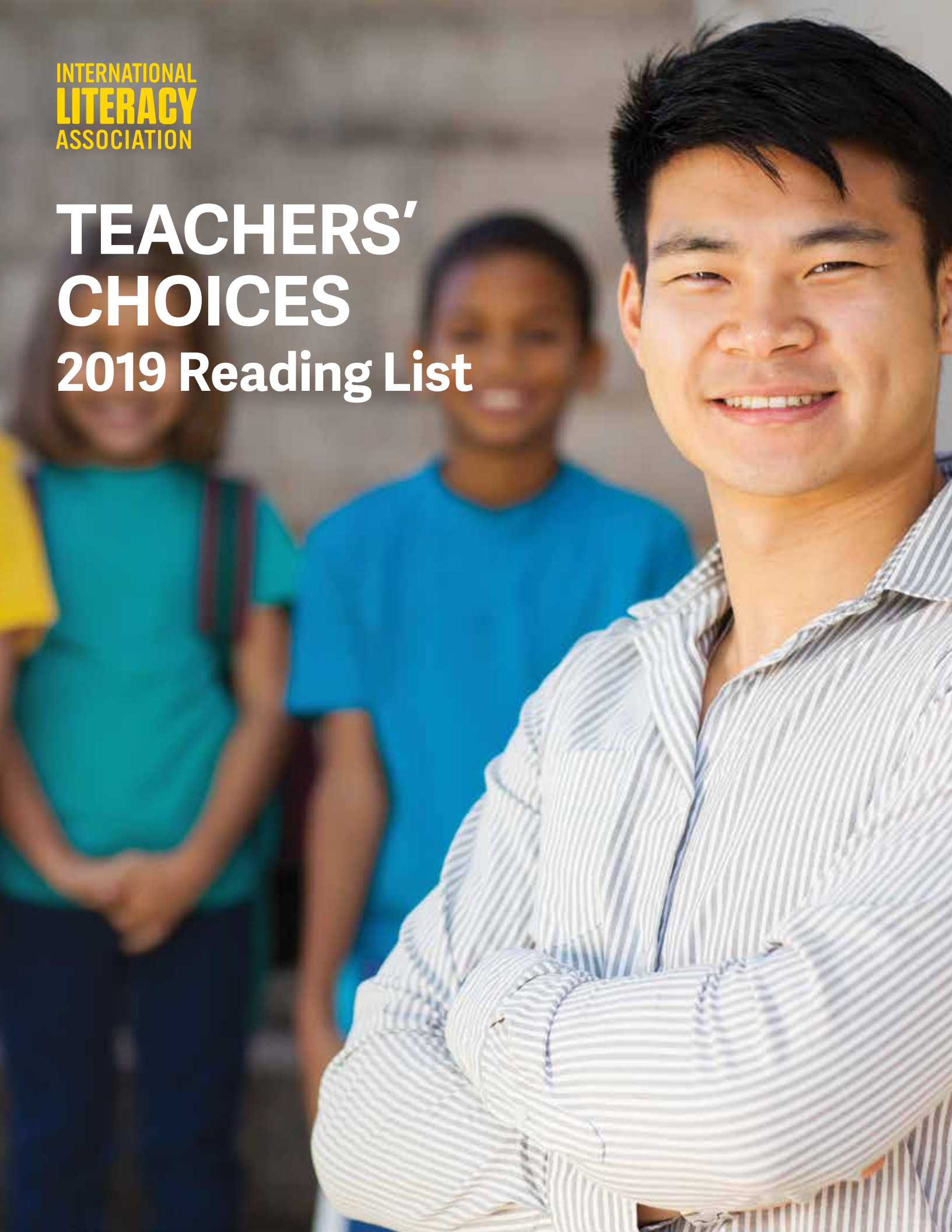


INTERNATIONAL  
**LITERACY**  
ASSOCIATION

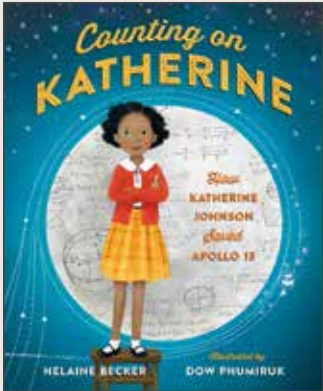
# TEACHERS' CHOICES

## 2019 Reading List

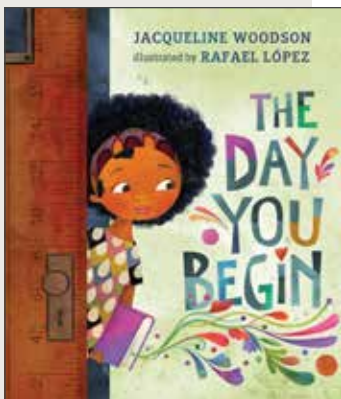


# What Is the Teachers' Choices Reading List?

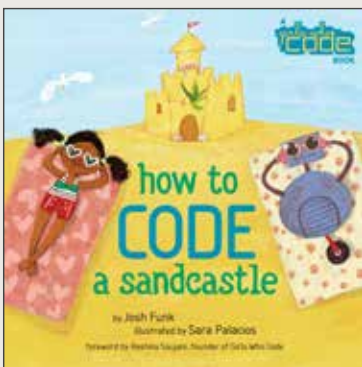
For teachers looking for the best new titles for ages 5–14 to add to their classroom library, the Teachers' Choices list is the place to start. Since 1989, the International Literacy Association's Teachers' Choices project has identified outstanding trade books published in the previous year that teachers, 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.



*Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13.* Helaine Becker. Ill. Dow Phumiruk.



*The Day You Begin.* Jacqueline Woodson. Ill. Rafael López.



*How to Code a Sandcastle.* Josh Funk. Ill. Sara Palacios.

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

### ***Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13***

Helaine Becker. Ill. Dow Phumiruk. Henry Holt Books for Young Readers/Macmillan Children's Publishing Group.

Even as a child, Katherine loved everything about math and learning. This biographical sketch reveals the life and career of one of the preeminent mathematicians who helped make the space program possible, breaking through barriers of segregation and prejudice to make it happen.

### ***\*The Day You Begin***

Jacqueline Woodson. Ill. Rafael López. Nancy Paulsen.

