

# PALMS Social Studies

## Summer Geography & Multicultural Enrichment

### Recommended Reading Lists

#### Antarctica, the World and the Oceans

- [National Geographic, Destination World: Antarctica](#)
- Virtual Tours
  - [Stunning Coral Reefs](#)
  - [Great Barrier Reef](#)
  - [Oceans 360](#)
  - [Antarctica](#)
- [World Geography Games](#)
- Kahoots
  - [Continents and Oceans](#)
  - [Geography of the Oceans and the Continents](#)
  - [Ocean Wonders](#)
- Newsela Articles
  - [Which Ocean is the World's Smallest?](#)
  - [Despite Seven-Headed Serpents, 15th Century World Map is Very Accurate](#)
- [Cultural Recipe: Fish Taco](#)

#### Africa

- [National Geographic, Destination World: Africa](#)
- [Virtual Tour of Africa](#)
- Kahoots
  - [African Countries](#)
  - [African Animals](#)
  - [African Geography](#)
  - [African Physical Geography](#)
  - [African Flag](#)
- Newsela Articles
  - [Africa: Physical Geography](#)
  - [Africa: Human Geography](#)
- [Cultural Recipe: Koeksisters](#)

## Asia

- [National Geographic, Destination World: Asia](#)
- [Virtual Tour of Asia](#)
- [Asia Map Games](#)
- Kahoots
  - [Asian Geography](#)
  - [South Asian Physical Geography](#)
  - [Asian Geography](#)
  - [More Asian Geography](#)
- Newsela Articles
  - [Asia: Physical Geography](#)
  - [Asia: Human Geography](#)
- [Cultural Recipe: Sticky Asian Glazed Chicken](#)

## Australia/Oceania

- [National Geographic, Destination World: Australia](#)
- Virtual Tours
  - [Melbourne, Victoria](#)
  - [Uluru](#)
- [Oceania Map Games](#)
- Kahoots
  - [Australian Geography](#)
  - [More Australian Geography](#)
  - [Even more Australian Geography](#)
- Newsela Articles
  - [Australia and Oceania: Physical Geography](#)
  - [Australia and Oceania: Human Geography](#)
  - [How Australia Bushfires Spread: Mapping the Fires](#)
- [Cultural Recipes: New Zealand Style Beef and Cheddar Pies](#)

## Europe

- [National Geographic, Destination World: Europe](#)
- [Virtual Tour of Europe](#)
- [Europe Map Games](#)
- Kahoots
  - [European Geography](#)
  - [More European Geography](#)
  - [European Landmarks](#)
  - [More European Landmarks](#)
- [Newsela Article - \*The European Union: A History and Overview\*](#)
- [Video: How Europe's Geography Shaped History](#)

## Northern and Central America

- [National Geographic, Destination World: North America](#)
- [Visit All 50 States with the Virtual Tours](#)
- [North and Central America Map Games](#)
- Kahoots
  - [US Geography](#)
  - [Basic North American Geography](#)
  - [American Landmarks](#)
- Newsela Articles
  - [North America: Human Geography](#)
  - [North America: Physical Geography](#)
  - [In 1562, Mapmakers Thought America was Full of Mermaids, Giants, and Dragons](#)
- [Cultural Recipe: Amish Sugar Cookies](#)

## South America

- [National Geographic Destination World: South America](#)
- [South America Virtual Tour](#)
- [South America Map Games](#)
- Kahoots
  - [South America Countries](#)
  - [Latin America](#)
  - [South American Geography](#)
- Newsela Articles
  - [South America: Physical Geography](#)
  - [South America: Human Geography](#)
  - [Why We Can't Afford to Lose the Amazon Rainforest](#)
- [Cultural Recipe: Brazilian Cheese Rolls](#)

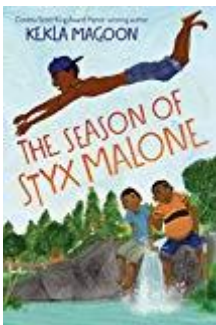


## African & African American

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### [The Season of Styx Malone](#)

by Kekla Magoon

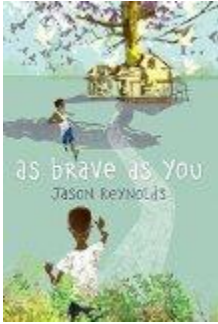


When brothers Caleb and Bobby Gene meet their cool new neighbour, Styx Malone, they are in for a mad adventure. Styx convinces them to join in the Great Escalator Trade: Exchanging one small thing for something better in the hope of ending up with a motorbike. But soon things get out of control. **The Season Of Styx Malone** is a heartwarming novel about friendship, trust, and the yearning to escape the ordinary.

