

# Young Adult Literature *and* Multimedia:

*a quick guide*  
2010





**Young Adult Literature and  
Multimedia  
A Quick Guide**

**Mary Ann Harlan  
David V. Loertscher  
Sharron L. McElmeel**

**5<sup>th</sup> Edition**

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This book is supplemented by a website, two wikis and a supplementary work. These are described in the introduction.

## **Acknowledgements**

Appreciation is extended to graduate students in Young Adult Materials at San Jose State University who wrote and contributed to some of the pages in this volume. Their names are included on the specific pages they helped to construct both within this book and in online contributions on the web. And thank you to Rebecca Brodegard who wrote a number of the pages and served as general editor for the entire project. Thanks also to Richie Partington, graduate of the School of Library and Information Science, for revising and adding to a number of pages. He also has served as editor to the online sections of the book.

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## Introduction

In the past twenty years, the world of young adult literature and multimedia has exploded. In schools of education and in library science many new courses focusing on teenagers have developed since courses in children's literature that traditionally covered teenage titles became overwhelmed with new content. Textbooks for young adult literature have become so large and so expensive that the authors decided to create a quick guide for pre-service teachers, pre-service librarians, and for anyone who would like to become acquainted with the basics of the new teen world of literature and multimedia.

For many persons, courses in printed literature have predominated the study of materials for either children or young adults. However, to ignore the world of multimedia and teens, including the Internet, is like ignoring the part of the iceberg that is underwater.

This book is organized into the following three sections: Understanding Young Adult Literature, Entering the Teen World of Literacy, and Issues to Consider in Young Adult Literature and Multimedia. Each genre treated is a two- to four-page introduction to the genre followed by valuable lists, a spotlight on an important aspect, ways to keep up with the genre, and, finally, some thought questions to stir conversation and stimulate research. Instructors or workshop developers can use the result to introduce a particular topic and then expand the topic as needed.

The printed text is supplemented in four ways and readers are encouraged to participate:

- **YA Reviews:** A wiki of reviews written by readers of the book and maintained by students at San Jose State University. Instructors of YA materials courses are encouraged to ask their students to add reviews to this wiki. No other permission is needed. Go to <http://seedwiki.com> and search for YA Reviews. Readers can add their own reviews to this page by clicking on "edit this page," adding their review to the top of the list so that the most recent reviews are at the top, and then clicking "save this page." Please follow the format of the reviews already posted: citation, review, reviewer name, and date added. The advantage of seedwiki is that when the person wishes to add an entry and clicks on "edit this page," a familiar toolbar appears at the top of the box, making it easy to format as if one were in a Word document.
- **YA Literature and Multimedia:** A wiki of professional materials and sources that supplement the main text. This resource can be found at: [seedwiki.com](http://seedwiki.com) and search for YA Literature and Multimedia. Add your favorite resources or correct those already there. Follow the editing procedures above: edit this page; and save this page.
- **Mini-Expert Projects.** Graduate students have created extensions to the textbook in the format of the textbook as their project in the young adult materials course at San Jose State University. These projects have been carefully selected for their interesting content and as an extension to the

textbook. Instructors of young adult materials courses are invited to require or encourage such additions. The students may copyright their pieces and we must have their permission to post them. These projects are available at: [www.lmcsource.com](http://www.lmcsource.com) under "Freebies" and then under "book extensions." If you would like to submit a mini-expert project for consideration, send a Microsoft Word file to David Loertscher at [reader.david@gmail.com](mailto:reader.david@gmail.com). The authors of the book will judge each entry for appropriateness and expertise. You will be notified about the possibility of inclusion.

- **Best Teen Reads.** While the previous extensions are free, Sharon McElmeel, one of the authors of the text, has created *The Best Teen Reads for 2007*, which appeared January 2007, and is available from Hi Willow Research & Publishing through [www.lmcsource.com](http://www.lmcsource.com). This resource contains hundreds of recommended titles both new and old to help teachers and librarians recommend good books for teens.

#### Other Recommended Professional Books on Teenagers and their Literature:

- Anderson, Sheila B. *Extreme Teens Library Services to Nontraditional Teens*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.
- Anderson, Sheila B. *Serving Older Teens*. Libraries Unlimited, 2003
- Anderson, Sheila B. *Serving Young Teens and 'Tweens*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.
- Brozo, William G. *To Be a Boy, To Be a Reader: Engaging Teen and Preteen Boys in Active Literacy*. International Reading Association, 2002.
- Carman, L. Kay. *Reaching Out to Religious Youth: A Guide to Services, Programs, and Collections*. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.
- Champlain, Connie, David V. Loertscher, and Nancy A.S. Miller. *Raise a Reader at any Age: A Librarian's and Teacher's Toolkit for Working with Parents*. Hi Willow Research & Publishing, 2005.
- Cords, Sarah Startz. *The Real story: A Guide to Nonfiction Reading Interests*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.
- Donelson, Kenneth L. and Alleen Pace Nilsen. *Literature for Today's Young Adults*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Pearson Education Inc., 2005.
- Farmer, Lesley S.J. *Digital Inclusion, Teens, and Your Library: Exploring the Issues and Acting on Them*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.
- Frolund, Tina, Compiler. *The Official YALSA Awards Guidebook*. YALSA/ALA, 2008.
- Gee, James Paul. *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Harlan, Mary Ann, David V. Loertscher, and Sharron L. McElmeel. *Young Adult Literature and Multimedia: A Quick Guide*. Hi Willow Research & Publishing, 2005.
- Herald, Diana Tixier. *Teen Genreflecting: A Guide to Reading Interests*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Libraries Unlimited, 2003.
- Holley, Pam Spenser, ed. *Quick and Popular Reads for Teens*. ALA, 2009.
- Jones, Patrick. *Connecting Young Adults and Libraries*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Neal-Shuman, 2004.

- Keane, Nancy J. and Terence W. Cavanaugh. *The Tech-Savvy Booktalker: A Guide for 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Educators*. Libraries Unlimited, 2009.
- Koelling, Holly. *Classic Connections: Turning Teens on to Great Literature*. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.
- Krashen, Stephen D. *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.
- Kunzel, Bonnie and Constance Hardesty. *The Teen-Centered Book Club: Readers into Leaders*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.
- Latrobe, Kathy and Judy Drury. *Critical Approaches to Young Adult Literature*. Neil Schuman, 2009.
- Lerch, Maureen T. and Janet Welch. *Serving Homeschooled Teens and Their Parents*. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.
- Lesesne, Teri S. *Take Reading: Uncovering What Tweens Need to Become Lifelong Readers*. Stenhouse Publishers, 2006.
- Loertscher, David V. and Landon D. Loertscher. *My Reading and Writing Log: Microsoft Access Edition*. Hi Willow Research & Publishing, 2005.
- Lynn, Ruth Nadelman. *Fantasy Literature for Children and Young Adults: A Comprehensive Guide*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.
- Manhood, Kristine. *A Passion for Print Promoting Reading and Books to Teens*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.
- McElmeel, Sharron L. *The Best Teen Reads 2007*. Hi Willow Research & Publishing, 2007.
- Nichols, C. Allen. *Thinking Outside the Book: Alternatives for Today's Teen Library Collections*. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.
- Ott, Valerie A. *Teen Programs with Punch: a Month-by-Month Guide*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.
- Reid, Rob. *Reid's Read-Alouds: Selections for Children and Teens*. ALA, 2009.
- Smith, Michael and Jeffrey Wilhelm. *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys: The Role of Literacy in the Lives of Young Men*. Boynton Cook, 2002.
- Sullivan, Michael. *Connecting Boys with Books 2: Closing the Reading Gap*. ALA, 2009.
- Thomas, Rebecca L. *Popular Series Fiction for Middle School and Teen Readers: A Reading and Selection Guide*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.
- Walter, Virginia A. and Elaine Meyers. *Teens & Libraries: Getting It Right*. ALA, 2003.
- York, Sherry. *Children's and Young Adult Literature by Latino Writers: A Guide for Librarians, Teachers, Parents, and Students*. Linworth, 2002.

For the fifth edition, the authors have updated references, added and subtracted titles, but kept the bulk of the work the same as the first edition. Comments are invited by the authors and can be addressed to David Loertscher at [reader.david@gmail.com](mailto:reader.david@gmail.com)



# Section I

## Understanding Young Adult Literature

Section I provides an introduction to the world of literature for teenagers. It begins with a review of children's titles that should have been read before the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and then introduces the young adult novel and the teenager for whom this literature is written. Specific topics are addressed in two parts:

Part A: Building A Background for Understanding Young Adult Literature.....	3
Part B: Building a Background for Understanding the Young Adult Reader and Consumer of Media .....	14

## Teen Survey

The only way to really know what is going on in teen literature and media is to connect with teens themselves. But you need to talk and communicate with them about their world of media. Designing a questionnaire might help you question them verbally or doing a survey might help to collect broader data.

Why do a survey when you work with teens every day? The simple answer is that you interact with only a subset of teens in your daily activities. For example, a public librarian might interact well with teens that frequent the public library, but what about all those who don't come? A school librarian might experience the same customers every week but does not know the quiet patrons, those who never come in, or those who gave up coming long ago. Teachers might know their students in general, but the specifics of individual students might escape them.

A bank of questions might help in creating a brief questionnaire for the specific purpose you have in mind. Some sample questions are listed below. Try them out on a few teens and see if you are getting back the kind of information you want before giving the questionnaire to a larger group.

1. Do you like to read? No Sometimes Yes
2. About how many books have you read in the past year? None One Several  
10-20 More than 20 (change the time frame to month, school year, summer)
3. How often do you read just for fun? Often Sometimes Never
4. When you read for personal enjoyment, how often do you use the following kinds of media?

Magazines	Never	Sometimes	Often
Newspapers	Never	Sometimes	Often
The Internet	Never	Sometimes	Often
Paperback books	Never	Sometimes	Often
Hardback books	Never	Sometimes	Often
5. Of the books you have read recently, how many were on the following topics?

General YA fiction	None	Several	Almost All
Science fiction or fantasy	None	Several	Almost All
Adventure	None	Several	Almost All
Mystery	None	Several	Almost All
Romance	None	Several	Almost All
Science and technology	None	Several	Almost All
Sports	None	Several	Almost All
Self-help or religious	None	Several	Almost All
Adult books	None	Several	Almost All
Narrative Non-fiction	None	Several	Almost All
6. What libraries do you use to find books to read?

Classroom library	Never	Sometimes	Usually
School library	Never	Sometimes	Usually
Public library	Never	Sometimes	Usually
College library	Never	Sometimes	Usually
7. Would you enjoy participating in online book/movie/Internet discussions? Yes No

Think of using various Web 2.0 tools to collect the information such as Survey Monkey.

# Touchstones in Children's Books

John Newbery (1713–1767) is often acknowledged as one of the first publishers of books for children—*A Little Pretty Pocket Book* heralded as the first children's book. Prior to that, children were content to take adult books for their own. There were the tales of Gulliver and of the Lilliputians, Robinson Crusoe, and other adventurous tales. But Newbery published books intended solely for children, and two hundred years later there has never been more or better children's literature than in 21st century. Grandparents of today's generation were introduced to books of Virginia Lee Burton, Ezra Jack Keats, Dr. Seuss, and Maurice Sendak. These giants of children's literature emerged with touchstone titles that set the pace for today's books. Of course, before these giants there were editions of Mother Goose, fairy tales, myths and legends, and a few books we now call classics, such as *Treasure Island*, *Peter Pan*, and *Tom Sawyer*. The early 1960s saw the beginning of the golden age of picture books, the gorgeous illustrated books, the toy books, and the televised or full-length movies of children's books.

Now we are entering a period where picture books bring both a chance to reminisce about favorite books from childhood, a chance to think of favorite authors and titles, themes, and what makes them appealing even today, as well as an era stimulating picture books written for an older audience. A resurgence of children's books, and an interest from readers of all ages, has been launched by highly successful movies made from extremely popular novels: *Holes*, *Because of Winn Dixie*, and *Harry Potter* 1–6.

## Our "Can't Resist List"

### Picture Books

- *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss
- *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats
- *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle
- *The Polar Express* by Chris VanAllsburg
- *Jungle Dancer* by Cynthia Leitich Smith

### Chapter Books

- *Ramona* by Beverly Cleary
- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl
- *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White
- *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* by Eleanor Coerr and Ronald Himler
- *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor
- At least one childhood series, such as *Nancy Drew*, *The Hardy Boys*, *The Boxcar Children*, or *The Babysitter's Club*
- *The Black Cauldron* by Lloyd Alexander
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor
- *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls
- Any of the seven titles in the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling
- *Clementine* by Sara Pennypacker
- *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech

### Classics

- *Mary Poppins* by P.L. Travers
- *Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum
- *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett
- *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery
- *Little Women* and *Little Men* by Louisa May Alcott
- *Winnie the Pooh* by A. A. Milne
- *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

### Keeping Up

- The CIG to Publishing Children's Books at [www.underdown.org/more-resources.htm](http://www.underdown.org/more-resources.htm)
- Association for Library Services to Children at [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc)
- Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) at [www.education.wise.edu/ccbc/](http://www.education.wise.edu/ccbc/)

### Thought Questions

- 1) What's your own list of books that are too good to miss?
- 2) How do you know that the current teen crowd would appreciate your list?