For Angelina and Rigoberto, their differences are obvious as they compare themselves with their classmates. However, when they begin to share their own stories, their voices become strong, and their focus begins to shift away from the differences to little bits of commonalities among us all.

### ***How to Be a Lion***

Ed Vere. Doubleday Books for Young Readers/Random House Children's Books.

Leonard (a lion) and Marianne (a duck) are best friends and spend their days doing what friends do. When approached by a pack of bully lions who don't think they should be friends, Leonard learns that there are many ways to be a lion. Being friendly is one.

### ***How to Code a Sandcastle***

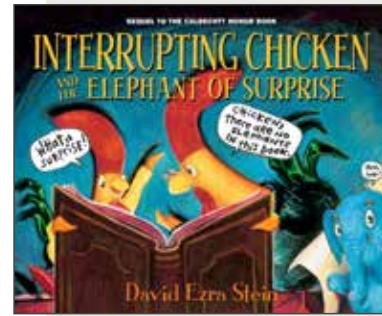
Josh Funk. Ill. Sara Palacios. Viking Books for Young Readers.

Pearl spends the last day of summer vacation with her robot, Pascal, determined to finally build the perfect sandcastle. When she realizes how big the task is, she breaks it down into smaller tasks, sequences, loops, and if-then-else codes for Pascal to help her find sandcastle success.

## ***Interrupting Chicken and the Elephant of Surprise***

**David Ezra Stein. Candlewick.**

When the little red chicken is asked to find the element of surprise in stories, she misunderstands it to be the “elephant” of surprise. As Papa reads the classics to her, she keeps adding elephants to each story. Through fun illustrations and witty banter, Papa and Little Red compose a story together with their own surprise.