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## [As Brave As You](#)

by Jason Reynolds

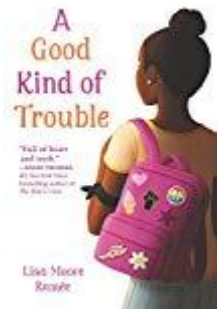


11-year-old Genie and his older brother Ernie are leaving Brooklyn for the very first time to spend the summer with their grandparents in rural Virginia. It is a time full of surprises for Genie and learning about himself and his family: From finding out that his grandfather is blind to discovering his secret room to learning that bravery can mean different things. Just published this month, **As Brave As You Are** is a thoughtful and gentle middle-grade novel by Coretta Scott King/Johnson Steptoe Award-winner Jason Reynolds ([When I Was the Greatest](#)).

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## [A Good Kind of Trouble](#)

by Lisa Moore Ramée

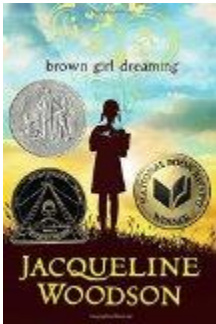


All twelve-year-old Shayla wants is to make it through seventh grade with her best friendships intact, learn to run track, and have a cute boy see past her giant forehead. But in junior high, she's suddenly questioning who her best friends are and some people at school are saying she's not black enough. Through her sister, she starts getting involved in the Black Lives Matter movement and soon has to decide to do what's right. **A Good Kind Of Trouble** is a funny and big-hearted debut novel about family, friendship and standing up for what is right.

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## [Brown Girl Dreaming](#)

*by Jacqueline Woodson*



**Brown Girl Dreaming** is a deeply personal and touching account of the author's childhood as an African American girl in the 1960's and 1970's. Growing up in South Carolina and New York, she becomes increasingly aware of the Civil Rights Movement. In poetic language full of imagery this award-winning book gives a glimpse into a child's soul and her journey of self-discovery.

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## [Finding Langston](#)

*by Lesa Cline-Ransome*



After the death of his mother, 11-year-old Langston and his father move from Alabama to Chicago's Bronzeville district. Everything is different here and Langston misses his home, his family and his friends. Being bullied at his new school and not seeing much of his father, Langston feels lonely in the big and noisy city. The library becomes his safe place and this is where he discovers the Langston his mother named him after. **Finding Langston** is a lyrical novel about one boy's experiences during the Great Migration.

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## [Hurricane Child](#)

by Kheryn Callender



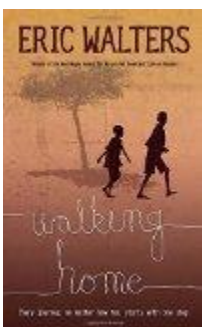
12-year-old Caroline Murphy struggles with being bullied by students and teachers alike at her small school on St. Thomas of the US Virgin Islands, a spirit that keeps following her, and the fact that her mother left home one day and never came back. When Caroline befriends Kalinda, a new student from Barbados, she soon realizes that her feelings for her are more than platonic. Although those feelings are not being reciprocated, Kalinda wants to help Caroline look for her missing mother and so the girls set out in a hurricane to find her before it is too late. Award-winning **Hurricane Child** is a moving and suspenseful coming-of-age novel that young readers will love.

More Caribbean books: [36 Children's Books set in the Caribbean](#)

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## [Walking Home](#)

by Eric Walters



13-year-old Muchoki and his little sister Jata have lost almost everything: Political violence has destroyed their Kenyan village and killed their father. Now living in an overcrowded refugee camp with their ailing mother, the siblings are faced with hunger and fears about the future. Driven by both hope and desperation, Muchoki and Jata set off on a brave, seemingly impossible journey, walking hundreds of kilometers to find their last remaining family. **Walking Home** is an inspiring and moving story about loss and forgiveness, perseverance and hope.

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## [The Length of a String](#)

by *Elissa Brent Weissman*

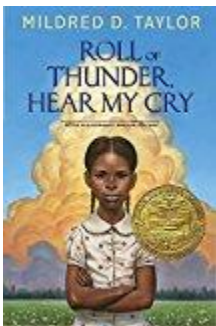


Imani is adopted and she knows exactly what she wants as her big bat mitzvah gift: to find her birth parents. Being Black in her mostly White Jewish community, she has always wondered where she came from. When her great-grandma Anna passes away, Imani discovers her old diary from 1941, the year she was twelve and fled Nazi-occupied Luxembourg alone. Anna's diary records her journey to America and her new life with an adoptive family of her own. As Imani reads the diary, she begins to see her family, and her place in it, in a whole new way. **The Length Of A String** is a gripping novel about identity, family and belonging.