## Our List of Favorite Children's Authors Too Good to Miss

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adler, David             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cushman, Karen       | <input type="checkbox"/> Hughes, Langston     | <input type="checkbox"/> Sachs, Marilyn      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alexander, Lloyd         | <input type="checkbox"/> Dahl, Roald          | <input type="checkbox"/> Hyman, Trina Schart  | <input type="checkbox"/> San Souci, Robert   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alexander, Sue           | <input type="checkbox"/> Danziger, Paula      | <input type="checkbox"/> Janeczko, Paul       | <input type="checkbox"/> Say, Allen          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aliki                    | <input type="checkbox"/> dePaola, Tomie       | <input type="checkbox"/> Johnson, D.B.        | <input type="checkbox"/> Sayre, April P.     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asch, Frank              | <input type="checkbox"/> Diaz, David          | <input type="checkbox"/> Keats, Ezra Jack     | <input type="checkbox"/> Scieszka, Jon       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avi                      | <input type="checkbox"/> DiCamillo, Kate      | <input type="checkbox"/> Kellogg, Steven      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sendak, Maurice     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aylesworth, Jim          | <input type="checkbox"/> Dillon, Diane        | <input type="checkbox"/> Kimmel, Eric A.      | <input type="checkbox"/> Seuss, Dr.          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Base, Graeme             | <input type="checkbox"/> Dillon, Leo          | <input type="checkbox"/> Kjelgaard, James     | <input type="checkbox"/> Shannon, David      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blume, Judy              | <input type="checkbox"/> Duncan, Lois         | <input type="checkbox"/> Konigsburg, E.L.     | <input type="checkbox"/> Sierra, Judy        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bond, Michael            | <input type="checkbox"/> Estes, Eleanor       | <input type="checkbox"/> Kurtz, Jane          | <input type="checkbox"/> Silverstein, Shel   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brett, Jan               | <input type="checkbox"/> Fisher, Aileen       | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawlor, Laurie       | <input type="checkbox"/> Simon, Seymour      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brown, Marc              | <input type="checkbox"/> Fitzgerald, John D.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawson, Robert       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sis, Peter          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brown, Marcia            | <input type="checkbox"/> Fitzhugh, Louise     | <input type="checkbox"/> L'Engle, Madeline    | <input type="checkbox"/> Skurzynski, Gloria  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bunting, Eve             | <input type="checkbox"/> Fleischman, Paul     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lewis, C. S.         | <input type="checkbox"/> Small, David        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burton, Virginia Lee     | <input type="checkbox"/> Fleischman, Sid      | <input type="checkbox"/> Lindgren, Asrid      | <input type="checkbox"/> Smith, Cynthia      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Byars, Betsy             | <input type="checkbox"/> Fox, Mem             | <input type="checkbox"/> Lobel, Anita         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sneve, Virginia     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carle, Eric              | <input type="checkbox"/> Fox, Paula           | <input type="checkbox"/> Lobel, Arnold        | <input type="checkbox"/> Driving Hawk        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carlson, Nancy           | <input type="checkbox"/> Freedman, Russell    | <input type="checkbox"/> Lowry, Lois          | <input type="checkbox"/> Soentpiet, Chris    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carroll, Lewis           | <input type="checkbox"/> Fritz, Jean          | <input type="checkbox"/> MacLachlan, Patricia | <input type="checkbox"/> Spier, Peter        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Casanova, Mary           | <input type="checkbox"/> Gag, Wanda           | <input type="checkbox"/> Marshall, James      | <input type="checkbox"/> Spinelli, Jerry     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christopher, Matt        | <input type="checkbox"/> Galdone, Paul        | <input type="checkbox"/> Martin, Bill Jr.     | <input type="checkbox"/> Stanley, Diane      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ciardi, John             | <input type="checkbox"/> George, Jean         | <input type="checkbox"/> Martin, Jacqueline   | <input type="checkbox"/> Steptoe, John       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleary, Beverly          | <input type="checkbox"/> Craighead            | <input type="checkbox"/> Briggs               | <input type="checkbox"/> Stevens, Janet      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cole, Joanna             | <input type="checkbox"/> Giff, Patricia       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mayer, Mercer        | <input type="checkbox"/> Stevenson, James    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collier, Christopher     | <input type="checkbox"/> Reilly               | <input type="checkbox"/> McCloskey, Rob       | <input type="checkbox"/> Stine, R. L.        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collier, James Lincoln   | <input type="checkbox"/> Goble, Paul          | <input type="checkbox"/> McKissack, Patricia  | <input type="checkbox"/> Taback, Simms       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooney, Barbara          | <input type="checkbox"/> Gorman, Carol        | <input type="checkbox"/> McPhail, David       | <input type="checkbox"/> Taylor, Mildred     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coville, Bruce           | <input type="checkbox"/> Hahn, Mary           | <input type="checkbox"/> Milne, A. A.         | <input type="checkbox"/> Taylor, Theodore    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creech, Sharon           | <input type="checkbox"/> Downing              | <input type="checkbox"/> Most, Bernard        | <input type="checkbox"/> Uchida, Yoshiko     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crews, Donald            | <input type="checkbox"/> Haley, Gail          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nelson, Kadir        | <input type="checkbox"/> Van Allsburg, Chris |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cummings, Pat            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hamilton, Virginia   | <input type="checkbox"/> O'Dell, Scott        | <input type="checkbox"/> Viorst, Judith      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curtis, Christopher Paul | <input type="checkbox"/> Henkes, Kevin        | <input type="checkbox"/> Oxenbury, Helen      | <input type="checkbox"/> Voigt, Cynthia      |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Henry, Marguerite    | <input type="checkbox"/> Park, Linda Sue      | <input type="checkbox"/> Waber, Bernard      |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hobbs, Will          | <input type="checkbox"/> Paterson, Katherine  | <input type="checkbox"/> Watson, Wendy       |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hopkins, Lee Bennett | <input type="checkbox"/> Paulsen, Gary        | <input type="checkbox"/> White, E. B.        |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Peck, Richard        | <input type="checkbox"/> Wiesner, David      |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Peet, Bill           | <input type="checkbox"/> Wilder, Laura I.    |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pinkney, Brian       | <input type="checkbox"/> Wiles, Deborah      |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pinkney, Jerry       | <input type="checkbox"/> Willard, Nancy      |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Polacco, Patricia    | <input type="checkbox"/> Williams, Vera      |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Potter, Beatrix      | <input type="checkbox"/> Winthrop, Elizabeth |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prelutsky, Jack      | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood, Audrey        |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ransome, James       | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood, Don           |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rey, H. A.           | <input type="checkbox"/> Wright, Betty Ren   |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rey, Margret         | <input type="checkbox"/> Yates, Elizabeth    |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ringgold, Faith      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yolen, Jane         |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ross, Tony           | <input type="checkbox"/> Young, Ed           |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rubel, Nicole        | <input type="checkbox"/> Zemach, Margot      |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ryan, Pam Muñoz      |  |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rylant, Cynthia      |  |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sachar, Louis        |  |

### Children's Lit Quizzes

What do you know about children's literature?

- Take a trivia test at:  
[www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/literature/specific\\_subjects\\_themes/childrens\\_literature.html](http://www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/literature/specific_subjects_themes/childrens_literature.html)
- A quiz developed by Carol Dingle and Diana Bell online at  
[www.memorablequotations.com/childlitquiz.html](http://www.memorablequotations.com/childlitquiz.html)

Invite young adults to take the quizzes with you and see how each of you do.

## **Building a Background for Understanding Young Adult Literature**

What is this phenomenon known as the teenage years? And why is it important in our culture, our literature, and our world?

For much of the world's history, there were only two distinct age groups of human beings: children and adults. In agrarian societies, every hand was needed to eek out a living. Everyone worked. Even today in many third world countries, as soon as a child passes through puberty, they are married and are considered as adults with full responsibility for sustenance and adult contributions to the community.

When the Industrial Revolution emerged in the nineteenth century, children and teenagers were employed as soon as they could physically operate a machine. Numerous activists began to publicize the horrors of child labor and its effect on the rising generation. Mechanization also caused many menial adult jobs to be eliminated, and it became apparent that the jobs that would survive required much more education and training. Western society adopted child labor laws and at the same time required young people to finish high school. Thus, by the end of World War II, a new species was created: the teenage animal. Suddenly there was a new class of individuals who were in school, but they also had leisure time—time for recreation and for mischief.

Historically, as books and literature became available to the masses, children read the limited children's literature available and then skipped directly to adult works. Teachers and librarians, plus these newly dubbed "teenagers," aged 12–18, were looking for things to read that related to teen life. There were a few books teenagers read, such as *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1943) and the shocking *Seventeenth Summer* (1942), plus lots of other sentimental drivel. When 17-year-old S.E. Hinton published *The Outsiders* in 1967, followed by Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* (1974), the young adult novel was born and has proliferated ever since.

In recent years, the teen culture changed as its desire toward ultimate consumerism required more than just pocket change. Today, most teens are back in the work force doing the low-paid jobs no one else wants in order to pay for the things they want to buy. With less free time, the reading of the young adult novel has declined despite the increase in its production. At the beginning of a new millennium, advertisers have developed a new group of "clients" to whom they are targeting their advertising: the "Tween"—the group that ages 8–12, or upper elementary school youth in grades 4–6, or even as low as grades 3–5.

In this quick guide, the authors target the traditional middle school and high school age groups, realizing that the tween market is developing rapidly. But before we go any further, some definitions are in order, since we will guide the reader far from the young adult novel. Our quick guide covers a range of materials for the young adult for teachers and librarians who are serving this age group. Thus a few definitions to get us started:

1. Young adult literature (the juvenile novel or YA novel): Books written for young adults and about young adults between the ages of 12 and 18.

2. Young adult literature: That literature enjoyed by young adults, whether borrowed from children's literature, adopted from adult literature by teens, or expanded to include genres such as comics, Internet sites, or their own writings as teenagers.
3. Young adult literature: That literature which adults think teenagers should experience before they go to college, ranging from classical authors such as Shakespeare to the best of many cultures around the world.
4. Young adult literature: That developing body of interesting non-fiction both aimed at teenagers, adopted by teens from the adult world, or forced upon teens in school. There is a growing genre of literary non-fiction aimed at young adults, but also the world of Google and the databases targeted at filling their research assignments.
5. Multimedia for young adults: That part of music, dancing, movies, and television adopted by teenagers as their own.
6. Multimedia for young adults: That part of high culture including drama, art, music, dancing, television, and the Internet that adults think teenagers should experience.

So, as the authors approach the topic of teen literature and multimedia, we realize that we are covering a tug-of-war body of materials consisting of those being pushed into teen's experience and those they identify as their own whether we like it or not.

### **Characteristics of a Young Adult Novel**

While the following characteristics are typical of most young adult novels, the absence of one characteristic does not necessarily keep the novel from being designated as being part of this genre. Many books are characterized by the emotional and social appeal to young adults.

- Written from the perspective of a young adult character (often the narrative is written in first person).
- Majority/main characters are approximately the age of the intended reader (or slightly older).
- Characters engaged in activities with which young readers can identify.
- Must include characters that the reader will care about.
- Ends with a sense of hope.
- Young person responsible for own destiny. Formula fiction and much of the mainstream fiction for young adults finds a method of absencing the parents from the picture so that the youthful characters can figure out and be responsible for solving their own problems.
- Fast-paced narratives reach for fast action and powerful images.
- Much of the literature deals with real-life and realistic teen experiences with gangs, sexual experiences, teen problems, conflict, relationships, rebellion, and other problems teens often encounter.

## YA Novels Too Good To Miss: 1960–2009

### 1960s

- Knowles, John. *A Separate Peace*. (1961)  
 Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. (1962)  
 L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*. (1962)  
 Hinton, S.E. *The Outsiders*. (1967)  
 Lipsyte, Robert. *The Contender*. (1967)  
 Potok, Chaim. *The Chosen*. (1967)  
 Zindel, Paul. *The Pigman*. (1968)  
 Cleaver, Vera and Bill. *Where the Lilies Bloom*.  
 (1969)  
 Armstrong, William. *Souder*. (1969)

### 1970s

- Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*. (1971)  
 Gaines, Ernest. *The Autobiography of Miss Jane  
 Pittman*. (1971)  
 Anonymous. *Go Ask Alice*. (1971)  
 Mathis, Sharon Bell. *A Teacup Full of Roses*. (1972)  
 Potok, Chaim. *My Name is Asher Lev*. (1972)  
 White, Robb. *Deathwatch*. (1972)  
 Kerr, M.E. *Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack*. (1972)  
 Green, Betty. *Summer of My German Soldier*.  
 (1973)  
 Childress, Alice. *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But A  
 Sandwich*. (1973)  
 Peck, Robert Newton. *A Day No Pigs Would Die*.  
 (1973)  
 Sleator, William. *House of Stairs*. (1974)  
 Cormier, Robert. *The Chocolate War*. (1974)  
 Blume, Judy. *Forever*. (1975)  
 Yep, Lawrence. *Dragonwings*. (1975)  
 Guest, Judith. *Ordinary People*. (1976)  
 Peck, Richard. *Are You in the House Alone?* (1976)  
 McCaffrey, Anne. *Dragonson*. (1976)  
 Cormier, Robert. *I Am the Cheese*. (1977)  
 Duncan, Lois. *Killing Mr. Griffin*. (1978)  
 McKinley, Robin. *Beauty: Retelling...* (1978)

### 1980s

- Adams, Douglas. *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the  
 Galaxy*. (1980)  
 Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*. (1982)  
 Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*.  
 (1983)  
 Voigt, Cynthia. *Dacey's Song*. (1983)  
 Paulsen, Gary. *Dogsong*. (1985)  
 Card, Orson Scott. *Ender's Game*. (1985)  
 Paulsen, Gary. *Hatchet*. (1987)  
 Myers, Walter Dean. *Fallen Angels*. (1988)

### 1990s

- Avi. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. (1990)  
 Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. (1993)  
 Crutcher, Chris. *Ironman*. (1995)  
 Pullman, Philip. *The Golden Compass*. (1996)  
 Thomas, Rob. *Rats Saw God*. (1996)  
 Hesse, Karen. *Out of the Dust*. (1997)  
 Levine, Gale Carson. *Ella Enchanted*. (1997)  
 Soto, Gary. *Buried Onions*. (1997)  
 Sachar, Louis. *Holes*. (1998)  
 Hickham, Homer. *Rocket Boys/October Sky*. (1999)  
 Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.  
 (1998)  
 Myers, Walter Dean. *Monster*. (1999)  
 Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Watson's Go to  
 Birmingham*. (1995)  
 Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Bud, Not Buddy*. (1999)

### 2000s

- Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Speak*. (2000)  
 DiCamillo, Kate. *Because of Winn-Dixie*. (2000)  
 Philbrick, Rodman. *The Last Book in the Universe*.  
 (2000)  
 Peck, Richard. *A Year Down Yonder*. (2001)  
 Crutcher, Chris. *Whale Talk*. (2001)  
 Howe, James. *The Mufitis*. (2001)  
 Brashares, Ann. *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*.  
 (2001)  
 Klass, David. *You Don't Know Me*. (2001)  
 Sones, Sonya. *What My Mother Doesn't Know*.  
 (2001)  
 Taylor, Mildred. *The Land*. (2001)  
 Park, Linda Sue. *A Single Shard*. (2001)  
 Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Pictures of Hollis Woods*  
 (2002)  
 Avi. *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*. (2003)  
 McNamee, Graham. *Acceleration*. (2003)  
 Johnson, Angela. *The First Part Last*. (2003)  
 Moriarty, Jaclyn. *The Year of Secret Assignments*.  
 (2004)  
 Paolini, Christopher. *Eragon*. (2004)  
 Farmer, Nancy. *House of the Scorpion*. (2004)  
 Riordan, Rick. *The Lightning Thief*. (2005)  
 Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Notes from the Midnight  
 Driver*. (2006)  
 Schmidt, Gary D. *The Wednesday Wars* (2007)  
 Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. (2008)  
 Applet, Kathi and David Small. *The Underneath*.  
 (2008)  
 Frost, Helen. *Crossing Stones*. (2009)  
 Korman, Gordon. *Pop*. (2009)  
 McCormick, Patricia. *Purple Heart*. (2009)  
 Smith, Sherri L. *Flygirl* (2009)

## Significant Authors

Several authors have emerged in the young adult field. Among these authors are the winners of the Margaret A. Edwards Award. The Edwards Award honors authors who have contributed significantly to the body of young adult literature. Consult the Awards list for specific titles cited. The author list includes S.E. Hinton who was the first to be given this award.

### Winners of the Margaret A. Edwards Award

- Laurel H. Anderson
- Orson Scott Card
- Lois Lowry
- Jacqueline Woodson
- Francesca Lia Block
- Ursula K. LeGuin
- Nancy Garden
- Paul Zindel
- Robert Lipsyte
- Chris Crutcher
- Anne McCaffrey
- Madeleine L'Engle
- Gary Paulsen
- Judy Blume
- Cynthia Voigt
- Walter Dean Myers
- M.E. Kerr, pseudo. (Maryjane Meaker)
- Lois Duncan
- Robert Cormier
- Richard Peck
- S.E. Hinton

See a complete list of winning authors and books at [www.ala.org/yalsa/edwards](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/edwards)

## Spotlight: S.E. Hinton

The first book that embraced real society was Susan Eloise (S.E.) Hinton's *The Outsiders* (Viking, 1967). Written by a female writer, and a teenager at that, this book has been heralded as the first in the new lexicon of young adult literature. At the time Susan was writing her groundbreaking novel, she flunked her high school writing class. Egged on by her younger sister who wanted a car so the two of them could have a little fun, Susan allowed a friend's mom, a literary agent, to submit her manuscript to a publisher. The rest is history. She became the first recipient of the Margaret A. Edwards award for her contribution to literature for young adult readers.