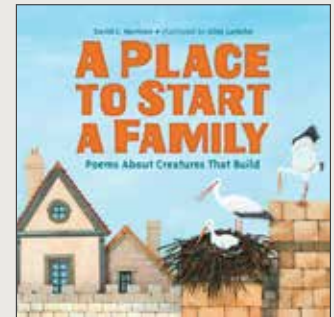


*Interrupting Chicken and the Elephant of Surprise.* David Ezra Stein.

## ***A Place to Start a Family: Poems About Creatures That Build***

**David L. Harrison. Ill. Giles Laroche. Charlesbridge.**

Readers get a poetic explanation and an up-close glimpse into homes being built underground, on land, in water, and in the air by some of nature’s finest architects.

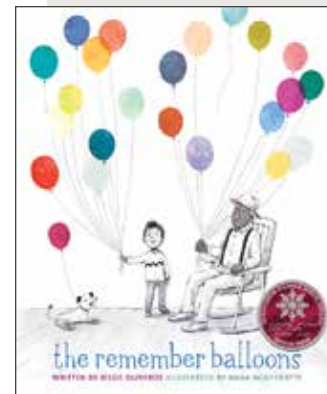


*A Place to Start a Family: Poems About Creatures That Build.* David L. Harrison. Ill. Giles Laroche.

## ***The Remember Balloons***

**Jessie Oliveros. Ill. Dana Wulfekotte. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.**

James is upset that his grandpa starts losing his balloons, meaning he cannot remember some of the most precious times they’ve shared together, including his favorite fishing trip. However, James finds that he can help his grandpa relive the memories by sitting on his lap and telling the stories.



*The Remember Balloons.* Jessie Oliveros. Ill. Dana Wulfekotte.

## ***Rescue & Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship***

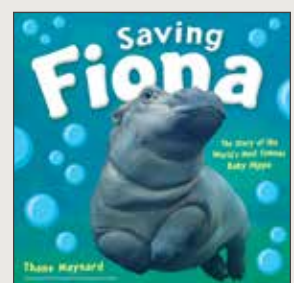
**Jessica Kensky and Patrick Downes. Ill. Scott Magoon. Candlewick.**

Based on a true story, the text reveals how Rescue trains and becomes the service dog for Jessica, who has been injured and experiences the heartbreak of losing her legs after an accident. Their partnership gives them both purpose and a way forward.

## ***Saving Fiona: The Story of the World’s Most Famous Baby Hippo***

**Thane Maynard. Photographs courtesy of the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.**

Tiny Fiona, a baby Nile hippo, was born at the Cincinnati Zoo two months early. This is the true story of how the zookeepers learned to care for her and nurse her into a healthy young hippo, showing how science and critical thinking were important in keeping her alive.



*Saving Fiona: The Story of the World’s Most Famous Baby Hippo.* Thane Maynard. Photographs courtesy of the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden.

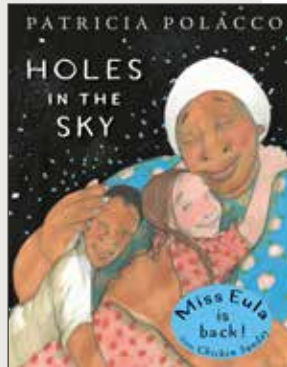
## ***What’s Your Favorite Bug?***

**Eric Carle and Friends. Henry Holt Books for Young Readers/Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group.**

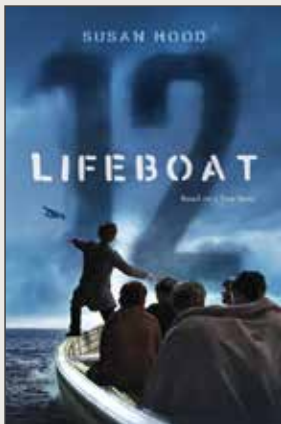
Eric Carle and 14 of his artistic friends showcase their unique and brilliant styles as each one presents his or her favorite bug. Teachers can use this text to explore poetry, science, and art, and it can serve as a model for similar student-created class anthologies.