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## [Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry](#)

by *Mildred D. Taylor*



Set in Mississippi at the height of the Depression, **Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry** tells of one family's struggle to maintain their integrity, pride, and independence in the face of racism and social injustice. This classic masterpiece focuses on Cassie Logan, an independent girl who discovers why having land of their own is so crucial to the Logan family, and learns to draw strength from her own sense of dignity and self-respect.

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## [Ann Fights for Freedom: An Underground Railroad Survival Story](#)

by Nikki Shannon Smith



Twelve-year-old Ann understands there is only one thing to be grateful for as a slave: having her family together. But when the master plans to sell her and her younger brother to two different owners, the family decides to run away on the Underground Railroad. Will they survive the dangerous trip to their freedom in the North? **Ann Fights For Freedom** is a compelling read with expressive illustrations.

More historical fiction: [African American Historical Fiction for Middle School](#)

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## [New Kid](#)

by Jerry Craft

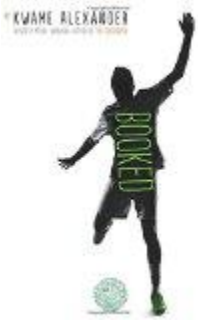


Seventh-grader Jordan Banks' passion is drawing cartoons about his life. He'd love to go to art school but his parents decide to send him to a prestigious private school known for its academics instead. Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds. **New Kid** is an engaging graphic novel about fitting in and staying true to yourself.

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## [Booked](#)

*by Kwame Alexander*

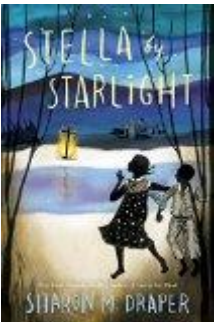


“Like lightning / you strike / fast and free / legs zoom / down field / eyes fixed / on the checkered ball / on the goal / ten yards to go / can’t nobody stop you...” In this follow-up to award-winning [The Crossover](#), twelve-year-old Nick struggles with problems at home, is faced with a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams. With the help of his best friend and inspiring books given to him by a rapping librarian, Nicky learns about the power of words and how to stand up for himself. **Booked** is an exciting and heartfelt novel-in-verse about soccer, family, love and friendship.

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## [Stella by Starlight](#)

*by Sharon M. Draper*

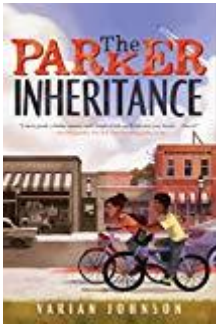


One night 11-year-old Stella and her brother witness a Ku Klux Klan meeting in the North Carolina woods. For the African American siblings, living in the South is a dangerous, scary and often humiliating experience. **Stella by Starlight** is a gripping and realistic portrayal of life in the segregated South during the Great Depression.

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## [The Parker Inheritance](#)

by Varian Johnson



In an old attic in Lambert, South Carolina, Candice finds a letter addressed to her grandmother, who left the town in shame. The letter tells of an injustice that happened decades ago, a mystery and the fortune awaiting the person who solves the puzzle. Together with her friend Brandon, Candice embarks on a journey that leads deep into Lambert's dark history, and deeper into their own families, with their own unspoken secrets. **The Parker Inheritance** is a powerful novel about racism, justice and friendship.

More books about racism: [37 Children's Books to help talk about Racism & Discrimination](#)

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## [Twinchantment](#)

by Elise Allan

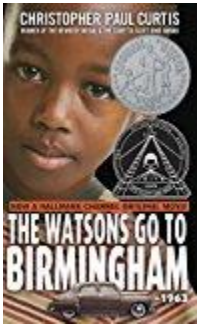


Generations ago, twins, black cats, and other potentially magical beings were outlawed in the kingdom of Kaloon. So from birth, twins Flissa and Sara had to pretend to be one princess, Flissara. But when a magical attack puts their mother's life in danger, the girls must break the rules that have protected them to save her. They set off on an epic quest to the Twists—a forbidden place full of dark magic—to find the evil mage who cursed the queen. The first book in a new series, **Twinchantment** brings to life a fantastical world of sisterhood, adventure, and incredible twists.

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## [The Watsons Go to Birmingham](#)

*by Christopher Paul Curtis*



Meet the “Weird Watsons”: 10-year-old Kenny, his mom, dad, little sister Joetta and older brother Byron. When Byron gets into too much trouble, the family drives to Alabama to visit Grandma, the one person who can shape him up. It’s 1963, and little does the family know that they are heading straight into one of the most horrific moments in America’s history: the bombing of a church that killed four little girls. Award-winning **The Watsons Go To Birmingham** is both hilarious and heartbreaking – a modern classic that every middle grader should read.