### Books by S.E. Hinton

*The Outsiders* (Viking, 1967)  
*That Was Then, This Is Now* (Viking, 1971)  
*Rumblefish* (Delacorte, 1975)  
*Tex* (Delacorte, 1979)  
*Taming the Star Runner* (Delacorte, 1988)  
*Hawkes Harbor* (Tor Books, 2004)



## Keeping Up

- Donelson, Kenneth L. and Alleen Pace Nilsen. *Literature for Today's Young Adults*.
- ALA Booklists: [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.htm)
- *Voya Magazine* (online at [www.voya.com](http://www.voya.com))

## Thought Question

Do a quick survey of some teens you know asking them about their consumption of media, including print, film, TV, computer, and radio. How much of their day do they spend with each of these media? What are the implications for you as you begin to try to understand the world of teen literature and multimedia?



## Awards and Recognition

The John Newbery medal, first proposed by Frederic G. Melcher in 1921, was the first award to honor excellence in children's literature (with children being defined as ages 8-14). The award was first presented in 1922. In the years that followed, the United States was introduced to several other awards. The American Library Association and its divisions established many of the awards. Others, often "choice awards," were sponsored by reading and library organizations within individual states.

As the body of children's literature grew and the genre of young adult literature appeared, there seemed a need for additional awards. Some awards recognize individual titles while others recognize an author or illustrator for his or her body of work over a lifetime. Most books recognized by the

American Library Association are selected for literary merit while the majority of state awards are chosen because of their popular appeal to readers.

### Multicultural Awards

One of the oldest multicultural awards is the Coretta Scott King (CSK) award. First awarded in 1970, the CSK award is presented to an author (or illustrator) of African descent who promotes understanding of the American dream. The range of books that have received the award, or honor status, range from picture books to books with teen protagonists and adult problems, such as the 2004 winner *The First Part Last* by Angela Johnson, and to historical texts such as the 2006 winner, *Day of Tears: A Novel in Dialogue* by Julius Lester, and 2009 a non-fiction book about the Negro baseball leagues. The Pura Belpré award, established in 1996, recognizes a Latino/a that best represents and celebrates the Latino culture. Since 2009, the award is given annually. Winners include Pam Muñoz Ryan for *Esperanza Rising*, Victor Martinez for *Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida*, Viola Canales for *The Tequila Worm*, and *Frida: ¡Viva la vida! Long Live Life!* by Carmen T. Bernier-Grand. The award is given to picture books and novels; in 2008 and 2009 the books honored were for younger readers.

Award	2009 Winner
Newbery	<i>The Graveyard Book</i> by Neil Gaiman
Printz	<i>Jellicoe Road</i> by Melina Marchetta
Robert F. Siebert Award	<i>We Are the Ship: The Story of the Negro League Baseball</i> by Kadir Nelson
Margaret A. Edwards	Laurie Halse Anderson
Coretta Scott King	<i>We Are the Ship: The Story of the Negro League Baseball</i> by Kadir Nelson
Schneider Family Book Award	<i>Waiting for Normal</i> by Leslie Conner <i>Jerk, California</i> by Jonathan Friesen

### Informational Books

For many years informational books were overlooked when it came award time. The majority of Newbery award winners have been fiction, although four biographies, two books of poetry (including Paul Fleischman's *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* in 1989), and one book of history have garnered the award. In 2001 ALA members responded to the growing oversight by establishing the Robert F. Siebert award to celebrate the best informational book published in the preceding year. Winners include *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1795* by Jim Murphy and *The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler* by James Cross Giblin, and in 2009 Kadir Nelson's *We Are the Ship: The Story of the Negro League Baseball*.

## YALSA Awards

The Young Adult Library Services division of ALA (YALSA) has three awards that specifically recognize contributions to young adult literature. The Margaret A. Edwards lifetime achievement award honors the body of work of an author who has been popular with teens over time. The Michael A. Printz award recognizes an outstanding work of literature published during the preceding year. The first award winner, in 2000, was Walter Dean Myers for *Monster*. The third—the Alex Award list, recognizes books published for adults that have crossover appeal for teenagers. In 2008, ALSC and YALSA named the first Odyssey winner for excellence in audio books for children.

## Other Awards

ALA, and its various divisions, is not the only organization awarding outstanding young adult books. The Assembly on Literature for Adolescents (ALAN) honors an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of young adult literature. The 2009 Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards included Terry Pratchett's *Nation* (Fiction and Poetry) and Candace Fleming's *The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary*. The National Book Awards also recognizes excellence in Young People's Literature. Some of the more recent winners include Pete Hautman for *Godless*, and Judy Blundell for *What I Saw and How I Lied*. The Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators presents the Golden Kite Award, an award given by peers for outstanding work. Recent awardees include Mary E. Pearson for *A Room on Lorelei Street* (and an honor for *The Adoration of Jenna Fox*), Pamela S. Turner for *A Life in the Wild: George Schaller's Struggle to Save the Last Great Beasts*, and Russell Freedman for *Children of the Great Depression*.

### Where to Find Award Information:

- **ALAN**  
[www.alan-ya.org](http://www.alan-ya.org)
- **Boston Globe-Horn Book**  
[www.hbook.com](http://www.hbook.com)
- **Golden Kite Award**  
[www.scbwi.org/Pages.aspx/Golden-Kite-Award](http://www.scbwi.org/Pages.aspx/Golden-Kite-Award)
- **YALSA Booklists and Book Awards**  
[www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.cfm)
- **ALSC Book Awards**  
[www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/index.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/index.cfm)

## State and Regional Choice Awards

There are a number of state and regional awards. The significance of the state and regional awards is that they are often "choice" awards. Choice awards are selected through a combination of teens and adults. Nominations come from teens, adult professionals (often librarians and English teachers) then narrow the list, and finally teens read and vote on the short list. This is one of the places that teens can have a voice in recognized literature; their input is also welcomed in "Best Books for Young Adults" and "Teens Top Ten of the Year" lists.

## Selected State Choice Awards

Gateway (links) to websites for State and Regional Awards available at [www.mcelmeel.com/curriculum/bookawards.html](http://www.mcelmeel.com/curriculum/bookawards.html)

### Selected State Choice Awards



#### Grades 6–8 Focus

Delaware: Blue Hen Award (chapter book division)  
Florida: Sunshine State Young Reader's Award  
Illinois: Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award  
Louisiana: Louisiana Young Reader's Choice Award (grades 6-8 division)  
Maine: Student Book Award  
Minnesota: Maud Hart Lovelace Book Award  
Missouri: Mark Twain Award (grades 4-8)  
Vermont: Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children's Book Award  
West Virginia: Children's Book Award  
Wisconsin: Golden Archer Award (Middle/Junior high school)

#### Grades 6–8 & 9–12

Pacific Northwest Library Association's Young Reader's Choice Award  
Arizona: Young Readers Awards  
California: Young Reader Medal  
Kansas: Heartland Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature  
Kentucky: Bluegrass Award  
Maryland: Black-Eyed Susan Book Award  
Massachusetts: Children's Book Award  
Michigan: Great Lakes' Great Books Award  
Nebraska: Golden Sower Award  
Nevada: Young Reader Award

#### Grades 6–8 & 9–12 (continued)

New Jersey: Garden State Book Awards–Teens  
New Mexico: Land of Enchantment Book Award-Young Adult  
New York: Charlotte Award–Young Adult Award  
Ohio: Buckeye Children's Book Award  
Pennsylvania: Young Reader's Choice Award  
Rhode Island: Teen Book Award  
South Carolina: SCASL (SC Assoc. of School Librarians) Book Award  
Texas: Lone Star  
Virginia: Virginia State Young Readers

#### Grades 7–12 Focus

Colorado: Blue Spruce Young Adult Book Award  
Georgia: Peach Book Award for Teen Readers  
Illinois: Abraham Lincoln Illinois High School Book Award  
Indiana: Eliot Rosewater (Rosie) Award  
Iowa: Iowa Teen Award  
Iowa: Iowa High School Book Award  
Missouri: Gateway Readers Award (grades 9–12)  
Ohio: Teen Buckeye Award (grades 9–12)  
Oklahoma: Sequoyah Book Awards–Young Adult  
South Dakota: YARP Reading List  
Tennessee: Volunteer State Book Award–Young Adult  
Texas: Tayshas  
Utah: Beehive Awards  
Washington: Evergreen Young Adult Book Award  
Wyoming: Soaring Eagle Book Award

## Lists

There are lists developed on a yearly basis that recognize the best books published in the preceding year. Several professional publications publish best books lists: *Horn Book*, *VOYA*, *School Library Journal*, *Booklist*, and *Kirkus Reviews*. ALSC (a division of ALA) develops lists of Notable Children's Media (including books), and YALSA develops a list of Best Books for Young Adults, Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers, Popular Paperbacks, and Audio Books. Since 2007, YALSA has also published a Great Graphics Novels for Teens List. ALA lists can be found at [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc) and [www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa). Don't overlook other lists, including the Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books Blue Ribbon Awards, International Reading Associations "Choice" lists, and lists from organizations dedicated to a specific topic, such as the National Science Teachers Association.

### Websites:

- The Bulletin: Blue Ribbon Awards  
[bccb.lis.illinois.edu/](http://bccb.lis.illinois.edu/)
- Teen Reading Lists: SLJLibrary.org  
[www.sjlibrary.org/gateways/teens/booklists/](http://www.sjlibrary.org/gateways/teens/booklists/)
- International Reading Association  
[www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)
- National Science Teachers Association  
[www.nsta.org](http://www.nsta.org) (search site for "best books list")
- National Council for the Social Studies (Notable List)  
[www.socialstudies.org/resources/notable](http://www.socialstudies.org/resources/notable)

### Online Reading Groups with Recommendations:

- [www.teenreads.com](http://www.teenreads.com) — Reader's Recommendations
- [www.bookdivas.com](http://www.bookdivas.com) — The Leading Online Book Community for Young Adult and College Readers
- [www.readingrants.org](http://www.readingrants.org) — Reading Rants! Out of the Ordinary Teen Booklists!

## Spotlight: *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson

In 2009, Anderson was honored with the Margaret A. Edwards Award in recognition of her powerful novels: *Catalyst*; *Fever 1795*; and *Speak*. Some feel that *Chains* is even more significant. Anderson writes of Isabel who is locked in slavery in the home of a loyalist (during the Revolutionary War period) — Isabel's plight forces her to think about the loyalist and patriot causes in terms of possibilities for her own freedom. *Chains* won the 2009 Scott O'Dell Award for historical fiction and was a National Book Award Finalist (as was her first novel, *Speak*).

Most books that examine slavery in America tend to center on the Civil War era, but *Chains* examines Isabel's fight for freedom alongside the entire nation. Watch for a sequel to *Chains* as the author seems to suggest that one is in the future.

### An Award Author to Watch

In 2006, John Green made his way onto Young Adult lists when he was awarded the Michael A. Printz Award for his first novel, *Looking for Alaska*. That triumph was quickly followed with another acclaimed title, *An Abundance of Katherines* (2006). His next novel, *Paper Towns* (2008), was the subject of several favorable reviews, including a starred review in *Booklist*. You can learn more about John Green and his writing at his "internet home," [www.sparksflyup.com](http://www.sparksflyup.com).

### Thought Questions

- 1) How important are awards chosen by the readers in comparison to those selected for their literary value?
- 2) Should all awards take into consideration the book's potential for popularity among its audience? Explain.
- 3) Award books from past decades are, by today's standards, found to be flawed in terms of stereotypes of minority cultures/genders. What implication does that have for use in the classroom/library?

# Teen Psychology

Adults who determine to work with the teenagers of today are brave or crazy, depending on your point of view. It is certain that those who dedicate their lives to this age group have to love their subjects and spend a career in fascinated puzzlement.

We have all been teenagers at one time or another, experiencing those wonderful, terrible, and unexpected changes, but we cannot assume that our own experience is representative of those whom we aim to serve. A good dose of teenage psychology, research, and common sense will prepare us and keep us on our toes of understanding teens.<sup>1</sup> It is certain that those who dislike or fear teens should find another vocation.

So many young adults come from dysfunctional homes, lack English skills, or are from such a wide variety of cultural backgrounds that teachers and librarians have to stretch understanding constantly to communicate effectively with these budding adults. To communicate your respect and your certainty of the teen's worth is to gain their trust and respect while keeping a measure of professional distance. Today's teens need advocates—adults who are willing to step in when society, the school, the law, or other community institutions are abusing their “power” over teenagers.

## The Four Spheres of Development

As a teen teacher/librarian/advocate, think, read, and plan in advance for how to deal with four significant aspects of development during the teen years. Here is our list of considerations. Add and revise as you build understanding and discuss these critical characteristics.

### Physical Development

- ❑ There are certain things we can't change: skin color, height, zits, handsome or ugly, early or late development...It's all in the genes. Accept it and move on.
- ❑ Puberty comes to all at various times during the teen years. There is nothing you can do to control the timing of this event. Correct information will minimize the surprises.
- ❑ Teenage diseases are both genetic and environmental and can be the consequence of our behavior or out of our control.
- ❑ Healthy eating, exercise, sleep, and cleanliness will contribute or detract from our sense of wellbeing and predict what will happen to us physically in our adult life.
- ❑ Risky behaviors often have deadly consequences (sex, drugs, alcohol, and the excess of almost anything).

### Spiritual Development

- ❑ Teens often question family traditions of religion, churches, or the lack thereof. Have the courage to investigate fully before making life-long decisions.
- ❑ A moral and ethical sense not only helps us get along in society, but it is the foundation of a healthy, well-rounded person.

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<sup>1</sup> A useful and inexpensive collection of current articles on teenage psychology with an excellent outline of concerns and issues is: Sticle, Fred E., *Adolescent Psychology*. Annual Editions series. McGraw-Hill, 2007.

### **Social Development**

- ❑ Friendships are a vital part of growing up.
- ❑ Deciding the difference between a true friend and a fair weather friend is a critical skill to develop.
- ❑ Being your own self, with your own standards, should be acceptable to a true friend.
- ❑ It's often who you know as much as it is what you know.
- ❑ "Fun" need not involve self-destructive behavior.
- ❑ The world of social networking extends both friendships but also introduces problems.

### **Emotional Development**

- ❑ Everyone feels depressed at times, but if this is an all-day, everyday experience, seek help.
- ❑ Changes in our physical bodies during puberty affect our emotions as well as our bodies.  
Many crazy feelings are usually only temporary as we learn to cope in the adult world.

### **Resources for adults working with teens:**

- Lerner, Richard M. and Laurence Steinberg. *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*. 2 vols. Wiley, 2009. An authoritative and scholarly encyclopedia.
- Stickle, Fred E. *Adolescent Psychology* 5<sup>th</sup> ed. McGraw-Hill/Dushkin. This book comes out annually, so make sure you have the most recent edition. Additional resources and teaching suggestions to accompany the collected articles online at [www.dushkin.com/online](http://www.dushkin.com/online)
- Pressley, Michael. *Child and Adolescent Development for Educators*. Guilford Press, 2006.
- Psychology Information Online: Depression in Teenagers:  
[www.psychologyinfo.com/depression/teens.htm](http://www.psychologyinfo.com/depression/teens.htm)
- Encyclopedia of Psychology—Links to additional sites.  
[www.psychology.org/links/Environment\\_Behavior\\_Relationships/Adolescent/](http://www.psychology.org/links/Environment_Behavior_Relationships/Adolescent/)
- Pollack, William. *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*. Henry Holt and Company, 1998.
- *CQ Researcher on Teens in America*. CQPress, Congressional Quarterly, 2001.
- Faber, Adele and Elaine Mazlish. *How to Talk to Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk*. Collins, 2005.
- Godfrey, Rhett. *The Teen Code: How to Talk to Them About Sex, Drugs, and Everything Else—Teenagers Reveal What Works Best*. Rodale Books, 2004.
- Edgette, Janet Sasson. *Stop Negotiating With Your Teen: Strategies for Parenting Your Angry, Manipulative, Moody, or Depressed Adolescent*. Perigee, 2002.