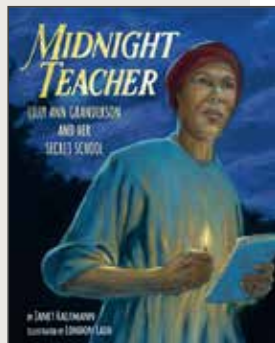
*The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs.* Kate Messner. Ill. Matthew Forsythe.



*Holes in the Sky.* Patricia Polacco.



*Lifeboat 12.* Susan Hood.



*Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School.* Janet Halfmann. Ill. London Ladd.

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

### ***The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs***

**Kate Messner. Ill. Matthew Forsythe. Chronicle.**

In this beautifully illustrated text, the story of Ken Nedimyer unfolds, beginning with a childhood fascination of all underwater life and continuing into adulthood with his work with the Coral Restoration Foundation. Vivid descriptions and specific vocabulary are used to depict efforts to restore and preserve the world's coral reefs.

### ***Finding Langston***

**Lesia Cline-Ransome. Holiday House.**

After his mother dies, Langston sees nothing positive about his new life in 1946 Chicago. Bullying and chaos mark his days, but with complete access to the library, unlike back home in Alabama, Langston is comforted by his namesake's poetry and finds a way to feel close to his mother again.

### ***Holes in the Sky***

**Patricia Polacco. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers.**

When young Trisha's babushka passes away, she thinks she'll never find anyone to fill the hole that's left. When a family move to California introduces her to Miss Eula, a new grandmother figure, Trisha learns that her babushka may have been right about those *holes in the sky*.

### ***\*Lifeboat 12***

**Susan Hood. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.**

Based on a little-known World War II story, this novel in verse depicts the escape of Ken Sparks and other British children on a luxury ship to Canada. Shocked by a torpedo attack and the sinking of their ship, the survivors band together to save each other, showing bravery, compassion, and hope.

### ***Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School***

**Janet Halfmann. Ill. London Ladd. Lee & Low.**

Although illegal, enslaved Lilly Ann Granderson learned to read and write. Because she believed in the power of education, she secretly taught hundreds of others to do the same. Dubbed the "midnight teacher," teaching at night inside a hidden building, Lilly Ann risked her life to empower others toward freedom.

## ***Otis and Will Discover the Deep: The Record-Setting Dive of the Bathysphere***

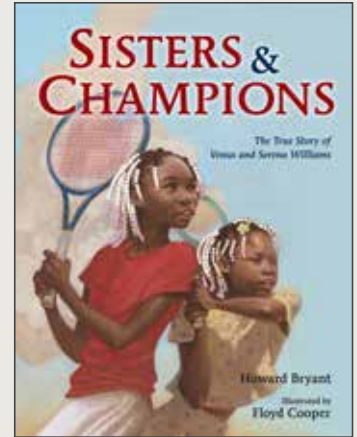
Barb Rosenstock. Ill. Katherine Roy. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Filled with mesmerizing illustrations, intriguing text, and fascinating back matter, this story combines engineering, deep-sea diving, and perseverance to portray the true-to-life experiences of Otis Barton and Will Beebe as they designed and built the bathysphere to take them to record-setting ocean depths.

## ***Sisters & Champions: The True Story of Venus and Serena Williams***

Howard Bryant. Ill. Floyd Cooper. Philomel.

Despite the negative talk, Richard Williams knew his girls with brown skin, wonderful eyes, big smiles, and even bigger hearts were full of magic and destined to be champions. Through trials, setbacks, and triumphs, Venus and Serena Williams silenced the negativity to become the greatest tennis players of all time.



*Sisters & Champions: The True Story of Venus and Serena Williams.* Howard Bryant. Ill. Floyd Cooper.