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## [The Usual Suspects](#)

*by Maurice Broaddus*

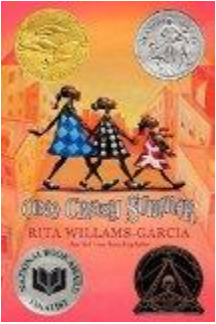


Because of his disruptive antics and pranks, Thelonius Mitchell is in special ed, separated from the “normal” kids at school who don’t have any “issues.” When a gun is found at a neighbourhood hangout, Thelonius and his pals become instant suspects and they must find the real culprits in order to prove their innocence. **The Usual Suspects** is an engaging and honest middle-grade thriller that young readers won’t want to put down.

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## [One Crazy Summer](#)

by Rita Williams-Garcia



**One Crazy Summer** is the first book of Williams-Garcia's award-winning trilogy about three resilient young sisters in the late 60's. Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern travel to Oakland in 1968 to spend the summer with their mother who abandoned them seven years earlier. They receive a cold welcome from their mother, a dedicated poet and printer, and are being sent to the Black Panther's day center every day. This heartfelt, funny and thought-provoking novel addresses two difficult subjects: The controversial Black Panther Party, and a mother who leaves her children behind.

The other books in the trilogy: [P.S. Be Eleven](#) // [Gone Crazy in Alabama](#)

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## [How High the Moon](#)

by Karyn Parsons



It's 1944 and 12-year-old Ella spends her days fishing and running around with her best friend Henry and cousin Myrna in the small town of Alcolu, South Carolina. But she struggles with being bullied for her light skin tone her mother being away pursuing a jazz singer dream in Boston. So Ella is ecstatic when her mother invites her to visit for Christmas. Little does she expect the truths she will discover about her mother, the father she never knew and her family's most unlikely history. After a life-changing month, she returns South and is shocked by the news that her schoolmate George has been arrested for the murder of two local white girls. **How High the Moon** is a bittersweet and powerful novel about a girl finding herself in a world that is determined to hold her down.

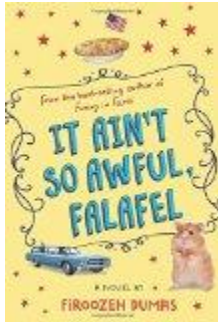
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# Asian & Asian American

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## [It Ain't So Awful, Falafel](#)

by Firoozeh Dumas



Another fantastic brand new release! In times of the anti-Iran sentiments of the 1970s, fitting in has become even more difficult for brainy loner Zomorod Yousefzadeh. Her family has just moved again, this time to Newport Beach, California, and she is determined to fit in, even changing her name to all-American Cindy. **It Ain't So Awful, Falafel** is a moving yet lighthearted middle-grade novel from the author of best-selling [Funny in Farsi](#).

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## [The Night Diary](#)

by Veera Hiranandan



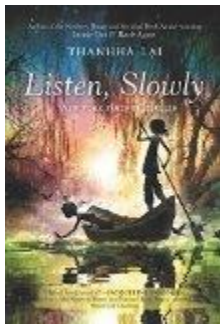
After India has been divided into two countries (India and Pakistan), 12-year-old half-Muslim/half-Hindu Nisha doesn't know where she belongs anymore. Her family embarks on a dangerous journey to find a new home. Told through Nisha's letters to her late mother, **The Night Diary** is a poignant story of loss, identity and hope.

More books set in Pakistan: [15 Children's Books set in Pakistan](#)

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## [Listen, Slowly](#)

by Thanhha Lai



Instead of spending her holidays at the beach, Californian girl Mai has to accompany her grandmother to Vietnam. Her parents are hoping that the trip will connect their out-of-touch daughter with her roots, but Mai struggles with the foreign country and its culture. Bestselling **Listen, Slowly** is an irresistible and poignant story about the true meaning of home, culture, family and friends. The paperback edition includes a letter from the author, a Vietnamese glossary and a pronunciation guide.

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## [Front Desk](#)

by Kelly Yang



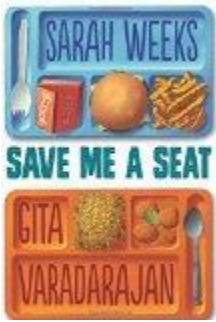
Ten-year-old aspiring writer Mia Tang manages the front desk of a motel where her immigrant parents clean the rooms. If the mean motel owner, Mr Yao, finds out they've been letting other immigrants stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed. Featuring an irresistible protagonist, award-winning **Front Desk** is an engaging middle-grade novel about immigration, poverty and resilience.