### **Self-help resources for teenagers:**

- Packer, Alex J. *The How Rude! Handbook of Friendship & Dating Manners for Teens: Surviving the Social Scene*. Free Spirit Publishing, 2004. (Look for additional *How Rude!* books by Alex Packer.)
- Saul, 'Aunt' Laya. *You Don't Have to Learn Everything the Hard Way*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Kadima Press, 2007.
- Bladow, Chad E. *Seven Years, Seven Ways: Surviving Your Teen and Preteen Years*. Starrider Books, 2007.
- Niedzwiecki, Hal. *The Big Book of Pop Culture: A How-To Guide for Young Artists*. Illustrated by Marc Ngui. Annick, 2007.
- *Adolescent Health Sourcebook*. Ed. Chad T. Kimball. Omnigraphics, 2002.

- Cobain, Bev. *When Nothing Matters Anymore: A Survival Guide for Depressed Teens*. Free Spirit Publishing, 2007.
- Horsley, Heidi. *Grief Relief*. Rainbow Books, 2007.
- Nelson, Richard and Carol Christen. *What Color Is Your Parachute for Teens: Discovering Yourself, Defining Your Future*. Ten Speed Press, 2006
- Covey, Sean. *The 6 Most Important Decisions You Will Ever Make for Teens*. Fireside, 2006.
- McCoy, Kathy and CharlesWibbelsman. *The Teenage Body Book: A New Edition for a New Generation*. Hatherleigh Press, 2009.
- Girlosophy series. Allen & Unwin. Various titles.
- Smith, Keri. *Boyology: A Teen Girl's Crash Course in All Things Boy*. Chronicle Books, 2009.
- The Teen Girl's Gotta-Have-It Guide series. Watson-Guptill.
- Medoff, Lisa. *SOS: Stressed Out Students Guide to Handling Peer Pressure*. Kaplan Publishing, 2009.

Many current books, pamphlets, and Internet sites advise teens how to survive the teen years and live to tell about it. All materials contain the biases of their authors and are thus open to controversy in a typical community of parents and teenagers from varying backgrounds, cultures, and religious orientations. The quandary for adults is to select and help teens gain access to the information they desire. For example, some books might stress responsible drinking and others advise total abstinence from alcohol. Librarians and teachers who follow intellectual freedom guidelines try to include a wide range of opinions in the information they provide. Such policies, however, may not be popular in a very conservative community and may result in public controversy. Every teacher and librarian needs to be able to defend the array of information being provided to teens and have policies and procedures in place when questions arise. If your school or library does not have a policy for handling controversial materials, you are inviting trouble that can escalate out of control overnight.

#### Questions to ask about as one selects information for teens:

- What are the credentials of the author? (Education? Promoting an organizational viewpoint?)
- What is the bias of the author? (conservative to liberal)
- What messages are contained in the media aimed at teens? (magazines aimed at teen girls stressing thinness and other things)
- Are the materials something that teens would actually read, view or listen to?
- How does the material fit in with the community in which it will be used?
- How does the material support the agenda of the school or community? (making this school safe, building a drug-free zone in a neighborhood)

#### Spotlight on The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens

Written by the son of the famous author of the 7 Habits book, Sean Covey speaks to teens about habits, paradigms, being proactive, setting goals, will power, relationships, positive thinking, understanding others, making yourself understood, keeping time for yourself, and having the motivation to do all this. It is written in a positive, motivating, and easy-to-read style. There are interactive activities throughout the book, helping teens to understand the concepts, set goals, and be able to achieve those goals.



## Collection Development and Selection

One of the most interesting challenges both school and public librarians have is to develop collections of information, printed materials, and multimedia that will serve the needs of the teachers and teens. School librarians concentrate more on collections that support the school's curriculum while public librarians see teen needs in a larger framework of community information needs. From the patron point of view, the task seems quite simple: Just stock what I, the teen need, when I need it, in the format I desire, in the language and reading level I prescribe, and have this at my elbow 24/7/365. Oh, and by the way, if you don't do it, Google will. (Not!)

The best way to keep current with teen trends and young adult materials is to talk to and listen to the teens you work with. However, this will not help you lead teens to materials they need, enjoy, or might be interested in if they knew about them. There are other resources that will help with this task. Our job as young adult advocates who serve teenagers requires we know not only what teens know (what is current and what is on the horizon), but also that we know about what teens need and the materials that meet those needs. Professional reviews and professional peers who work with young adults are excellent resources, but it is important to understand your community and the needs of that community when selecting materials.

Teens are an excellent source of recommendations. They are often plugged into what is available, and they know what they want. A survey to establish the different types of media that teens are consuming is often very helpful in decisions regarding your collection. Talking to the teens you work with will also help you determine the needs of teens and what is available. Become a consumer of teen media. Knowing what teens watch, listen to, and read will help open up conversations, as well as keep you up-to-date on the trends.

It is also important to know the curriculum standards and needs of the teens you serve. Each state has different standards, but there are commonalities in curriculum. Collaborating with other professionals, teachers, and librarians (both public and school) helps those involved to know what research assignments teens will be working on. As teens begin to recognize the library as an information resource, they will use the library to meet personal information needs as well. Remember, adolescence can be a confusing time in life. Teens are building personal identities and defining their individualism. Often they will have information needs built around that search for identity. Teens may not approach an adult for help in finding what they need, so it is important to keep in mind the emotional and physiological issues teens may be facing. Also pay attention to what the hot topics are in the news surrounding teenagers. What adults are saying about teenagers may spark debate and interest among teen patrons.

### Professional Reviews

There are several resources for professional reviews. Publications include books, serial publications, and the Internet. Published six times a year, *VOYA's (Voices of Youth Advocates)* magazine is an excellent starting point. *VOYA* includes articles on programs and facilities, but its primary focus is materials. The reviews, written by volunteers and teens, are assigned a popularity rating as well as a quality rating, the only journal to do so. *VOYA* also reviews websites and graphic novels. The staple for school librarians is *School Library Journal (SLJ)*. Like *VOYA*, *SLJ* relies primarily on volunteer reviewers, which can lead to an uneven quality in reviews. *SLJ* includes reviews for all ages with a category for 5th grade and up, as well as adult books for young adults, reference materials, audio books, and other media. Reviews can



also be found in review journals with a broader focus, such as *Booklist*, *Kirkus Reviews*, and *Publisher's Weekly*. *Horn Book for Children* has reviews for older readers, despite having a focus on the younger ages, and can be an excellent resource. Another avenue to investigate when determining the worthiness of a title for addition to a collection is Amazon, which posts editorial reviews from major review journals as well as reviews from staff. (Note: These are different than customer reviews.)

### Review Journals

- **Booklist:** Professional Reviewers; reviews presumed to be positive and are more annotative in nature
- **School Library Journal:** Reviewers are primarily volunteers and has a limited number of reviews. Reviews consider quality.
- **VOYA:** Reviews written by volunteers, including teens. Reviews are finite and consider quality.
- **Kirkus:** Focus on public libraries. Reviewers are anonymous and paid but are mostly working professionals. The anonymity allows reviews to be sharper and more direct. Includes positive and negative reviews.
- **Library Media Connection:** Reviewers are volunteers. Focuses on curriculum applications.
- **Publisher's Weekly:** Focus on booksellers
- **Amazon and B&N.com:** Each pays for professional review reprint rights. Excellent resource for investigating individual titles, but not for developing a collection of multiple titles.

### Associations

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) is also an excellent resource for keeping current in regards to teen materials and quality materials for libraries. YALSA is responsible for a number of lists that they compile on a yearly basis. The lists include Best Books for Young Adults, Popular Paperbacks, Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers, Selected Audio Books, and Selected DVDs and Videos. They also sponsor Teen's Top Ten, in which teens can vote online for their favorites during Teen Read Week in October. Every five years YALSA publishes a list of Outstanding Books for the College Bound. YALSA also sponsors a listserv called "YALSA Bk" that helps develop lists of titles, keeps users current in new material, and, on occasion, discusses books. Books that annotate and recommend books are among the organization's publications. Titles include *ALA's Guide to Best Reading* (2002), *Best Books for Young Adults* (Carter, 2000), and *Hit List for Young Adults 2* (Lesene, Chance 2002).

Another organization that focuses on young adults is The Assembly on Literature for Adolescents (ALAN). ALAN is an independent assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). ALAN may feature a larger diversity of members than YALSA because of its connection to the NCTE; there are more English teacher members. ALAN publishes *The Alan Review* three times per year. This journal has in-depth articles about young adult books as well as "clip and save" reviews. The articles are often focused on the teaching of literature but can be an excellent way to collaborate with English teachers to use young adult literature in their classroom. On the ALAN website, concise reviews are posted under "Bill's Best Books." The "New Voices" page highlights up and coming authors.

The International Reading Association (IRA) is a worldwide network of professionals who promote literacy and life-long reading. Each year the IRA works with different regions in the United States to develop a list of new books that encourage the reading habit. Each year the list has thirty titles selected by teens with the guidance of librarians and teachers. The

association also publishes a Teacher's Choice list, which has an advanced level that includes 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades. Choice lists are an excellent way of keeping up with what is new.

### Online Groups

The online environment has provided new avenues to keeping current with what is popular, what is quality, and, hopefully, what quality materials are popular with teens. Listservs and online communities may be difficult to keep up with but are an excellent resource for information and opinion. The YALSA and LM\_NET listservs each receive nearly 100 messages a day. For more in-depth conversations, and more mail, CHILD\_LIT is a well-known and frequently used discussion list. Adbooks plans discussions of one or two books a month and recommends various titles, including older as well as newer titles. While keeping up with online lists or discussion groups can be daunting, even "lurking" (monitoring the list without participation) can provide insight into available titles to help with selection. Another online resource is the kidlit "blogosphere". There are a number of excellent bloggers who review and discuss Young Adult materials. Set up a reader and get frequent updates from MotherReader, Bookshelves of Doom, Fuse 8, or any number of book reviewers.

#### Book Listservs for Librarians

- **YALSA Book:**  
[www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa)  
Select: Electronic Lists
- **LM\_NET:**  
[www.eduref.org/lm\\_net/](http://www.eduref.org/lm_net/)
- **CHILD\_LIT:**  
[www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mjoseph/childlit/about.html](http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mjoseph/childlit/about.html)
- **Adbooks:** [www.adbooks.org](http://www.adbooks.org)
- **Booktalking:**  
[groups.yahoo.com/group/booktalking](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/booktalking)

### Internet Sites

There are several Internet sites geared to teens that focus on books. One of these is Teen Reads ([www.teenreads.com](http://www.teenreads.com)). Teen Reads provides reviews, featured authors, polls, and links to websites. There are also contests and reading group guides. Another site is Book Divas ([www.bookdivas.com](http://www.bookdivas.com)). You must apply to participate in the message boards, but you can still read reviews written by the divas, usually teen readers. Genrefluent ([www.genrefluent.com](http://www.genrefluent.com)) explores the world of genre fiction. Each entry has a brief annotation and review. There is also a teen page with comments from teens and a form for teens to submit comments. Reading Rants ([www.readingrants.org](http://www.readingrants.org)) is another website with excellent annotated lists put together by Jennifer Hubert. The IPL ([www.ipl.org/div/teen/browse/bw0000/](http://www.ipl.org/div/teen/browse/bw0000/)) has a page of collected annotated links that lead to different public libraries with teen pages and booklists. Several publishers have pages promoting the latest books being published. Finally, sign up for Richie's Picks at [www.richiespicks.com](http://www.richiespicks.com) for ongoing and readable reviews via email, or browse reviews on his site.

### Selection Policy

Providing materials for teens provides some unique challenges, particularly when dealing with younger teens. The wide range of maturity and developmental needs of teens can present difficulties. One way to effectively handle potential problems is to have a clear selection policy in place. Selection policies can guide purchasing and protect against challenges. A good selection policy will lead to a stronger collection because you will not purchase unnecessary materials, will have a well thought-out reason for the purchase of items that are grounded in professional philosophy, and will meet the needs of your community. A good selection policy

should consider the mission of your library, the objectives you wish to meet, and the mechanics of selection. The mechanics of selection should include the person responsible for selection, the criteria for selection (including the number of professional reviews to be consulted), and the formats to be selected. There are a number of sample selection policies available online including a Workbook for Selection Policy Writing produced by the American Library Association

**Selection Activity**  
Develop a library mission and professional objectives for a selection policy. Consider professional ethics, materials important to teens, and the information needs of teens.

([www.ala.org/ala/oif/challengesupport/dealing/dealingchallenges.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/challengesupport/dealing/dealingchallenges.cfm)). Take the time to investigate selection policies and make sure you understand the policy you are working with. Use that understanding to guide your implementation of the policy.

### Professional Titles

The Wilson's Catalog, published by The H.W. Wilson Company, contains over 10,000 selective recommendations of core titles throughout a collection. Each entry includes an annotation and/or an excerpt of a review, if available. There are two titles that focus on teens: the *Middle and Junior High School Catalog* and the *Senior High School Catalog*. Catalogs are published in print every five years with a supplement available on a yearly basis. There is also an online subscription. The Wilson catalog can be an invaluable resource while building a collection.

Here are some other titles that can help when building a collection:

- Barr, Catherine. *Best New Media, K-12: A Guide to Movies, Subscription Web Sites, and Educational Software*. Libraries Unlimited, 2008.
- Cart, Michael. *Passions and Pleasures: Essays and Speeches about Literature and Libraries*. Scarecrow Press, 2007.
- Frolund, Tina, comp. *The Official YALSA Awards Guidebook*. YALSA/ALA, 2008.
- Gillespie, John T. and Catherine Barr. *Best Books for High School Readers*. Supplement to the 1<sup>st</sup> ed, Grades 9-12. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.
- Gillespie, John T. and Catherine Barr. *Best Books for Middle School and Junior High School Readers*. Supplement to the 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Grades 6-9. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.
- Gillespie, John T. *The Children's and Young Adult Literature Handbook: A Research and Reference Guide*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.
- Herald, Diane Trixie. *Genreflecting: A Guide to Popular Reading Interests, Sixth Edition*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.
- Jones, Patrick, Taylor, Patricia, Edwards, Kristen. *A Core Collection for Young Adults*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2003.
- Latrobe, Kathy and Judy Drury. *Critical Approaches to Young Adult Literature*. Neil Schuman, 2009.
- McElmeel, Sharron. *Best Teen Reads 2007*. Hi Willow Research and Publishing, 2007.
- York, Sherry. *Booktalking Authentic Multicultural Literature: Fiction, History and Memoirs for Teens*. Linworth, 2008.
- Zbaracki, Matthew D. *Best Books for Boys: A Resource for Educators*. Libraries Unlimited, 2008.

# **School and Public Library Cooperation in a Teen World**

In the public mind, there may be little difference between the services to teens in school and public libraries, but a closer examination will reveal major differences in the focus of the two organizations. Teachers who understand the differences and build relationships with both organizations stand the greatest chance of succeeding with their students.

## **The Role of School Libraries**

High school libraries have been around for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their central focus is prescribed in their national standards, i.e. the support of the curriculum of the school. Thus they concentrate on serving students with school assignments, helping teachers construct library-friendly assignments, and providing collections that target curricular topics. Librarians are now constructing digital school libraries or virtual learning commons available 24 hours a day, seven days a week that link teens to databases, quality websites, Web 2.0 tools, and other materials directly connected to the teen's studies. School librarians may also be interested in the teaching of reading connected to the content areas of the school, so their interest is often directed toward supplying interesting and readable non-fiction and informational books at the reading levels of their clients. Some reading initiatives may also be taking place in the secondary school such as participating in state reading awards.

