant Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Mount Pleasant High School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ P.S. DuPont Middle School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Springer Middle School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Talley Middle School (Wilmington, DE)

## AREA 3

**Sharon Thompson (team leader), Biloxi, MS**

Biloxi Upper Elementary School (Biloxi, MS) ▪ Central Elementary School (Pascagoula, MS) ▪ Cherokee Elementary School (Pascagoula, MS) ▪ Escatawpa Upper Elementary School (Moss Point, MS) ▪ Magnolia Middle School (Moss Point, MS) ▪ Martin Bluff Elementary School (Pascagoula, MS) ▪ Trent Lott Academy (Pascagoula, MS)

## AREA 4

**Sherry Harrington (team leader), Imperial, MO**

Antonia Elementary School (Imperial, MO) ▪ Antonia Middle School (Barnhart, MO) ▪ Brentwood School District (Brentwood, MO) ▪ Clyde Hamrick Elementary School (Imperial, MO) ▪ Confluence Academy (St. Louis, MO) ▪ Fox Elementary School (Arnold, MO) ▪ Guffey Elementary School (Fenton,

MO) ▪ Hazelwood School District (St. Louis, MO)  
▪ Hodge Elementary School (Imperial, MO)  
▪ Lindbergh School District (Sappington, MO)  
▪ Lonedell Elementary School (Arnold, MO)  
Meramec Heights Elementary School (Arnold, MO)  
Ridgewood Middle School (Arnold, MO) ▪ Rockport Heights Elementary School (Arnold, MO) ▪ Seckman Elementary School (Imperial, MO) ▪ Seckman Middle School (Imperial, MO) ▪ Seckman High School (Imperial, MO) ▪ Sherwood Elementary School (Arnold, MO) ▪ Simpson Elementary School (Arnold, MO)

## AREA 5

**Julie Greenberg (team leader), Oregon, OH, and Gary Willhite (team leader trainee), Holmen, WI**

Bangor Elementary School (Bangor, WI) ▪ Coulee Montessori (La Crosse, WI) ▪ Eagle Bluff Elementary School (Onalaska, WI) ▪ Evergreen Elementary School (Holmen, WI) ▪ Hamilton Elementary School (La Crosse, WI) ▪ Hintgen Elementary School (La Crosse, WI) ▪ Holmen Middle School (Holmen, WI) ▪ Irving Pertzsch Elementary School (Onalaska, WI) ▪ Lemonweir Elementary School (Tomah, WI) ▪ Lincoln Middle School (La Crosse, WI) ▪ Longfellow Middle School (La Crosse, WI) ▪ Maplewood Elementary School (Sparta, WI) ▪ Maumee City Schools (Maumee, OH) ▪ Northern Hills Elementary School (Onalaska, WI) ▪ Northside Elementary (La Crosse, WI) ▪ North Woods Elementary (La Crosse, WI) ▪ Onalaska Middle School (Onalaska, WI) Oregon City Schools (Oregon, OH) ▪ Prairie View Elementary School (Holmen, WI) ▪ Rio Elementary School (Rio, WI) ▪ Rossford Schools (Rossford, OH) Sand Lake Elementary School (Holmen, WI) ▪ School of Technology & Arts I (La Crosse, WI) ▪ Southern Bluffs Elementary School (La Crosse, WI) ▪ State Road Elementary School (La Crosse, WI)  
▪ Summit Elementary School (La Crosse, WI) Toledo Public Schools (Toledo, OH) ▪ Universal Academy Charter School (Minneapolis, MN) University of Toledo (Toledo, OH) ▪ Viking Elementary School (Holmen, WI) ▪ Washington Local Schools (Toledo, OH)