More books about immigration: [30 Multicultural Picture Books about Immigration](#)

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## [Save Me a Seat](#)

by Gita Varadarajan

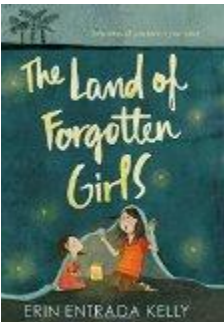


**Save Me A Seat** is told from the points of view of Ravi, who recently arrived in the US from India, and Joe, whose best friend has just moved away. Both boys attend Fifth Grade at the same school and – each in their own way – struggle to acclimatise to the new situation. Over the course of a single crazy week, they find out that they have more in common than they thought: Dillon Samreen, the school’s biggest bully. Together Ravi and Joe try to take control of their lives. Released earlier this month, this is an authentic middle grade novel about fitting in and staying true to yourself.

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## [The Land of Forgotten Girls](#)

by Erin Entrada Kelly



Abandoned by their father, sisters Soledad and Ming from the Philippines live in Louisiana with their evil stepmother. All they have is the stories their deceased mother used to tell them about the travels of her magical sister. The stories give the sisters hope, but for little Ming they also blur the lines between fact and fiction. Sol needs to find a way to pull her sister back into reality. Mixing fantasy and realism, **The Land of Forgotten Girls** is an enchanting middle-grade novel about sisterhood, hope and the power of imagination.

From the same author: [Blackbird Fly](#)

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## [The House That Lou Built](#)

by Mae Respicio



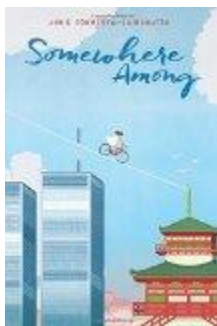
Lou Bulosan-Nelson plans to build a tiny house on land she inherited from her dad. She longs for a place where she can escape her lovable but crazy extended Filipino family. But then she finds out that the land may not be hers for much longer. With Lou's determination and the help of friends and relatives, her dream eventually begins to take shape. **The House That Lou Built** is a warm coming-of-age story about culture and family, forgiveness and friendship.

More books about friendship: [18 Multicultural Children's Books about Friendship](#)

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## [Somewhere Among](#)

by Annie Donwerth-Chikamatsu

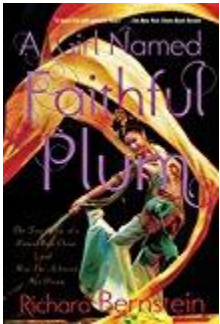


11-year-old Ema is looking forward to the arrival of her baby sibling. Finally, someone who will understand how it feels to be half American and half Japanese. But spending the summer with her grandparents in Japan is difficult for Ema: Her harsh grandmother, her mother's tricky pregnancy, and then their stay is extended and she must attend a new school, once again not fitting in. When the tragedy of 9/11 strikes an ocean away, and her grandfather falls ill, Ema feels more helpless than ever and learns about the tender side and the strength of her grandmother. Entirely written in free-verse, **Somewhere Among** is a heartfelt debut middle-grade novel about family, loneliness and hope.

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## [A Girl Named Faithful Plum](#)

by Richard Bernstein



In 1977, 11-year-old Zhongmei travelled for several days to attend the open auditions of the prestigious Beijing Dance Academy. Against all odds, the poor country girl beat out 60,000 other girls, became a famous dancer, and made her New York debut with her own dance company when she was in just her late 20s. Written by Zhongmei’s husband, **A Girl Named Faithful Plum** is a fascinating account of one girl’s journey from the remote farmlands of China to the world’s stages.

More books about female artists: [40 Multicultural Children’s Books About Fabulous Female Artists](#)

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## [Cilla Lee-Jenkins: The Epic Story](#)

by Susan Tan



Chinese-American Cilla Lee-Jenkins has already written a “Bestseller” and a “Classic”—now it’s time for her to write an Epic Story. Epics are all about brave heroes overcoming struggles to save the world, and this year, Cilla is facing her toughest struggles yet: She is in fifth grade and, unlike her classmates, not at all ready to start middle school; she has to look after two younger sisters who don’t get along, and her beloved grandfather YeYe has had a stroke and forgotten his English. With humour, heart and a lovable main character, **Cilla Lee-Jenkins: The Epic Story** will appeal to young readers entering middle school, especially aspiring young writers.

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## [Summerlost](#)

by Allie Condie



After her father and younger brother were killed in accident, Cedar and what's left of her family are spending the summer in Iron Creek. The Asian American girl befriends local boy Leo who introduces her to the renowned Summerlost theatre festival. Cedar gets a job at the festival and soon finds herself surrounded by mysteries: That of a deceased Hollywood actress haunting the halls of Summerlost, and that of the strange gifts Cedar keeps receiving. **Summerlost** is a tender and touching middle grade novel about processing loss and finding friendship.