## **The Role of Public Libraries**

Many public libraries do not have large collections of books aimed at the teen reader, a person dedicated to working with young adults, or a space in the library that teens could call their own. These libraries have children's collections and children's reading rooms, but expect the teen to graduate to the adult collections and space. In recent years, however, more interest in teens has been growing among public librarians. A space for teens is often carved out and stocked with YA fiction, graphic novels, or whatever popular fare seems to attract teens to the space. Many young adult librarians, when there are such personnel, try to build activities with teenagers that attract them to the public library. These may include book clubs, discussion groups, cultural activities, service projects, and any other activity proposed by teen advisory groups. Public librarians often inherit students from the local schools who either don't have quality school libraries or their school libraries lack the resources to support school assignments. Another crowd of teens gravitates to the public library as a social place and somewhere to go after school. The public library might be much more popular with teens because of its more diverse collection, larger young adult fiction collections, and a pleasant/safe environment.

## **Collaborative Relationships**

Public librarians often complain that they are caught unawares about the assignments given by teachers in the local schools and teens expecting collections or services at a moment's notice. The perennial problem cannot be fully solved, but it can be minimized by regular communication among all the parties involved. The teacher who gives a call to the public library warning of a major impending research assignment or the school librarian who borrows extra materials from the public library so that there is a high fill rate during the school day is often appreciated both by the public library staff and by the teens who have a higher success rate. Links to nearby academic libraries can often help to fill requests for research on special or unusual topics. The sharing of digital resources is often one of the best cooperative activities in the quest to serve teens with quality information resources as opposed to trusting Google for everything.

## Teachers, School and Public Librarians

One of the most important friendships a teacher can make is the friendship with school and public librarians. These two professionals will feed every interested teacher so many wonderful tidbits about working with their students. In return, the librarians will want to know where teachers are in the various topical units of instruction. Every librarian will act somewhat differently, but they could supply teachers with boxes of books on a topic, interesting articles to read, collaboration on building units of instruction, connections to great links on the Internet, visits to the classroom to work with students on their projects linked to information, teaching teens information literacy, providing booktalks to classes and small groups, providing tours and card sign ups for the public library, homework help, sites/workshops, pathfinders for information teens need on assignments, instruction in the use of technology, and a whole host of other services. Can you as a teacher afford to have no communication with or an enemy in the library?

### Keeping Up

Five Journals explore the topic of school and public library cooperation at varying intervals:

- *School Library Journal*
- *VOYA*
- *Teacher Librarian*
- *Knowledge Quest*
- *Library Connections*

A Google search using “school library and public library cooperation” as key terms will yield many links to documents with procedures and standards for cooperation among the public and school libraries. Many guidelines are included for full-service cooperative ventures to special joint programs serving their common patrons.

### Spotlight: School and Public Library Cooperation

Three divisions of the American Library Association — ALSC, AASL, and YALSA — formed a joint task force in 2004 to investigate local and national models of school/public library cooperative activities. A gateway page of links to their findings and bibliographies that list articles, books, and websites about the subject are available on the web at [www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/initiatives/partnerships/coopacts/schoolplcoopprogs.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/initiatives/partnerships/coopacts/schoolplcoopprogs.cfm)

### Thought Questions

- 1) What cooperative activities exist between your local public and school libraries that focus on teenagers? How could these activities be improved?
- 2) What types of activities are likely to attract more teenagers to both school and public libraries?
- 3) Why can the public library usually stock more diverse and controversial YA novels than schools can? What is *in loco parentis* and how does it affect schools and school libraries?

# Section II

## Entering the Teen World of Literacy

The heart of this quick guide is an introduction into the mainstream of both literature and multimedia designed for the teen years. The challenge for the reader is to build a repertoire that spans the entire world of teens as a group. Here you will find friends, strangers, the tame, the outlandish, the easy, the difficult, and most anything that is both recognizable and surprising at the same time. Perhaps this is the definition of the teenage animal: never predictable, always surprising, lovable yet difficult. Enjoy.

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## Graphic Novels and Manga

Some would define a graphic novel as simply a more ambitious comic book. That definition, however, misses one major component. A comic book is most often the creation of a creative group of people who carry a storyline forward based on a formula and have agreed upon character profile. At times these comic books are strung together in sequential episodes to tell a cohesive story of that character. The character and storyline belong to the publishing enterprise that publishes the novel. A more sophisticated graphic novel is usually the work of one writer who develops the character and the storyline and produces the written storyline much as a conventional writer would develop a story. The difference between novels and graphic novels is that in graphic novels story and character development is shared with the reader in a graphic format similar to the storyboard format used for writing and illustrating the traditional comic book as opposed to just the use of words in novels.

The range of graphic novel subjects span from superhero to high school romance to biography. Storytelling with pictorial storyboards creates an obvious connection to movies (in Japan these animated movies are termed Anime). Titles that have become popular include "The Road to Perdition," "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen," and "The X-Men."

Manga, which has its origins in Japan and now is present across Asia and into the United States, is a very popular sub-genre. Generally it has its own conventions of presentation: black and white, smaller volume size, large-eyed characters, and reads from back to front. Popular titles in the Manga body of work include "Cowboy Behop," "Love Hina," "Akira," and the previously mentioned "Sailor Moon." Manga has become a huge market for teens. Acquaint yourself with Manga offerings at [www.manga.com](http://www.manga.com); the home site for Manga.com. Just as with other literature forms Manga has developed beyond the escapist entertainment. In Japan and other parts of Asia, "manga" have become a powerful and effective medium to educate readers in regard to topics such as environmental conservation and food safety.

Graphic novels originating in Asia likely encompass basic mores and stereotypes that would not be accepted if the titles were published in the United States. While the titles and cover pictures may look innocent enough, some have very graphic content. The books published in Japan do, generally, have an age rating on the books—a system similar to the movie ratings in the states. Elizabeth Figa, an instructor at the University of North Texas, has assembled a superb list of links titled *Graphic Novels and Comics Websites* at [courses.unt.edu/efiga/GraphicNovels/GraphicNovelsAndComicsWebsites.htm](http://courses.unt.edu/efiga/GraphicNovels/GraphicNovelsAndComicsWebsites.htm). Katy Foster's presentation on the topic at [courses.unt.edu/efiga/HistoryAndEthnography/TrendsProjects/foster/FosterTrends.htm](http://courses.unt.edu/efiga/HistoryAndEthnography/TrendsProjects/foster/FosterTrends.htm) will also be of interest.

More and more frequently American publishers are giving readers titles with the "graphic" presentation made popular by the Manga titles. In 2007, Gene Luen Yang's graphic novel, *American Born Chinese*, became the first graphic novel to be awarded the Michael L. Printz Award and the first graphic novel to be nominated for a National Book Award.

## Graphic Novels\* — A Short List

- *Baby Sitter's Club: Kristy's Great Idea* by Ann M. Martin and Raina Telgemeier
- *Catwoman: When in Rome* by Jeph Leob and Tim Sale
- *Crossing Midnight* by Mike Carey and Jim Fern
- *Dramacon* by Svetlana Chmakova
- *Hikaru No Go, Volume I* by Yumi
- *Laika* by Nick Abadzis
- *Night Fisher* by R. Kikuo Johnson
- *Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea* by Guy Delisle (non-fiction)
- *Rubber Bandits: Plastic Man (V.2)* by Kyle Baker
- *Sorcerers and Secretaries* by Amy Kim Ganter
- *Star Wars: Tag and Bink Were Here* by Kevin Rubio et.al.
- *Teen Titans: A Kid's Game* by Geoff Johns
- *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation* by Sid Jacobson and Ernie Colon (non-fiction)
- *The Making of a Graphic Novel: The Resonator* by Prentis Rollins (fiction and non-fiction section)
- *Tokyo Babylon* by Clamp

## Popular Series—Manga and Graphic Novels

- *Emily Edison* by David Hopkins and Brock Rzy
- *Psy-Comm* by Jason Henderson and Tony Salvaggio
- *Real* by Takehiko Inoue
- *Sand Chronicles* by Hinako Ashihara
- *Young Avengers* by Allen Heinberg, Jim Cheung, and others.

The Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) has a page dedicated to Graphic Novels. Check out all the resources listed online at: [www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/graphicnovels.asp](http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/graphicnovels.asp)

## Spotlight on Gene Luen Yang

In 1986, Art Spiegelman's account of his father's survival of the Holocaust, *Maus, A Survivor's Tale*, won wide acclaim and changed the way graphic novels were viewed. Publishers, however, seemed reluctant to invest in the genre—viewing the genre as suspect. But in 2006, Gene Luen Yang brought forth his book, *American Born Chinese*. In three plot lines Yang examines racial stereotypes and coming of age as a Chinese in America. His first two plots feature Jin Wang, a lonely middle school student who longs to fit in with his white classmates, and Danny, who is painfully ashamed of his Chinese cousin Chin-Kee. Their tales converge in the third plot revealing a dramatic climax that leaves Jin Wang and Danny content with their life. In 2009, Yang, along with Derek Kirk Kim (*Same Difference and Other Stories*) created a collection of three stories—all presented graphically in *The Eternal Smile: Three Stories*. "Duncan's Kingdom" is a somewhat traditional quest to avenge a king's murder and earn the right to marry the princess. "Grandpa Greenbax and the Eternal Smile" has a frog contemplating his one wish—but perhaps decides that being a frog may not be so bad after all. In the final story, "Urgent Request," Janet's life becomes irrevocably changed after she receives an email from a Nigerian prince, a request seeking Janet's help. Find out more about Gene Luen Yang and his books on his website at: [www.humblecomics.com](http://www.humblecomics.com).

## Great Graphic Novels for Teens

A List from YALSA

[www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/greatgraphicnovelsforteens/gn.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/greatgraphicnovelsforteens/gn.cfm)

## Thought Question

Stephen Krashen extolls the benefits of "voluntary free reading" including graphic novels and comics. Read "Free Reading" by Stephen Krashen at [www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6367048.html](http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6367048.html) and "The "Decline" of Reading in America, Poverty and Access to Books, and the use of Comics in Encouraging Reading" on Krashen's website at [www.sdkrashen.com/articles/decline\\_of\\_reading/all.html](http://www.sdkrashen.com/articles/decline_of_reading/all.html). Do you agree with Krashen? Why or why not?



# Comic Books — Saving the World

## Superheroes: A History<sup>1</sup>

Superheroes burst into the American publishing world in June 1938 with Superman debuting in Action Comics #1. Inspired by two teenaged boys, writer Jerry Siegel and artist Joe Shuster, Superman went on to define the superhero genre. Not surprisingly, other super crime fighters appeared on the scene in 1939, including Batman and his sidekick Robin, Captain Marvel, and Sub-Mariner.

World War II provided the catalyst for the Golden Age of comics. America had taken on the role of the world's guardian, upholding the guiding principles of "truth, justice, and the American way." With patriotism high, Captain America and other super crime fighters battling the many injustices and evils of the world became extremely popular. This age produced many superheroes and imitations of these characters that lasted until the end of the 1940s. After the war, the demands for this genre of comic books faded and were replaced with other storylines—such as crime, westerns, and horror.

Following World War II comic books fell victim to an all-out assault from psychiatrists, parents, and law enforcement officers. Comic books were being burned in the hopes of fending off juvenile delinquency. Dr. Fredric Wertham, a prominent psychiatrist, revealed his conclusions of a two-year study involving comic books in a paper titled *Seduction of the Innocent*. He stated that comics' influence on youth was "undermining morals, glorifying violence, and were 'sexually aggressive in an abnormal way.'" This paper was published in 1954, the same year the Senate Subcommittee on the Judiciary held a hearing on comics. The self-regulating Comics Code Authority was established by the industry that same year. The publishers formed the Comics Magazine Association of America, voluntarily abiding by the code prohibiting "violence, explicit sex, gratuitous gore and the triumph of evil or antisocial behavior" from their pages. This change in attitude contributed to bringing about the Silver Age of superhero comics.

The Silver Age brought back some heroes that had faded in the '50s (e.g. Flash Gordon, Green Lantern, and the Sub-Mariner), as well as introduced new characters, such as Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four. These new characters of Marvel's fostered a growing teenage and college audience by not only dealing with the 'bad guys,' but also with universally inward dilemmas. These characters mirrored the struggles of the youth of the '60s, living in a tumultuous time with the Kennedy and King assassinations, Vietnam, and campus riots.

The two big publishing houses, Marvel and DC, were pretty much the only game in town during the 1970s as far as superheroes and adventure were concerned. Marvel's X-Men series and spin-offs were enjoying a large following. Marvel celebrated 20 years of publishing under that name and held 60% of the comics market. DC, on the other hand, accounted for 35% of comic sales but continued to attempt new ideas. In the '80s the success of the *Superman* and *Batman* movies secured DC's position in the marketplace.

The last two decades have seen familiar characters revamped only to return to their familiar selves. The future of superheroes and comics in general will no doubt evolve. The success of movies involving comic heroes, such as *Spider-Man*, has led to more superhero movies with varying degrees of success. These include *The Incredible Hulk*, *Catwoman*, *Hellboy*, *Fantastic Four*, and *Batman*. Whatever the trend, both teachers and librarians realize that the comics attract readers and contribute to literacy in general. Teens will help us select the best if we are interested enough to ask.

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<sup>1</sup> Acknowledgement for this page given to a graduate student of San José State University.



## Timeline of Superheroes

### Golden Age (1938–1949)

- Superman (1938)
- Arrow (1938)
- Batman (1939)
- Sub-Mariner (1939)
- Shock Gibson (1939)
- Captain Marvel (1939)
- Daredevil (1940)
- Masked Marvel (1940)
- Wonder Woman (1941)
- Captain America (1941)

### Silver Age (1956–1970)

- Flash (1956)\*
- Green Lantern (1959)\*
- Supergirl (1959)
- Justice League of America (1960)\*
- Fantastic Four (1961)
- Spider-Man (1962)
- Mighty Thor (1962)
- Incredible Hulk (1962)
- Sub Mariner (1962)\*
- X-Men (1963)
- Daredevil 2 (1964)
- Captain America (1964)\*

### Bronze Age (1970–Present)

- Conan the Barbarian (1970)
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (1984)
- Watchmen (1986)
- X-Force (1991) which became X-Static (2002)
- Rising Stars (2004)
- Anya Corazon (2004)
- Firebirds (2004)
- Incredibles (2004)
- Majestic (2005)

\* This comic series reintroduced in the year listed.

## Spotlight: Spider-Man



*Spider-Man*, created by Stan Lee of Timely Comics (later known as Marvel), debuted in 1962 in the final issue of *Amazing Fantasy* #15. Although advised by Martin Goodman, then publisher of Marvel Comics, to forget Lee's ideas for a spider-inspired character, Goodman tested the waters with a title that was scheduled for cancellation. Although *Amazing Fantasy* had been experiencing poor sales, issue 15 was a big seller. Deciding Spider-Man was the reason for issue 15's success, Spidey lived to sling another web, coming out in a comic book series bearing his name in 1963.

Spider-Man's appeal can be attributed to his complexity. Stan Lee wanted to break out of the proven but overused superhero formula by creating an angst-ridden, teenaged character who wasn't superhuman but in many ways one of us: "your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man." Being the first teenaged superhero that wasn't just an adult superhero's sidekick, Spider-Man was extremely popular with teens and young adults. The same self-doubt and frustrations he experienced reflected the turbulent times the youth of this country experienced in the '60s and still holds true today.



## Keeping Up

- [www.marvel.com](http://www.marvel.com)
- [www.dccomics.com](http://www.dccomics.com)
- [www.darkhorse.com](http://www.darkhorse.com)
- [www.imagecomics.com](http://www.imagecomics.com)
- Book: Goulart, Ron. *Comic Book Encyclopedia: The Ultimate Guide to Characters, Graphic Novels, Writers, and Artists in the Comic Book Universe*. Harper Entertainment, 2004

## Thought Questions

- 1) Will comic books ever gain respectability among the literary world?
- 2) Why do some superheroes (Superman, Batman, etc.) still thrive almost seventy years later?
- 3) In what way do the problems that current superheroes face parallel those of today's teens?