## ***Thirty Minutes Over Oregon: A Japanese Pilot's World War II Story***

Marc Tyler Nobleman. Ill. Melissa Iwai. Clarion.

Japanese pilot Nobuo Fujita is the only enemy pilot to ever bomb the continental United States. Even though no fatalities and little damage resulted from his maneuvers, he returned to the little Oregon town 20 years later to apologize. This little-known story illustrates the capacity of forgiveness and reconciliation.



*Thirty Minutes Over Oregon: A Japanese Pilot's World War II Story.* Marc Tyler Nobleman. Ill. Melissa Iwai.

## ***Thomas Paine and the Dangerous Word***

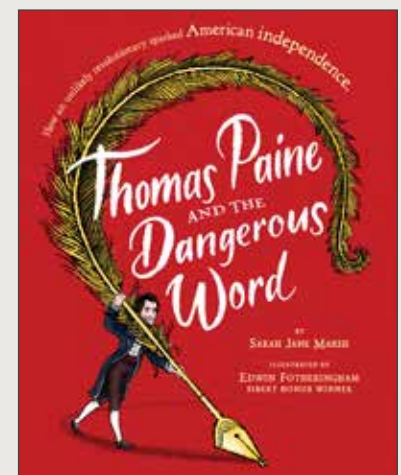
Sarah Jane Marsh. Ill. Edwin Fotheringham. Disney Hyperion.

Thomas Paine knew what it was like to leave oppressive situations for a new start in life. He learned early on about the power of words and used them boldly to spur a nation of 13 colonies to declare independence from Great Britain. Never before had words sparked such a revolution.

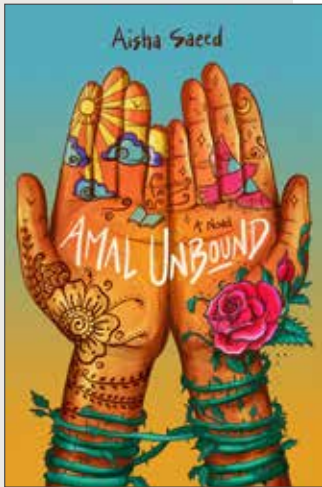
## ***Washington, D.C.: Our Nation's Capital From A-Z***

Alan Schroeder. Ill. John O'Brien. Holiday House.

Full of little-known facts, meaningful quotations, and clever quips, this book chronicles the history of the United States capital from A to Z.



*Thomas Paine and the Dangerous Word.* Sarah Jane Marsh. Ill. Edwin Fotheringham.



*Amal Unbound.* Aisha Saeed.

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

### ***Amal Unbound***

**Aisha Saeed. Nancy Paulsen.**

Amal is happy in her Pakistani village, pursuing her dreams of becoming a teacher. But a chance encounter with the son of her village's shady landlord lands her in the depths of indentured service. Amal's undying spirit and unwavering courage show that we all have the power to make change.

### ***Code Word Courage***

**Kirby Larson. Scholastic Press.**

Billie's brother Leo is going off to serve in World War II with Denny, who is a Navajo Code Talker. After Denny brings injured dog Bear home for her to care for, Billie does her part to help with the war effort while Bear comes to the rescue through her many adventures.

### ***Ebb & Flow***

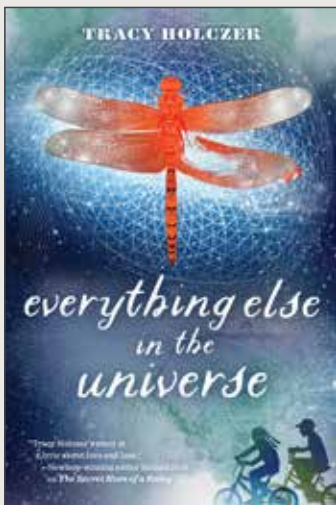
**Heather Smith. Kids Can Press.**

After his dad's incarceration and a rotten year at a new school, Jett returns to his grandma's house for the summer to try to forget. Written in verse, this novel highlights Jett's regrets, hopes, and plans to seek forgiveness all with the unfailing support of his loving grandma.