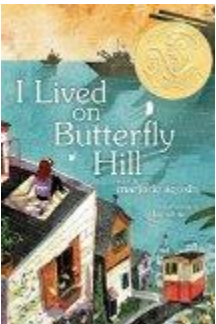
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## Hispanic & Hispanic American

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### [I Lived on Butterfly Hill](#)

by Marjorie Agosin

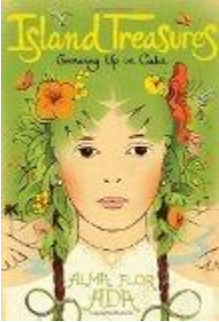


11-year-old Celeste lives a peaceful life among family, friends and neighbours in the idyllic seaside town of Valparaiso, Chile. But her world is turned upside down when one day warships arrive, and classmates start disappearing without an explanation. Celeste doesn't quite understand but she knows that no one is safe anymore. Celeste's parents have to go into hiding and send Celeste to America to protect her. Based on true events during Pinochet's dictatorship, **I Lived on Butterfly Hill** is a heart-rending historical fiction novel about exile and reunification, loss and hope.

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## [Island Treasures](#)

by Alma Flor Ada

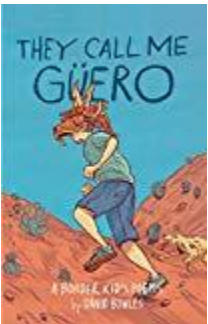


**Island Treasures** is a collection of autobiographical stories from renowned author Alma Flor Ada, offering a moving glimpse into her childhood in Cuba. The book features Ada's award-winning books 'Where the Flame Trees Bloom' and 'Under the Royal Palms' as well as five new stories, family photos and a Spanish/English glossary. The poignant and often humorous stories bring to life some of the important people in Ada's life, from her blind great-grandmother with her wisdom and generosity to her brave aeroplane-flying Uncle Medardo, from music-loving worker Samoné to Ada's beloved and supportive dance teacher.

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## [They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid's Poems](#)

by David Bowles

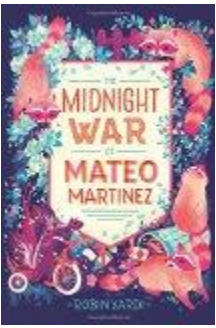


Twelve-year-old Güero is a Mexican American border kid with red hair, light skin and freckles. He is a book, game and music nerd and has just started 7th grade with a woke English teacher who knows how to make poetry cool. **They Call Me Güero** is a vibrant novel-in-poems about growing up between two cultures.

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## [The Midnight War of Mateo Martinez](#)

by Robin Yardi

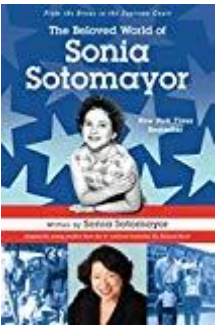


“‘Nobody believed me when I said two skunks stole my old trike. But I’d seen those stinkers take it. Swear.’ When Fourth Grader Mateo Martinez insists that two talking skunks stole his old trike, his family believes he was only dreaming, as he also constantly dreams of being a medieval knight. But that’s not all that’s difficult in Mateo’s life: He has to deal with bullies at school, with Johnny not being his best friend anymore and with developing his new friendship with Indian American Ashwin. And above all, he struggles with his Mexican American identity. **The Midnight War of Mateo Martinez** is a funny and action-packed middle-grade novel with a touch of fantasy, a story about growing up and letting go.

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## [The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor](#)

*by Sonia Sotomayor*

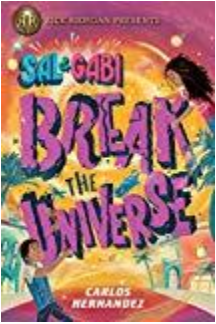


Growing up in the rough South Bronx, Sonia Sotomayor dreamed of becoming a lawyer and a judge. Her determination, along with the guidance from mentors and the love of her extended Puerto Rican family, propelled her forward until her dream eventually came true. She became the first Latina and the third woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court. **The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor** is the middle-grade adaptation of this inspiring woman’s memoir. Includes an 8-page photo insert and a brief history of the Supreme Court.

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## [Sal and Gabi Break the Universe](#)

by Carlos Hernandez

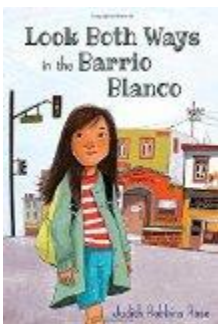


When Sal Vidon and Gabi Real meet for the first time, it isn't under the best of circumstances. Sal is in the principal's office for allegedly putting a raw chicken in Yasmany's locker (that has since magically disappeared), and Gabi, student council president and editor of the school paper, is there to support her friend Yasmany. Sal prides himself on being an excellent magician. When Gabi learns that he's capable of conjuring things much bigger than a chicken—including his dead mother— and she takes it all in stride, Sal knows that she is someone he can work with. There's only one slight problem: their manipulation of time and space could put the entire universe at risk. **Sal & Gabi Break The Universe** is a hilarious and quirky novel that middle-graders won't be able to put down.