# Unstoppable Anime

By Sarah Couri

There's an Anime invasion just about everywhere—at movie theaters, video rental stores, and in the library. While the most enthusiastic otaku (otaku means mega-fan) might feel right at home, it can be a little overwhelming to the uninitiated. When most people use the term *Anime*, they tend to think of what it looks like: cartoon characters with crazily colored hair and big, big eyes. The definition is a little simpler than that: Anime is any animated feature that is created in Japan. It can be made for television, for theatrical release, or for direct-to-video; as long as it's animated and made in Japan, it's Anime. (If you are in Japan, *Anime* simply means any animated feature regardless of its origin.) While this is a valid definition, however, it's not entirely useful; this description includes a lot of material. It doesn't help with finding Anime for the library or with planning Anime-related programs for all your otakus.

Anime is complicated for a number of reasons. The sheer volume of material available is rather intimidating. Osamu Tezuka's *Astro Boy* is often considered a source for most modern Anime, and it was made in the 1960s<sup>1</sup>. With over 40 years of material to choose from—and so many opinions on what's the best, and so many versions of titles—it can be a little alarming. There are titles that are syndicated TV shows; *Cowboy Bebop* for example. *Cowboy Bebop* the movie was also released theatrically in Japan and throughout the world. Is it better to start at the beginning and watch all the episodes of the show? Or can you just dive into the movie? When picking titles for library collections, these doubts can seem impossible to resolve, and familiarity with every title is out of the question.

The various audiences Anime is made for compounds the complications. Just because something's animated doesn't mean it's only for kids. There are many titles that are either inappropriate for kids, or, at the very least, are uninteresting to them thematically. Of course there are a number of titles that are specifically made for children and teenagers, but knowing which is which can be a challenge. Fortunately, it can be very easy to find thoughtful online reviews. Reading these reviews can give you a good sense of what is good and what titles are appropriate for which audience. Having so many fans can be a real advantage!

Interest in Anime has only grown over the years. However, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when Anime became bestselling entertainment. It hit mainstream by the time *Dragonball Z* was aired on Cartoon Network; for many people, this was the first time they were exposed to Anime. Now, in addition to Cartoon Network's Toonami and Adult Swim programming incorporating many Anime titles, there's also an Anime Network.

The Anime trend does not seem to be disappearing. Many of the titles coming from Japan have blurred format lines—they are comic books and TV shows, card games, action figures, video games, and other collectible items. With such flexible marketing and income options, it's a viable market that shows no sign of slowing. Anime is not simply a consumerist craze, however; Anime artists are continually expanding the creative possibilities of animated storytelling in unique and marvelous ways, unrealized by other artists.

So how can you decide what is best to have available? As we said before, talk to teens in your library. They will help you wade through the best, and worst, of this overwhelming genre.

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<sup>1</sup> Poitras, Gilles. "What is Anime?" *The Librarian's Guide to Anime and Manga*. 18 June 2003. [www.koyagi.com/Libguide.html](http://www.koyagi.com/Libguide.html)

## Anime Online and in Print

Finding reviews, or just keeping up with the latest news, is important and challenging! Here are some places to start:

- *Anime Essentials* by Gilles Poitras (2000)
- [www.animenfo.com](http://www.animenfo.com)
- [www.animeondvd.com](http://www.animeondvd.com)
- [www.animenewsnetwork.com](http://www.animenewsnetwork.com)
- [www.anipike.com](http://www.anipike.com)
- [www.rightstuf.com](http://www.rightstuf.com)
- [www.theanimereview.com](http://www.theanimereview.com)
- [www.themanime.org](http://www.themanime.org)
- "The Anime-ted Library" by Kat Kan and Kristen Fletcher Spear. Article in *VOYA* (April 2005). Available online at: [pdfs.voya.com/VO/YA2/VOYA200504AnimetedLibrary.pdf](http://pdfs.voya.com/VO/YA2/VOYA200504AnimetedLibrary.pdf)
- [www.animeresearch.com/books.html](http://www.animeresearch.com/books.html)
- For teens wanting to create anime, suggest the software: *Anime Studio* and the guide: *Anime Studio, the Official Guide*. Course Technology, 2008
- McCarthy, Helen. *500 Essential Anime Movies: the Essential Guide*. Collins Design, 2009.

### Caution

Be sure to contact distributors if you are going to show anime at the library. Getting permission is not usually tough, but it is important.

## Touchstone Titles

- *Akira* (Geneon)
- *Dragonball Z* (Funimation)
- *Fruits Basket* (Funimation)
- *Fushigi Yugi* (Geneon)
- *Initial D* (Tokyopop)
- *Inu-Yasha* (VIZ)
- *Mobile Suit Gundam Seed* (Bandai)
- *Marmalade Boy* (Tokyopop)
- *Nausicaa: Valley of the Wind* (Buena Vista)
- *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (AD Vision)
- *Ranma* (VIZ)
- *Spirited Away* (Buena Vista)
- *Vision of Escaflowne* (Bandai)

## Thought Questions

- 1) Hold a focus group in your classroom or library with teens interested in Anime. Why are they interested and how do they select the best from the enormous amount available?
- 2) Are there Anime groups or conventions in your local area? Have you considered attending one?

# Cult Movies

By Rebecca Brodegard

Cult movies have been around since around the 1950s. They exploded when videotapes appeared and made movies from the theater readily accessible to people's homes. So, what are cult movies? "Cult movies are usually strange, quirky, offbeat, eccentric, oddball, or surreal, with outrageous and cartoony characters or plots, garish sets and they are often considered controversial. They elicit a fiery passion in devoted fans, and may cause cultists to enthusiastically champion these films, leading to audience participation and repetitive viewings and showings."<sup>1</sup> Cult movies often don't do well in the theaters, but they explode in video sales. There is usually a group of people that group together and watch a movie together, dress up like the characters, and incorporate quotes from the movie into their daily vocabulary. Any kind of movie can be a cult movie—comedies, romances, horror, Sci-Fi, anything. Most of them are "B" movies, movies made with little budget and fall in the shadow of the A-listers.

Although there were some cult movies around the 1950s and 1960s, the biggest one, and the one that had the most impact, came in 1967—*The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. The plot was crazy and new, with rock 'n' roll musical numbers scattered throughout. People flocked to it. Even today theaters show late-night showings of the movie with cult fans filling the seats. It is a cult classic that made the genre come alive.

Since then, more and more movies have achieved the fame and cult following that *Rocky Horror Picture Show* achieved. Today, it could be contested that the description of cult movies has changed a bit. They can be successful in the theater, gaining more and more followers, and have a huge video/DVD release.

One of the greatest cult classic movies of today is *Star Wars*. When *Star Wars* first appeared in 1979, it was a modest success. With the two sequels, *Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, *Star Wars* was launched into a huge success. The following grew and grew. When George Lucas decided to do the "prequels," every *Star Wars* fan cheered. People lined up at theaters for months before the first showing, just to say they were the first to see the "new" *Star Wars*. People dressed in costumes, and even acted out scenes from the original three movies, to pass time in line. These are definitely signs of a cult classic.

The cult movie has been around a long time and has given us a rich history of movies to watch, follow, and parody. As long as fans create a loyal following to any movie, cult movies are here to stay.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.rockyhorror.it/webring/cultring.html](http://www.rockyhorror.it/webring/cultring.html)

## Some of the Major Cult Classics

- *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*
- *Star Wars* (and all sequels and prequels)
- *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*
- *Dazed and Confused*
- *Napoleon Dynamite*
- *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*
- *UHF*
- *The Princess Bride*
- *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*
- *Heathers*
- *Scarface*
- *The Matrix*
- *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*
- *American Pie* (and sequels)
- *Caddyshack*
- *Rushmore*
- *Spider-Man*
- *Pulp Fiction*
- *Gone With The Wind*
- *The Big Lebowski*
- *Indiana Jones* (all three older movies)
- *The Lord of the Rings*
- *The Breakfast Club*
- *Friday*
- *Half Baked*
- Bruce Lee movies

*Entertainment Weekly* published their list of "Top 50 Cult Movies" in their May 23, 2003 issue. It is available online at [www.filmsite.org/cultfilmsew.html](http://www.filmsite.org/cultfilmsew.html)

## Spotlight: Frank Miller



Frank Miller is a comic book author and artist who Hollywood has recently discovered. The films based on his books retain his graphic artistry. The subject matter has been diverse—from superheroes to modern-day saints and sinners to historical fiction. The first Frank Miller film to gain a large buzz among teens was *Sin City* in 2005. Violent and intense with over-the-top characters, the cinematography of the movie was beautiful and edgy, using both black and white, and color. In 2007 when *300* was released, Miller's movies were no longer a secret, building word of mouth among teens. Groups of teens made *300* a mandatory viewing, viewing it on the opening weekend, and making it the talk of teens the following Monday. In the tradition of *Sin City*, *300* was violent and intense but beautifully filmed. *The Spirit* appeared in late 2008. It was Miller's dark look at superheroes, using the same black and white/color film technique. Look for more *Sin City* in the future.

## Keeping Up

- [www.hollywoodteenmovies.com](http://www.hollywoodteenmovies.com)
- Keep your eyes on the theaters and magazines. What are the top DVD sales? What are people quoting? What has a loyal fan base? What are comedians making fun of?

## Thought Questions

- 1) What are the characteristics of a cult movie?
- 2) How can teachers and librarians capitalize on the intense interest in a cult movie to move teens in other interesting or instructional experiences?
- 3) Have relatively unknown stars of cult movies gone on to achieve success as actors and actresses?

# Video Games

By Rebecca Brodegard and Allison Parham

Video games are fairly new, yet their history is diverse and complicated. Steve Russell developed the first real video game in 1962 while attending M.I.T. Despite this early beginning, video games really didn't take off until the 1970s when the first arcade games were created. The first arcade games were basically TV screens hooked up to a console that could only play one game. These games caught on fast with teenagers and service men. The main corporate players in today's video game industry began to emerge: Sony, Sega, Nintendo, and Atari. These companies were not only interested in arcade games, but in video game consoles that could be taken into everyone's own home. Atari, a video game giant until very recently, was the first to introduce a console that could hook into any normal television. Some of the popular games to emerge in the beginning of video game history are those that still continue to be popular today: Tetris, Pong, Pac-Man, Frogger, and Mario.

The 1980s began with a dip in the industry. Some of the major players lost their footing. Nintendo was the one to break out and bring gaming back into full swing with the release of their Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). It was sold in conjunction with the game Super Mario Bros., and the complete package was an instant hit. Both Atari and Sega fought to catch up. Atari never could and Sega came close. When Nintendo released *The Legend of Zelda*, a quest game, it hit the charts again. Other releases in the '80s included Nintendo's Game Boy (handheld gaming) and Sega's Genesis, the first 16-bit console.

The 1990s saw huge changes to the gaming industry. Although Nintendo did very well throughout the decade, other companies began to share the glory. Sony's hold over the market rose because of its advancing technology. They moved to using CDs for storing the larger amount of information needed to create sophisticated games, and the graphics of the games jumped to a whole new level. Computer games also saw a jump in popularity and better graphics. Controversy surrounding the violence in some video games began to arise. With the shootings at Columbine High School in 1998, video games were heavily scrutinized; the Federal government decided to put ratings on the games. Those with an M rating were not to be sold to teenagers. Despite all this regulation, M-rated games have still found their way into the hands of teenagers. Another facet of the '90s was gaming's jump to Hollywood. Movies like *Laura Croft* and *Final Fantasy* used the video game counterpart to help sell the movie.

In recent years gaming has stepped up a notch. Microsoft released their X-Box console in 2001, changing the face of gaming. The graphics of the X-Box beat the competition by yards, and it also allowed gamers to play each other over the Internet. Microsoft also created the game *Halo* and sequels, arguably the most popular games available. These consoles became home entertainment centers, acting as DVD players, wireless hubs, etc. in addition to their gaming capabilities. But technology moved on. Microsoft released the new X-Box 360 in 2006, followed closely by a new Sony Playstation. The Wii, Nintendo's new gaming console, is dominating the industry. The Wii's controllers track your movements to control the game's movements. The games are very family friendly. The Wii Fit is the newest addition, bringing exercise to gaming. PCs also remain a main hub of gaming. PCs allow for sophisticated gaming because of advanced video cards, high memory, and allow gamers to interact with other gamers and friends over the Internet.

Teachers and librarians can capitalize on teen interest and gaming by supplying gaming magazines and links to gaming websites. It is, however, one thing to help them build interests; it is quite another to feed their gaming addiction. Tips and techniques for doing this should be shared with colleagues since success is probably near impossible.

## Popular Titles

### 1980s

Commodore 64  
Donkey Kong\*  
Pac-Man\*  
Super Mario Bros.\*  
Tetris\*

### 1990s

Donkey Kong Country\*  
Doom\*  
Final Fantasy\*  
Legend of Zelda\*  
Mario Kart\*  
Mega Man\*  
Metroid\*  
Mortal Kombat\*  
MYST\*  
Prince of Persia\*  
SimCity\*  
Sonic the Hedgehog\*  
Street Fighter II\*  
Super Mario 64\*

### 2000–Now

Counter-Strike  
DragonBall Z  
Final Fantasy XI online  
Grand Theft Auto (and sequels)  
Halo series  
Metroid  
The Sims (and sequels)  
WarCraft (and sequels)  
Tony Hawk (any version)  
Splinter Cell (and sequels)  
Madden NFL (any)  
Battlefield 2  
Fear  
Burnout series  
Guitar Hero  
Crisis  
Metal Gear series  
Bioshock series

\* indicates that newer versions of this game are popular today.

Caution: The list of today's popular games can go out of date very quickly. Look to Keeping Up for ways to stay up-to-date on popular games.

## Spotlight: World of WarCraft

World of WarCraft is a popular game that allows players to enter into a fantasy world and control individuals similar to their favorite Lord of the Rings characters. This game is played online, and users pay a monthly fee to participate. Each player customizes the appearance of his human, elf, dwarf, gnome, orc, troll or other creature, and then he logs into the world. A user plays the game with others in his real world time zone. In the game, players must follow specific directions, learn to work as a team with other players, and enjoy challenging quests that necessitate strategy formulation. Each time a player completes a quest, he gains rewards that enable him to participate in increasingly difficult quests. A player's progress is automatically saved as he plays. Players can also communicate with each other. For example, if they hit "enter", and then type "/g", they can type a message to the group of people with whom they are participating in challenges. If they type other codes instead of "/g", they can type messages to individuals or other sets of people. Players also enjoy special computer commands that allow them to do such things as pretend to fall asleep. This gives the players in the group a good laugh. World of WarCraft involves great strategy and is a fun, though addictive, entertainment source.

## Keeping Up

### Magazines:

- *Computer Gaming World*
- *Game Pro*
- *Electronic Gaming*
- *Game Informer*
- *PC Gamer*
- *X-Box*

### Websites:

- EB Games: [www.ebgames.com/default.aspx](http://www.ebgames.com/default.aspx)
- GameSpot: [www.gamespot.com/](http://www.gamespot.com/)
- Nintendo: [www.nintendo.com/](http://www.nintendo.com/)
- PlayStation: [www.us.playstation.com/Games](http://www.us.playstation.com/Games)
- X-Box: [www.xbox.com](http://www.xbox.com)
- Game Informer: [www.gameinformer.com](http://www.gameinformer.com)
- [www.computerandvideogames.com](http://www.computerandvideogames.com)
- [www.ign.com](http://www.ign.com)
- [www.addictinggames.com](http://www.addictinggames.com)
- [gamespy.com](http://gamespy.com)

## Thought Questions

- 1) Interview a player of Halo (or sequels) and try to understand the motivation behind addiction to these and other games.
- 2) What redeeming qualities do the addicted claim for this activity?