### ***Everything Else in the Universe***

**Tracy Holczer. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers.**

Lucy's father served as an army doctor in the Vietnam War and returned as an amputee, changed forever. As she tries to find ways to reconnect, Lucy joins with her neighbor Milo to solve a mystery of a Purple Heart that she hopes will bridge the distance to her father.

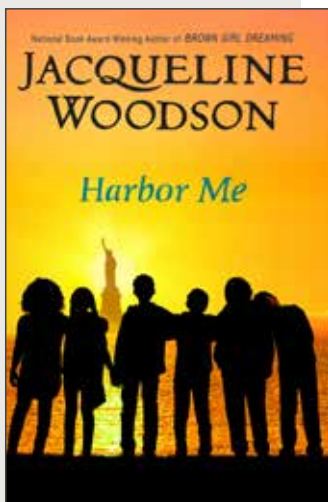


*Everything Else in the Universe.*  
Tracy Holczer.

### ***\*Harbor Me***

**Jacqueline Woodson. Nancy Paulsen.**

Six middle school kids who are in an experimental class because of their academic challenges meet together weekly to share their stories in a room they dub ARTT (A Room To Talk). Through these conversations, they share their difficult realities and realize friends come in all varieties.



*Harbor Me.* Jacqueline Woodson.

## **The Night Diary**

**Veera Hiranandani. Dial Books for Young Readers.**

With the backdrop of the 1947 India–Pakistan split, this harrowing story is told from the perspective of 12-year-old Nisha through letters to her deceased mother. Nisha writes about her confusion regarding tensions in her country, becoming a refugee, and her hope for a peaceful future.

## **The Not So Boring Letters of Private Nobody**

**Matthew Landis. Dial Books for Young Readers.**

Seventh grader Oliver, self-proclaimed Civil War expert, is paired with don't-care Ella to research a nobody soldier for a Civil War project. At first disappointed, Oliver soon warms to Ella and recruits his buddy Kevin as their writing consultant. Together they discover a mystery that just might lead to greater things.

## **Out of Left Field**

**Ellen Klages. Viking Books for Young Readers.**

After being unfairly cut from the Little League baseball team, strong-willed Katy uses both her keen research skills and helpful librarians to learn about the history of women in baseball and fight for her rights. Set in 1957, expertly woven facts and cultural details contextualize this fascinating story.

## **Rebound**

**Kwame Alexander. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.**

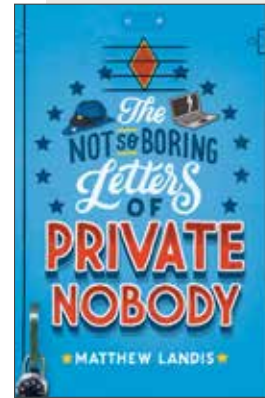
As a prequel to *The Crossover*, readers learn how Jordan and Josh's father, Chuck "Da Man" Bell, was introduced to basketball, and his family's history helps readers of this popular series glimpse into his childhood. The novel in verse focuses on experiencing heartache, the value of family, and growing up.

## **Resistance**

**Jennifer A. Nielsen. Scholastic Press.**

As a young Jewish girl in Nazi-occupied Poland, Chaya Lindner isn't safe. However, she forgoes safety, uses her fair features, and forges papers to become a courier. When a raid goes incredibly wrong, Chaya's left alone. Finding support and her resolve, she vows to resist or die trying.

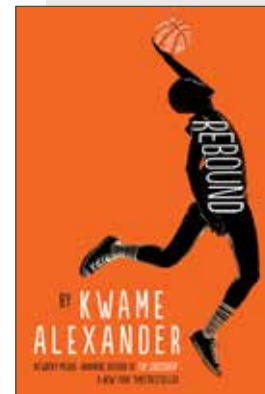
\* Titles that received the most votes



*The Not So Boring Letters of Private Nobody.* Matthew Landis.