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## [Look Both Ways in the Barrio Blanco](#)

by Judith Robbins Rose

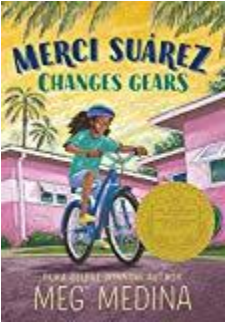


Daughter of undocumented Mexican immigrants, Jacinta Juarez doesn't know much about the world outside her barrio. When a well-known news anchorwoman becomes her mentor after reporting on her youth center, Jacinta finds herself caught between two cultures. She wants to embrace a better future but also longs for the comfort of her family and the barrio. When her family is torn apart, Jacinta needs to find her own strength to pick up the pieces. **Look Both Ways in the Barrio Blanco** is a charming and authentic coming of age story, told with humour and sensitivity.

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## [Merci Suárez Changes Gears](#)

by Meg Medina



Sixth-Grader Merci Suarez and her older brother are the only scholarship students at their private school in Florida. They have to do extra community service to make up for their free tuition. Added to that Merci is being targeted by a jealous girl and at home, her beloved grandfather is acting increasingly strange. Merci feels very alone with her confusion and worry and tries to find her own way of navigating the difficult situation. Award-winning **Merci Suárez Changes Gears** is a heartfelt yet humorous coming-of-age novel about change, authenticity and family connection.

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## [Caminar](#)

by Skila Brown



Set in 1981 during Guatemala's Civil War, this is the story of a young boy who has to flee when soldiers invade his village. Separated from his mother, Carlos joins a band of guerillas and tries to make his way to his grandmother's mountain village. Written entirely in free-verse, **Caminar** is a gripping and moving story of a young boy's loss, survival and growth.

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## [Love Sugar Magic: A Sprinkle of Spirits](#)

by Anna Meriano

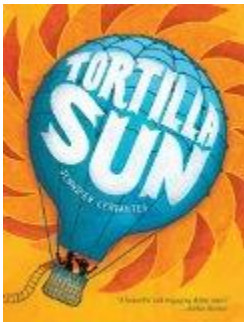


In this follow-up of the instant hit [Love Sugar Magic: A Dash of Trouble](#), Leonora Logroño has finally been introduced to her family's bakery bruja magic. But since her special power hasn't shown up yet, her family still won't let her perform her own spells, and they expect her to keep the family magic secret, even from her best friend Caroline. Suddenly spirits are popping up all over town, causing all sorts of trouble! Is this Leo's fault? And can she reverse the spell before it's too late? **Love Sugar Magic: A Sprinkle Of Spirits** is a charming book that middle-graders will love.

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## [Tortilla Sun](#)

by Jennifer Cervantes



Initially, 12-year-old Lizzy is not keen on spending the summer with her grandmother in a remote village in New Mexico. But soon she enjoys her loving Nana's company and the enchanted atmosphere of a village frozen in time. Lizzy also starts to uncover the mystery surrounding her father who died before she was born. **Tortilla Sun** is a gentle story about family, friendship and dealing with the past.

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## [The Moon Within](#)

by Aida Salazar

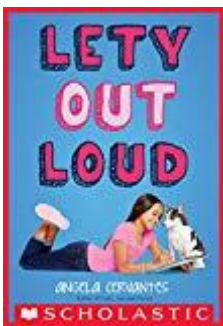


11-year old Celi Rivera has lots to grapple with, from her changing body to her first crush and her best friend's exploration of gender fluidity. But most of all, she is dreading the looming arrival of her first period, because her mother insists on having a traditional Mexican moon ceremony. Told in verse, **The Moon Within** is a sensitive and humorous coming-of-age story that will appeal not only to young Latinas but girls everywhere.

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## [Lety Out Loud](#)

by Angela Cervantes



Recently immigrated to the U.S., Lety Muñoz loves volunteering at the Furry Friends Animal Shelter because the dogs and cats there don't care how fast she can find the right word in English. When another volunteer sets up a secret competition to determine who will be the official shelter scribe, Lety is worried that if the shelter finds out, they'll kick her out of the program. And then she'll never be able to adopt her favourite shelter dog! **Lety Out Loud** is a touching story about compassion, empathy and living between two cultures.

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## [Welcome to Washington, Fina Mendoza](#)

by Kitty Felde



10-year-old Fina Mendoza's mom just died. She and her older sister Gabby move to Washington, D.C. to live with Papa, a congressman from California. Fina loves riding the Capitol subways, grabbing snacks in congressional offices, and spending more time with Papa. But after she encounters a mysterious cat, a string of disasters follows, and Fina must solve the mystery of the Demon Cat of Capitol Hill. **Welcome To Washington, Fina Mendoza** is a fun read with a lovable protagonist that will appeal to middle-graders everywhere.

