



Multicultural Themes

The Skin I'm in by Sharon Flake

Maleeka suffers every day from the taunts of the other kids in her class. When a new teacher, whose face is blotched with a startling white patch, starts at their school, Maleeka can see there is bound to be trouble for her too. But the new teacher's attitude surprises Maleeka. Miss Saunders loves the skin she's in.

American Born Chinese by Gene Yang

A fable for every kid born into a body and a life they wished they could escape. The fable is filtered through some very specific cultural icons: the much-beloved Monkey King, a figure familiar to Chinese kids the world over, and a buck-toothed amalgamation of racist stereotypes named Chin-Kee.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian by Sherman Alexie

Exploring Indian identity, both self and tribal, Alexie's first young adult novel is a semiautobiographical chronicle of Arnold Spirit, aka Junior, a Spokane Indian from Wellpinit, WA.

Chanda's Wars by Allan Stratton

Chanda has been dreaming of civil war, lost children, and rivers of blood. Suddenly the dream is real. Rebel soldiers brutally attack her family's village and kidnap her brother and sister. Risking their lives, Chanda and a troubled young tracker must pursue the rebels through the unforgiving bush to save her family.

Moonshadow by Simon Higgins

Moonshadow is the newest member of the shogun's secret service. An orphan trained by the Grey Light Order, the young ninja is able to look into the eyes of animals and command them to follow his wishes by using his ki.

Efrain's Secret by Sofia Quintero

Efrain, 17, is the pride of his Bronx high school. He's respected by students, teachers, and family, and will probably make valedictorian. He tutors failing students after school. He wants to be the first Latino mayor of New York. But to pay for his SAT tutoring, he needs to make some fast cash. Running drugs fits the bill.

Red Glass by Laura Resau

After Pedro, a six-year-old Mexican boy, recovers from dehydration, he comes to live with Sophie and her family. After a year, Pedro's surviving family in Mexico makes contact, Sophie travels with Pedro to his hometown so that he can make a heart-wrenching decision.

Tall Story by Candy Gourlay

16 yr old Bernardo lives in the Philippines with his aunt and uncle. His mother lives in London with her husband and Andi, his step sister. For years Bernardo's family has been trying and waiting to get his Visa. Finally Bernardo is allowed to be with this family. 12 yr old Andi is looking forward to welcoming her step brother to London. Though when Andi discovers that Bernardo is 8ft tall, she doesn't know what to make of him and keeps her distance.

Humor

Guys Read: Funny Business edited by Jon Scieszka

(funny and not just for boys)

Looking for a story heavy on the ick-factor? Read Jack Gantos's "The Bloody Souvenir." "David Yoo's "A Fistful of Feathers" features a bloodthirsty turkey intent on destroying the narrator's life. Eoin Colfer offers an autobiographical piece that shares how his younger brother was his real-life inspiration for Artemis Fowl.

Boom! By Mark Haddon

When Jimbo, and his friend Charlie overhear two of their teachers talking in a strange language they investigate the home of one of them and discover a note written in the mysterious language and a collection of brass bracelets. Then Charlie goes missing, and Jimbo and his sister embark on a trip to Scotland's Isle of Skye, where they discover that aliens are kidnapping science-fiction fans to repopulate their dying planet.

I am a Genius of Unspeakable Evil (and I want to be your class president) by Josh Lieb

Oliver Watson fools his family and classmates into thinking that he is slow-witted when in fact he is the world's third-richest person. He overthrows foreign dictators, owns corporations, is a successful inventor and investor, and is on the way to attaining his goal of world domination.

Non-fiction

Heart of a Samurai

by Margi Preus

Manjiro is 14 when a freak storm washes him and his four fishing companions onto a tiny island far from their Japanese homeland. Shortly before starving, they are rescued by an American whaling ship.

We Beat the Streets by Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, and Rameck Hunt, with Sharon Draper

"What started out as three boys skipping class turned out to be the most significant experience of our lives," says George Jenkins, who, together with Sampson Davis and Rameck Hunt, made a teenage pact to leave their impoverished New Jersey neighborhood, attend medical school, and become doctors.

Phineas Gage : a gruesome but true story about brain science by John Fleischman

The story of the construction foreman who survived for 10 years after an iron rod shot through his brain. Fleischman shows how Gage's misfortune actually played an intriguing and important role in the development of our knowledge of the brain.

Claudette Colvin: Twice toward Justice by Phillip Hoose

Nine months before Rosa Parks' history-making protest on a city bus, Claudette Colvin, a 15-year-old Montgomery, Alabama, high-school student, was arrested and jailed for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger.

Tracking Trash: Flotsam, Jetsam, and the Science of Ocean Motion by Loree Griffin Burns

In 1990, five containers packed with Nike sneakers were swept off a cargo ship during a storm at sea. In 1992, 28,800 floating bathtub toys spilled into the Pacific in a similar mishap.

The Duel: the parallel lives of Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr by Judith St. George

On the morning on June 11, 1804, Aaron Burr shot and killed Alexander Hamilton. The two men lived strikingly similar lives. Both men had been orphaned young; both were excellent, driven students; both men had served on the staff of General George Washington during the Revolutionary War; both were lawyers in New York City; and both were deeply involved in politics. Political intrigue meets epic melodrama.