*Out of Left Field.* Ellen Klages.



*Rebound.* Kwame Alexander.



*Resistance.* Jennifer A. Nielsen.

# Teachers' Choices 2019 Reading List

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

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\**The Day You Begin.* Jacqueline Woodson. Ill. Rafael López. Nancy Paulsen.

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*How to Code a Sandcastle.* Josh Funk. Ill. Sara Palacios. Viking Books for Young Readers.

*Interrupting Chicken and the Elephant of Surprise.* David Ezra Stein. Candlewick.

*A Place to Start a Family: Poems About Creatures That Build.* David L. Harrison. Ill. Giles Laroche. Charlesbridge.

*The Remember Balloons.* Jessie Oliveros. Ill. Dana Wulfekotte. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

*Rescue & Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship.* Jessica Kensky and Patrick Downes. Ill. Scott Magoon. Candlewick.

*Saving Fiona: The Story of the World's Most Famous Baby Hippo.* Thane Maynard. Photographs courtesy of the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

*What's Your Favorite Bug?* Eric Carle and Friends. Henry Holt Books for Young Readers/Macmillan Children's Publishing Group.

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

*The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs.* Kate Messner. Ill. Matthew Forsythe. Chronicle.

*Finding Langston.* Lesa Cline-Ransome. Holiday House.

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\**Lifeboat 12.* Susan Hood. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

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*Thirty Minutes Over Oregon: A Japanese Pilot's World War II Story.* Marc Tyler Nobleman. Ill. Melissa Iwai. Clarion.

*Thomas Paine and the Dangerous Word.* Sarah Jane Marsh. Ill. Edwin Fotheringham. Disney Hyperion.

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*Rebound.* Kwame Alexander. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

*Resistance.* Jennifer A. Nielsen. Scholastic Press.

\*Titles that received the most votes

To learn more about the Teachers' Choices project, including how to participate and to access previous years' reading lists, please visit [literacyworldwide.org/choices](http://literacyworldwide.org/choices).



# More About Teachers' Choices

**Thank you to the 2018–2019 ILA Teachers' Choices cochairs, team leaders, and review teams.**

**Project cochairs: April Hoying, Russia, OH, and Jennifer Fox, Stockton, MO**

## AREA 1

**Kim Fairbanks (team leader), Albany, OR, and Tracey MacLachlan (trainee), Washougal, WA**

Alsea Elementary School (Alsea, OR) ▪ Alsea Middle School (Alsea, OR) ▪ Canyon Creek Middle School, (Washougal, WA) ▪ Central Elementary (Albany, OR) ▪ Columbia River Gorge Elementary School (Washougal, WA) ▪ Franklin Elementary (Corvallis, OR) ▪ Gause Elementary School (Washougal, WA) ▪ Hathaway Elementary School (Washougal, WA) ▪ Heritage High School (Vancouver WA) ▪ Jefferson Elementary (Corvallis, OR) ▪ Jemtegaard Middle School (Washougal, WA) ▪ Liberty Elementary (Albany, OR) ▪ Oak Elementary (Albany, OR) ▪ Sunrise Elementary (Albany, OR) ▪ Takena Elementary (Albany, OR) ▪ Tangent Elementary (Albany, OR) ▪ Woodburn Elementary School (Camas, WA)