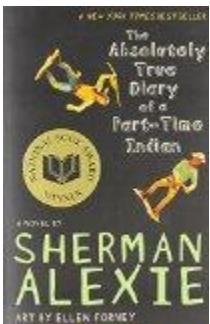
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## Diverse

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### [The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian](#)

by Sherman Alexie

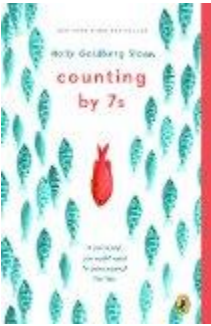


Junior, an aspiring cartoonist, leaves his school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school. Based on the author's own experiences, **The Absolute True Diary of a Part-time Indian** is a touching and funny middle grade novel about the contemporary adolescence of a Native American boy. Illustrated with poignant cartoon-style drawings.

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## [Counting by 7s](#)

by Holly Goldberg Sloan

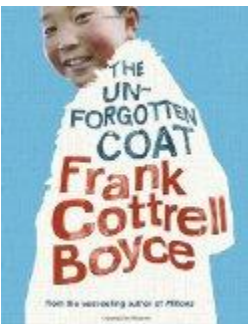


12-year-old Willow Chance is obsessed with nature, diagnosing medical conditions, and counting by 7s. Struggling to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents, she leads a quietly happy life, until both her parents die in an accident, leaving her alone in a confusing world. But Willow manages to push through her grief and find a substitute family. With a multicultural cast (Willow describes herself as a ‘person of colour’), her new family is of mixed Vietnamese, African American, and Mexican heritage), bestselling **Counting by 7s** is a moving middle grade novel about loss, resilience and the true meaning of family.

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## [The Unforgotten Coat](#)

by Frank Cottrell Boyce

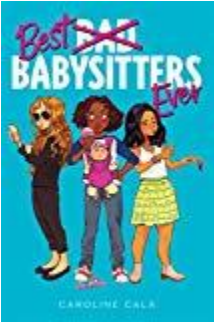


Written in the form of a notebook, **The Unforgotten Coat** chronicles the events of Julie’s sixth-grade year many years ago. Two Mongolian brothers inexplicably appear one morning in her class in Liverpool, England. Chingis, the older brother, proclaims Julie as their “Good Guide” – a nomadic tradition of welcoming strangers to a new land –, and Julie must somehow navigate them through soccer, school uniforms, and British slang, whilst dealing with her own typical tween issues. A unique, moving and sometimes funny middle-grade novel about immigration and two brothers trying to survive.

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## [Best Babysitters Ever](#)

by Caroline Cala

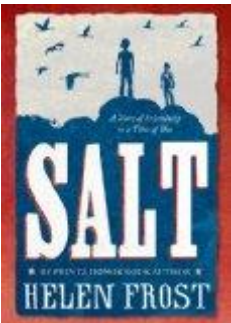


12-year-old Malia convinces her friends Dot and Bree to start a babysitting club in order to earn funds for an epic birthday bash. But babysitting isn't exactly what they thought it would be... **Best Babysitters Ever** is a funny middle-grade novel about friendship, jealousy and first crushes.

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## [Salt](#)

by Helen Frost

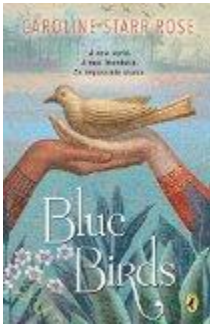


**Salt** is a compelling middle grade novel about the friendship between children of settlers and a Native American tribe. In 1812 Anikwa and James spend their days fishing, trapping, and exploring the forests together. When tensions rise between the traders and the tribe, the two 12-year-olds face the heartbreaking decision where their deepest loyalties lie.

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## [Blue Birds](#)

*by Caroline Starr Rose*



Another one about a friendship between children of settlers and native children, this time with girls as main characters. With rich historical detail, **Blue Birds** tells the story of two girls from two very different worlds: Alis belongs to a family of settlers from England, and Kimi to a native family of the Roanoke tribe. Despite the tensions between the settlers and the Native people, the two girls form an impossible friendship and risk their lives for one another.

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## [Kazu Jones and the Denver Dognappers](#)

*by Shauna Holyoak*



When a string of dognappings grips her Denver neighbourhood, spunky Kazu Jones sets out to track down the culprits with the help of her gang, including her best friend and expert hacker, March; and her ginormous, socially anxious pup, Genki. With a diverse cast of characters and a suspenseful storyline, **Kazu Jones and the Denver Dognappers** is the first instalment in a new series.