## Teens Online

It is possible that when a network of computers accessible globally was first conceived in the early sixties, the impact of the World Wide Web could not have been imagined. After years of scientific development, the World Wide Web became a reality in 1991. The use of the web grew throughout the nineties and the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Internet usage continues to grow in the United States, although the rate of growth has slowed. Teens are among the many users of the Internet. Studies indicate that 87% of teens are online.<sup>1</sup>

Teens use the Internet in a variety of ways: communication, entertainment, and research. Email remains the number-one usage of the Internet among users, and teens are no exception. Often teens manage more than one email account and online identity. However, with the rise in popularity of social networking sites, email usage has dropped. They are also the primary users of instant messaging and chat rooms. Teens participate in message boards and websites in which they can post personal works and receive or offer critiques. The online environment allows teens to multi-task, communicating with several friends at once while participating in other online activities.

Teens Online	
Daily Access	93%
Visit entertainment sites	81%
Visit Social Networking Sites	65%
Read News; Get Information On Current Events	63%
Instant Message with Friends	60%
Watch videos (i.e. YouTube)	57%
Search for College Information	55%
Shop online	38%
Health Information	28%
Blog, Keep online journal	27%
Downloaded a podcast	19%
Visit Chat Room	18%
Maintain a website	11%

Another primary use of the online environment is entertainment. Teens gravitate to more interactive sites with graphics they can participate in and to which they can contribute. Teens use the web to connect with their peers via social networking sites like Facebook, MyYearbook, MySpace, etc. Even after the changing face of file-sharing, a majority of online teens still download music and videos. As computers improve and bandwidth makes downloads faster, teens are also downloading movie clips (some illegal). Online gaming remains a popular activity, both interactive role-playing games and one-player video games. Teens write fan fiction, post to blogs, and maintain web sites. And the favorite teen pastime of shopping? It's here too. Teens use the Internet to "window shop" for everything, from sports equipment to prom dresses. They post videos and pictures on a variety of sites such as YouTube, DeviantArt or Flickr. 57% of online teens report creating content.<sup>2</sup>

Besides entertainment, teens have not overlooked the role of the Internet in locating information. A majority of teens rely on the Internet to help with schoolwork, even occasionally completing online assignments. It is possible that in the future we will see more and more virtual schooling. In Florida, the statewide virtual school served more than 20,000 secondary students. But for now the Internet remains a source of information to help complete school assignments.

Teens live in an increasingly networked world. In 2009 93% of teens went online every day. The number steadily increases as more options become available to teens—networked homes, schools, and public spaces as well as smart phones that allow them to access the Internet while "mobile." While the primary technology in a teen's life is their cell phone, the Internet plays a significant role in their social and academic activity.

<sup>1</sup> *Teens and Technology: Youth are Leading the Transition to a Fully Wired and Mobile Nation*. July, 2005. [www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)

<sup>2</sup> *Teen Content Creators and Consumers*. November, 2005. [www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)

For those working with teens, awareness and understanding of the digital worlds of teens is a fundamental need. Exploring the communities and tools provides insight beyond the popular media constructions of the multitasking teen at danger to predators and unwisely exposing their lives to strangers. Negotiating the fine line between invading the world of the teen and providing authentic and necessary service can be successfully done if one educates one's self about a teen's digital world. The difficulty is that this world is ever changing.

Networking with other professionals who work with teens can help maintain an awareness of the digital world of teens. What are the web sites teens are using? What are the online tools that can help a professional reach teens? What innovations are there in youth services? Fortunately the same digital world occupied by teens is also occupied by working teen advocates who blog, tweet, build wikis, and Facebook (or MySpace) to share ideas, make connections, and keep current on the online world of teens.

Library services for teens should acknowledge the disparate elements of the digital world. Academically provide research support, homework help, and building an "answer center"—a virtual library. Socially use the networking tools to connect with teens. And in a programming sense, use the digital world to connect teens to the brick and mortar building and sponsor fan fiction writing groups, gaming tournaments, or YouTube film festivals.

### Websites for Teens

Teen Space @ the Internet Public Library: A web portal for teens with links in several categories including the Arts, College and Careers, Sports, Style, and Money Matters: [ipl.si.umich.edu/div/teen/](http://ipl.si.umich.edu/div/teen/)

General Sites: Places to go for fun, news, games, advice, etc.

[www.gurl.com](http://www.gurl.com)  
[www.smartgirl.org](http://www.smartgirl.org)  
[www.cyberteens.com](http://www.cyberteens.com)  
[www.spankmag.com](http://www.spankmag.com)

Advice: There are a number of places online where teens can go for advice and information:

[www.teencentral.net](http://www.teencentral.net)  
[www.sxetc.org](http://www.sxetc.org)

College and Careers: Information to help teens prepare for life after high school is readily available online, including college and scholarship searches:

[fastweb.monster.com](http://fastweb.monster.com)  
[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)  
[nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/index.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/index.asp)  
[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

Arts and Entertainment: Sites to visit for both recreational and informational needs.

#### Movies

[www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)  
[www.rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com)

#### Music

[www.artistdirect.com](http://www.artistdirect.com)  
[www.itunes.com](http://www.itunes.com)

#### Blogging

[www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com)  
[www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)

#### Fashion

[www.alloy.com](http://www.alloy.com)  
[www.delias.com](http://www.delias.com)

### Spotlight: Web 2.0 Tools

Facebook/MySpace: While SNS sites have not been as all consuming to teens as they were 3 years ago, they are still a fundamental part of their online experiences. Libraries can create MySpace and Facebook profiles to share news and make connections with teens

Nings: A more focused SNS. Nerdfighters ([nerdfighters.ning.com](http://nerdfighters.ning.com)) is an example of how a ning can work to bring teens together.

Twitter: While indications are that Teens aren't flocking to Twitter – librarians can post updates on Twitter, widgets on websites with automatically update with new posts, so it can be effective even if teens aren't following the library.

YouTube: Libraries can create a channel for teens to create and share videos such as book trailers, library programming, etc.

Jing/Screencasting: Use these tools to make visual instructions for teens using your library.

### Thought Questions

- 1) What is the role of the Internet in the library?
- 2) How can a library authentically address security and privacy concerns?
- 3) How can a library use social networking and Web 2.0 tools to connect with teens?

# Horror Movies

By Rebecca Brodegard

The history of the horror film dates back to just before the turn of the twentieth century. The first horror film, *Le Manoir du Diable*, directed by Georges Melies, was also the first vampire movie. Lasting only two minutes, audiences were instantly captured and the horror movie phenomenon was born. After the turn of the twentieth century, in the early 1900s, horror movies grew in number in Europe. Hollywood picked up this genre in the 1930s and ran with it. Universal Studios created gothic-themed movies such as *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* (both 1931) and *The Mummy* (1932).

During the 1950s, with the advent of the nuclear age and the space race, the tone of horror films shifted away from the gothic towards the modern. Aliens, and their threats of world domination, were now the feared creatures along with mutated people, plants, and insects. Two of the more popular films of this period were *The Thing From Another World* (1951) and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956). The late 1950s saw the advent of the gory horror films. Technology had changed, so filmmakers used this to their advantage to add blood and gore into their movies.

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw a move towards the occult and supernatural. The cost of making the films increased, but some of the greatest and most famous horror movies were created at this time. Some films of note during this era were *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Exorcist*, and *The Omen*. The '60s also ring of Alfred Hitchcock, a master at film that always left an unpleasant taste in your mouth. His film *Psycho* left everyone wary of motels and showers.

The 1980s horror films began the trend of helpless teens being chased by supernatural human killers. The first, and maybe most notable, of these films was *Halloween*, followed by *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* and *Nightmare on Elm Street*.

In the 1990s and into the new millennium, horror films continued their slash-like nature with films like *I Know What You Did Last Summer* and *Jeepers Creepers*. Some movies were also made to put the "scare" back into the horror film without the gore. Such films included *The Sixth Sense*, *The Others*, and *The Blair Witch Project*. Also in the '90s there were the parodies on scary movies, such as the movie *Scary Movie*, a bawdy blending of parodies of the best in horror films.

Today, horror movies are still alive and well. A lot of the movies to come out early in the millennium borrowed from horror movies of the past, like *Halloween* and the Freddy and Jason movies from the 1980s. There are still horror films that relish on the gore, but there are plenty of scary movies that still depend on ghosts or other supernatural phenomenon to induce a scare. Horror is not going away, and its popularity with teenagers continues to grow.

## Popular Horror Films

### 1970s

*Carrie*  
*The Exorcist*  
*Alien*  
*Jaws*

### 1980s

*The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*  
*Halloween*  
*Nightmare on Elm Street*  
*Poltergeist*  
*The Shining*  
*Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>*  
*Hellraiser*  
*Pet Cemetary*  
*Return of the Living Dead*

### 1990s

*Scream* (and sequels)  
*I Know What You Did Last Summer*  
*Blair Witch Project*  
*Silence of the Lambs*  
*The Sixth Sense*  
*Event Horizon*

### 2000–Now

*The Ring* (and sequel)  
*Halloween–Resurrection*  
*Final Destination*  
*Jeepers Creepers*  
*Freddy vs. Jason*  
*The Amityville Horror*  
*Dawn of the Dead*  
*The Omen*  
*1408*  
*Disturbia*  
*28 Days Later* (& sequel *28 Weeks Later*)  
*I Know Who Killed Me*  
*Hellboy, Hellboy 2*  
*Prom Night*  
*Drag Me to Hell*  
*Twilight*  
*Terminator Salvation*

## Spotlight: Stephen King



Stephen King was born in 1947 in Portland, Maine. Although his family moved a lot, they eventually returned to Maine, where he stayed into adulthood. He always had an interest in writing. He went to the University of Maine, where he wrote a weekly column for the campus newspaper. He made his first professional short story sale in 1967 (“The Glass Floor”). He graduated in English in 1970 and was married in 1971. In 1973 Doubleday & Co. accepted his novel *Carrie*, and you can say the rest is history. *Carrie* made the School Library Journal’s list of books in 1975; that same year it was released as a movie. The movie catapulted King’s name into households across the United States. Some of his famous novels include *The Shining* (1974), *It* (1986), *Misery* (1987), *Dolores Claiborne* (1992), *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon* (1999), *The Green Mile* (2000), *The Cell* (2006), *Lisey’s Story* (2006), *Cell* (2007), *Just After Sunset* (2008), and many, many more. In addition, over 51 of his novels and short stories have been made into movies or TV movies, and that number continues to grow. Stephen King is a prolific writer that has broadened horror fiction’s readership and horror movies to extreme proportions.

Official Website: [www.stephenking.com](http://www.stephenking.com)

## Keeping Up

### Websites:

- [www.everythingscary.com](http://www.everythingscary.com)
- [www.upcominghorrorrmovies.com](http://www.upcominghorrorrmovies.com)
- [www.horror.com](http://www.horror.com)
- [www.allhorrorfilms.com](http://www.allhorrorfilms.com)
- [buried.com](http://buried.com)

## Thought Questions

- 1) What attracts teens to horror movies?
- 2) Does the watching of horror movies (filled with gore, etc.) negatively contribute to teen development?
- 3) Are most teens mature enough to realize that horror movies are just that—movies?

# Teen Movies

## A History

By Rebecca Brodegard

As long as movies have been around, teenagers have been crowded in the audience. Movies had a very humble beginning. In the early 1900s, penny arcades had machines called kinetoscopes, which, for a penny, showed a short film. These short films grew in length, and as a result, the arcade owners developed nickelodeons. They set out chairs and charged a nickel to view these films. Parents believed that this activity was a crude morality destroyer, but that didn't stop the kids. As movies grew, teenagers began attending the most frequently with their friends, and movies began to be a part of the dating scene. Movies also began to be the model for how teenagers wanted to live. Teenage girls sought for the perfect skin and figures of the actresses; boys sought for the charm and suaveness the actors portrayed.

The Depression launched movies into the big time. The automobile gave those in the country a means of getting to the movies. Gangster films and musical comedies were a hit. Teenage actors began to emerge. The most popular were Mickey Rooney (Andy Hardy films) and Judy Garland (*The Wizard of Oz*). Most films involving teenagers were happy and light.

The 1940s saw another surge of teenage attendance at the movies. The majority went at least once a week; many went two or three times. Hollywood responded and created what are now called "bobby-soxer" films. They were set in upper-middle class suburban towns and the teens in them were happy and innocent. They showed a type of happy existence even with World War II raging overseas.

The 1950s was the breakout decade for teen films. These movies began to confront real issues and real teenage problems, like juvenile delinquency. Movies like *Rebel Without A Cause* and *The Wild One* made stars out of Marlon Brando and James Dean. They also made the jeans/leather jacket look popular. Scary science fiction films and "B" movies were popular around this decade, leading to today's horror films.

The 1960s brought about the beach party pictures. These movies were fun and comedic. The girls wore bikinis and the boys could usually surf. The 1970s was not a decade for teen films. Some great horror films came around this time, but most teens enjoyed the movies that their parents were also watching. Some classics from this decade are *Superman*, *The Godfather*, and *Saturday Night Fever*.

The 1980s saw an explosion of teenage movies; it could even be argued that this was the best decade for teenage movies. Not only did the movies talk about teenagers; they starred teenagers and addressed real teenage problems. John Hughes was the most popular director of movies dealing with teenagers. Most of his movies starred "the brat pack," a group of actors that were friends on and off the screen (see Spotlight). Comedies made a comeback for teenagers, some cruder than others, and horror films were also popular. Some of the prevailing movies of the day were *The Breakfast Club*, *Sixteen Candles*, *Better Off Dead*, National Lampoon movies, and many others.

The 1990s to the present have built on the '80s foundation. Teenage actors are still playing a major role in the movies for teens today. Teen movies still address real teen problems, like popularity, sex, drugs, pregnancy, etc. Blockbusters have caught the attention of teens as well. *Titanic* wasn't only an epic onscreen but an epic in the hearts of teenage girls. Comedies are still popular with teenagers and the all-prevalent horror films. More recently, the market has turned a little toward pre-teens and early teens.

## Three Decades of Teen Movies

### 1980s

*Back to the Future*  
*Better Off Dead*  
*The Breakfast Club*  
*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*  
*Pretty In Pink*  
*Sixteen Candles*  
*St. Elmo's Fire*  
*Weird Science*  
*Some Kind of Wonderful*  
*Porky's*  
*The Outsiders*

### 1990s

*Clueless*  
*10 Things I Hate About You*  
*Never Been Kissed*  
*American Pie*  
*Titanic*  
*William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*  
*The Wedding Singer*

### 2000–Now

*Bring It On*  
*Dude, Where's My Car*  
*Legally Blonde*  
*A Walk to Remember*  
*Save The Last Dance*  
*The Lizzie Maguire Movie*  
*Spider-Man (& sequels)*  
*A Knight's Tale*  
*Mean Girls*  
*Napoleon Dynamite*  
*High School Musical (& sequels)*  
*Hairspray*  
*Take the Lead*  
Harry Potter series  
*Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*  
*Epic Movie*  
*Twilight*  
*Step It Up*  
*17 Again*

Entertainment Weekly has released a list of their top 50 teen movies. View it at: [www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,1532588,00.html](http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,1532588,00.html)

## Spotlight: The Brat Pack

The Brat Pack refers to a group of teenage actors in the 1980s that were friends on and off the screen. When talking about the Brat Pack, the actors that are most likely involved are Emilio Estevez, Anthony Michael Hall, Rob Lowe, Andrew McCarthy, Judd Nelson, Molly Ringwald, and Ally Sheedy. They worked on some of the most popular teenage movies of the 1980s. Most of these movies were directed by John Hughes (1950–2009). Their biggest hits were *The Breakfast Club*, *St. Elmo's Fire*, *Sixteen Candles*, and *Pretty In Pink*. There are definitely more movies they starred in, but these were the most popular and influential. Their chemistry on the screen was amazing. The Brat Pack tapped into the true teenage sentiments of the day, making teenagers relate to what was happening on the screen. Off the screen, these actors lived life to the fullest with drugs and sex scandals. Each actor tried a "solo" career, tried to make movies without their fellow brat-packers, but most failed in the attempt. Today, you will occasionally see Emilio Estevez or Rob Lowe, but most have had their fame and are out of the public eye. Although they have parted ways and broken friendships, they have left a legacy of really good teenage movies that we still enjoy today.