## AREA 2

**Heather Jones (team leader), Smyrna, DE, and Bonnie Yurkanin (trainee), Claymont, DE**

Allen Frear Elementary School (Camden, DE) ▪ Booker T. Washington Elementary School (Dover, DE) ▪ Brandywine High School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Carrcroft Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Clayton Elementary School (Clayton, DE) ▪ Clayton Intermediate School (Clayton, DE) ▪ Concord High School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Conrad Schools of Science (Wilmington, DE) ▪ East Hartford Middle School (Hartford, CT) ▪ Forwood Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Hanby Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Harlan Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ H.O. Brittingham Elementary School (Rehoboth Beach, DE) ▪ John Bassett Moore Intermediate School (Smyrna, DE) ▪ Lancashire Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Lane Elementary School (Claymont, DE) ▪ Las Americas Aspira Academy (Newark, DE) ▪ Lombardy Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Matapeake Middle School (Stevensville, MD) ▪ Metacommet Elementary School (Bloomfield, CT) ▪ Mount Pleasant Elementary School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Mount Pleasant High School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Olive B. Loss Elementary School (Middletown, DE) ▪ P.S. DuPont Middle School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Silver Lake Elementary (Middletown, DE) ▪ Smyrna Middle School (Smyrna, DE) ▪ Smyrna High School (Smyrna, DE) ▪ Springer Middle School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Sudlersville Elementary School (Sudlersville, MD) ▪ Sunnyside Elementary School (Smyrna, DE) ▪ Sunset Ridge Middle School (East Hartford, CT) ▪ Talley Middle School (Wilmington, DE) ▪ Welch Elementary School (Camden, DE)

## AREA 3

**Alicia Pruitt (team leader), Chesapeake, VA, and Sharon Thompson (trainee), Biloxi, MS**

28th Street Elementary (Gulfport, MS) ▪ Bayles Elementary (Dallas, TX) ▪ Central Elementary (Pascagoula, MS) ▪ Cherokee Elementary (Pascagoula, MS) ▪ College Park Elementary (Pascagoula, MS) ▪ Colmer Middle School (Pascagoula, MS) ▪ Hardeeville Middle School (Hardeeville, SC) ▪ Jeff Davis Elementary (Biloxi, MS) ▪ Magnolia Middle School (Moss Point, MS) ▪ Martin Bluff Elementary (Gautier, MS) ▪ Moss Point Escatawpa Upper Elementary School (Moss Point, MS) ▪ Newton Razor Elementary (Denton, TX) ▪ Trent Lott Academy (Pascagoula, MS)

## AREA 4

**Colleen Shuler (team leader), Stockton, MO, and Sherry Harrington (trainee), Imperial, MO**

Antonia Elementary School (Imperial, MO) ▪ Antonia Middle School (Barnhart, MO) ▪ Bolivar Middle School (Bolivar, MO) ▪ Clyde Hamrick Elementary School (Imperial, MO) ▪ El Dorado Springs Elementary (El Dorado Springs, MO) ▪ Fair Grove Middle School (Fair Grove, MO) ▪ Fox Elementary School (Arnold, MO) ▪ Guffey Elementary School (Fenton, MO) ▪ Halfway Elementary (Halfway, MO) ▪ Hodge Elementary School (Imperial, MO) ▪ Humansville Elementary (Humansville, MO) ▪ Leeton Elementary (Leeton, MO) ▪ Lonedell Elementary School (Arnold, MO) ▪ Meramec Heights Elementary School (Arnold, MO) ▪ New Covenant Academy (Springfield, MO) ▪ Perspectives Preparatory Academy (Springfield, MO) ▪ Polk County Christian School (Bolivar, MO) ▪ Raymondville R-VII Schools (Raymondville, 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) ▪ Southwest Baptist University (Bolivar, MO) ▪ Stockton Middle School (Stockton, MO) ▪ Three Trails Elementary (Independence, MO) ▪ Truman Elementary (Rolla, MO) ▪ Weaubleau Elementary (Weaubleau, MO) ▪ Willard Intermediate School (Willard, MO) ▪ Windsor Intermediate School (Imperial, MO)

## AREA 5

**Julie Greenberg (team leader), Perrysburg, OH**

Dublin City Schools (Dublin, OH) ▪ Maumee City Schools (Maumee, OH) ▪ Oregon City School Schools (Oregon, OH) ▪ Rossford Schools (Rossford, OH) ▪ Toledo Public Schools (Toledo, OH) ▪ University of Toledo (Toledo, OH) ▪ Washington Local Schools (Toledo, OH)