## Keeping Up

- Hollywood Teen Movies: [www.hollywoodteenmovies.com](http://www.hollywoodteenmovies.com)  
Offers the past and most recent popular teen movies.
- MTV: [www.mtv.com](http://www.mtv.com)  
Includes a link for movies.
- [www.teenhollywood.com](http://www.teenhollywood.com)
- Teen Choice Award winners: [www.teenchoiceawards.com](http://www.teenchoiceawards.com)
- Check Local theaters—if it's starring a teenager, teenagers will most likely flock to it.

## Thought Questions

- 1) What common elements are in popular teen movies?
- 2) Are those elements similar to or different from the common elements found in books for teen readers?

# Pop Music

By Rebecca Brodegard

Pop music (short for popular music) has been around for ages. It is the music that is listened to by the vast majority of people. The style of pop music has changed over the years. Despite the change, pop music has always had a very simple melody and a beat that you want to tap your foot to. It's music that easily "gets stuck in your head" and is easy to sing along to. Pop music is a general term that can blanket any musical style that holds the public's attention.

Pop music had its beginnings with the invention of the phonograph. Music could now be carried into every home, instead of people making music themselves. Bands could now be brought to the masses. The 1900s were filled with ragtime, barbershop quartets, and brass bands. The 1920s brought Jazz and dance filled rhythms to the pop scene. The 1940s consisted of the Big Band, with artists like Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, and Benny Goodman. Bing Crosby was a huge hit and the further rise in Jazz brought Frank Sinatra and Nat "King" Cole to the stage. Rock 'n' Roll came around in the 1950s with Elvis Presley, but old greats like Nat King Cole remained in the spotlight.

The 1960s experienced a breakthrough for pop music. The face of the industry changed with the emergence of The Beatles. The British rock band gained the biggest following pop music had ever known. Along with Elvis Presley, rock 'n' roll became the most popular music in the world. Rock 'n' roll still continues today to make an impact on contemporary pop music. The '60s also brought R&B to the spotlight, with groups like The Temptations, The Four Tops, and Diana Ross & The Supremes.

The 1970s continued with rock's domination of the charts. The Beatles broke up, but Simon & Garfunkel and Fleetwood Mac picked up the spotlight. The Carpenters made softer rock well known while heavier rock came from Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd. Disco was the pop music of the clubs while soul music kept its presence with The Jackson 5 and Gladys Knight & the Pips.

In the 1980s, pop's sound changed a bit. Music was created for the sole purpose of appealing to the masses. The two biggest names to emerge from this decade are Michael Jackson and Madonna. Heavy metal came into prominence with groups like Guns N' Roses, Motley Crue, and Whitesnake. Power pop emerged, which became a heavier rock version on the pop music Jackson and Madonna were creating. Power pop is shown with groups like Duran Duran and the Culture Club. Rap also was starting to emerge into the pop scene with Run DMC and LL Cool J.

The 1990s was the decade of women, rap, country, and alternative. Women broke out and the diva was now queen. Women like Jewel, Alanis Morissette, Whitney Houston, and Sarah McLachlan ruled the charts. Rap exploded and spread out of the ghettos. Country rose in prominence with LeAnn Rimes, the Dixie Chicks, and Clint Black. Alternative made it big with U2, Green Day, Stone Temple Pilots, and many more—a continuation of the power pop. The '90s was also the age of boy bands, like the Backstreet Boys and NSync.

Today, pop is still a continuation of the '90s. Rap and R&B rule the charts, with some power pop and rock making its appearance. Pop will continue to change as the public's, and especially teenager's, tastes change. Today's popular are tomorrow's forgotten.

## Who's Who in Pop

### 1980s

Michael Jackson~  
 Madonna\*  
 Whitney Houston~  
 New Kids On the Block  
 Debbie Gibson  
 Prince~  
 Cyndi Lauper  
 Bryan Adams  
 A-HA  
 Janet Jackson\*  
 U2\*  
 INXS

### 1990s

Mariah Carey\*  
 Jewel\*  
 Alanis Morissette\*  
 Sarah McLachlan\*  
 Boyz II Men  
 The Spice Girls  
 Backstreet Boys  
 Ricky Martin  
 Jennifer Lopez  
 Enrique Iglesias  
 Usher  
 Britney Spears\*  
 NSync  
 Brandy

### 2000–Now

Beyonce  
 Evanescence  
 Maroon5  
 OutKast  
 Black Eyed Peas  
 John Mayer  
 Avril Lavigne  
 Sheryl Crow  
 Kelly Clarkson  
 Ashlee Simpson  
 Rihanna  
 Chris Brown  
 Carrie Underwood  
 Natasha Bedingfield  
 Jonas Brothers  
 Lady GaGa  
 Rob Thomas  
 Jason Mraz

\* indicates still popular today  
 ~indicates popular through '90s  
 (This list isn't complete. Look to references in "Keeping Up" for more complete lists.)

## Spotlight: Madonna



Madonna Louise Veronica Ciccone was born on August 16, 1958 near Detroit, Michigan. She went to New York in 1977 where she studied ballet and took some modeling jobs. From 1979–1980, Madonna participated in two bands as lead singer. A demo tape found it's way to Sire Records and Madonna was signed on in 1982. She began her career by releasing two singles that hit it big on the club scene. Her first album *Madonna* was released in 1983. Her second, and more successful, album *Like a Virgin* launched Madonna in the big time. Every single from the album hit number one on the charts. She released 3 more albums in the '80s; all sold millions of copies. She raised controversy in 1992 when she released her book *Sex* and the subsequent album *Erotica*. She had always been known for her blatant sexuality, but with these two releases she went over the top. She kept up this persona for a few years. In 1995 she wanted to play in the movie *Evita*, so she started to tone down her image. She gained the part, and then became a mother by the end of filming. Her albums since then have focused more on an R&B/techno sound. Throughout her career, Madonna has also been involved in movies. Her successful ones include *Desperately Seeking Susan*, *A League of Their Own*, and *Evita*. Madonna is now in her forties, a mother of two, and still as popular as ever. She continues to produce albums and continues to be a great force in the pop music scene.

Official site: [www.madonna.com](http://www.madonna.com)

## Keeping Up

- Billboard's top lists — [www.billboard.com/bb/index.jsp](http://www.billboard.com/bb/index.jsp)
- Website — [www.popculturemadness.com/Music/](http://www.popculturemadness.com/Music/) (has lists by month and year of the top songs and artists)
- MTV — watch the channel or visit the website at [www.mtv.com](http://www.mtv.com)
- RollingStone — magazine and website at [www.rollingstone.com](http://www.rollingstone.com)
- Book: Whitburn, Joel. *Joel Whitburn Presents A Century of Pop Music: Year-By-Year Top 40 Rankings of the Songs & Artists That Shaped a Century.* (1999)

Movies	Thought Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Josie and The Pussycats</li> <li>• That Thing You Do</li> <li>• La Bamba</li> <li>• Selena</li> <li>• Grease</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What other ways for keeping up in pop music can you discover?</li> <li>2) What kind of a teen network could you establish to keep up?</li> </ol>



# Downloading Music

## A History

By Rebecca Brodegard

Downloading music from the Internet is a fairly recent phenomenon. It all started in 1999 with the creation of Napster by college student Shawn Fanning. This program allowed people to share MP3's (compressed audio files) over the Internet. Napster's popularity boomed, particularly with teens who were large consumers of music with a tradition of sharing music via mix tapes and burning CDS. It seemed to work for everyone, and had its roots in traditional teen behavior. You got the song you wanted without having to spend \$15 for the CD. Who could pass up free stuff?

Napster's clout didn't last long. Six months after its release, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) sued Napster for copyright infringement. The site still stayed operational throughout its many legal battles and for a while the publicity made it more popular. In April 2000 Metallica sued Napster for copyright infringement and the court battle continued to grow. In February 2001, Napster offered a \$1 billion to the record industry to drop the suit. The industry refused. The site had to close down in September 2002 from bankruptcy.

While Napster was encountering problems, similar programs arose to fit the need for online file sharing. Various other sites and programs popped up: KaZaA, Morpheus, Grokster, and others. These various programs seemed to avoid being sued by keeping a low profile and sometimes requiring their users to pay a membership fee.

During 2003, the recording industry went after Internet service providers (ISPs), wanting the ISPs to disclose users who illegally downloaded music from the Internet. The main target of this attack, Verizon, fought back, appealing a lower court's decision to reveal their users. Verizon won with a decision by an appeals court in late 2003, allowing them to keep user's information private, and the recording industry backed off. This decision allowed the alternate file sharing programs to continue. During this time high profile arrests of teens that had downloaded music illegally also made news.

A new way of downloading music legitimately arose in 2003 when Steve Jobs, Apple Computer's CEO, announced the iTunes Music Store. iTunes allows anyone to download a song for \$0.99, or a whole CD for \$9.99 with a few exceptions. The record companies could not say no, and DRM (Digital Rights Management) limiting sharing helped sweeten the deal. Here was a way to allow people to get music from the Internet in a legitimate, cheap way. Other services like iTunes have begun to compete. As the popularity of iPods and MP3 players grew, buying and finding music online is a more convenient way to get music to these players. iTunes has expanded the offerings to video, shows, and movies – also for reduced pricing and watchable on iPods and Nanos. In the past year there is a move toward DRM (Digital Rights Management) free music. This would allow multiple copies without copy protection. iTunes and Amazon are already offering a limited number of songs that are DRM free.

Many of the other illegal services are still operating. As long as there is a demand for these services, they will always be around. However the lawsuits, public awareness campaigns, and high profile arrests have changed the relationship to teens and downloading music, with fewer teens illegally downloading music – or at least admitting to it. Where is the fight for free music versus copyright protection going? Only time will tell.

## What's Legal

- Apple iTunes
- Amazon
- Napster 2.0
- Wal-Mart's eMusic
- Yahoo
- MusicMatch

Articles about legal digital download sites can be found at [ezinearticles.com/?expert=John\\_Rivers](http://ezinearticles.com/?expert=John_Rivers)

## What's Questionable

- Sites that use the term "file-sharing"
- Morpheus
- KaZaA
- Limewire
- Aquisition

## How To Identify an Illegal Download Service:

- Site says it has unlimited downloads but doesn't offer a list of songs.
- Site keeps taking you to the "sign-up" page
- Uses the term "file-sharing"
- Check with [www.pro-music.org](http://www.pro-music.org) to check the legality of your downloading service

## Articles to Help Avoid Piracy

- [www.microsoft.com/piracy/](http://www.microsoft.com/piracy/) for illegal software.
- [www.riaa.com/physicalpiracy.php](http://www.riaa.com/physicalpiracy.php) for help with music piracy.

## Spotlight: iPod

When Napster hit the scene in 1999, MP3 players began to find their way into the market. These players are small and allow the user to have music wherever they go. These MP3 players were dominating the market, until the iPod came along.

The first iPod was announced in October of 2001. It came in with a price tag of \$399, but it offered 5 GB hard drive (enough for 1,000 songs) and used a much better system of storing and playing songs. It only worked with Macs, but developers were quick to develop platform compatibility.

The following few years brought iPod to the top. Developers made the player compatible with PCs, introduced models with bigger storage space, and changed the look. iPods eventually became smaller and cheaper and took the MP3 player market by storm. The iPod continues to dominate MP3 player sales. At least 2 or 3 new versions of the iPod appear every year.

In 2005 Apple expanded their market. They announced the new iPod Shuffle, a player the size of a pack of gum and only costing a mere \$99. This player changed Apple's iPod industry because it was a way for everyone who couldn't afford a \$300 player to have an iPod. In 2006 Apple innovated again with the release of the iPod Nano. Like the regular iPod, it has video capability, yet is smaller than most of its predecessors. 2007 brought even more changes. The Shuffle became smaller and cheaper. The iPod Touch appeared. With a touch screen, it has Internet capability. The iPod is no longer just for music.

What is in the future for the iPod? We all just have to wait and see. Keep up with iPod's changing face at [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)

## Teens and Music: Some Fiction Titles

- *Just Listen* by Sarah Dessen (2006)
- *Diva* by Alex Flinn (2006)
- *Born to Rock* by Gordon Korman (2006)
- *The Last Days* by Scott Westerfeld (2006)
- *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist* by Rachel Cohn and David Levithan (2006)
- *King Dork* by Frank Protman (2006)

## Thought Questions

- 1) What legal issues should concern those who download music?
- 2) How does the copyright law effect the sharing of music?
- 3) What role does the library play in teaching teens about copyright and music downloads?

# **I Want My MTV**

## Teens and Television

By Rebecca Brodegard

From the beginning of television, teens have been engaged with its content. Up through the 1990s, watching television was more of a family activity. Teens did not necessarily watch TV by themselves. Most television shows were directed toward the family without trying to target teenagers specifically. In the 1980s popular shows consisted of *The Cosby Show*, *Miami Vice*, *Magnum P.I.*, and many others. But a new kind of television emerged in the 1980s with the creation of MTV.

MTV went on the air on August 1, 1981. It was a cable station that showed music videos twenty-four hours a day. As the station grew in popularity, it started to create television shows, but it still concentrated more on the music. The station played the popular songs and videos of the day. It started to target teenagers exclusively, playing "their kind" of music and directing all programming to the age group. MTV took off, especially with their "I want my MTV" campaign.

By the very late 1980s and early 1990s, the rest of television saw the potential of a teenage audience and started to create shows for and about teens. There was a mixture of comedies, dramas, and cartoons that arose to target a teen audience. Comedies included *Saved By the Bell*, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, *Boy Meets World*, and *Sister, Sister*. Dramas included *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Melrose Place*, *Felicity*, and *My So-Called Life*. Cartoons included the ever popular *The Simpsons*, *Beavis and Butt-head*, *South Park*, and *Daria*. No matter the genre, each show, in its own way, addressed the problems teens faced everyday. They discussed issues from sex to drugs, dealing with parents to homework, friendships to relationships; whatever teens lived through, one of these shows would talk about it.

Teens also began watching soap operas, which began incorporating younger actors and storylines involving teens to keep their new audience interested. On the younger end of the spectrum, Cartoon Network began developing animated series for teens, including *Teen Titans* and *Toonami* shows. In the late '90s and early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the WB made a name for itself producing prime time television directed mostly at teenagers with *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *7<sup>th</sup> Heaven*, *Charmed*, and *Dawson's Creek*. The WB and UPN merged into The CW in 2006.

A new genre of television has emerged that teenagers have caught hold of: reality shows. It all began with CBS's *Survivor* and Fox's *American Idol*. They both were an instant hit with people of all ages. Now reality shows dot the primetime spots: *The Bachelor*, *The Amazing Race*, *Dancing with the Stars*, and so much more. MTV, whose programming now consists of more shows than music videos, has been doing versions of reality TV for years. Their series *The Real World* has been on for more than twenty seasons, and MTV continues to explore a variety of reality programming. So do other cable stations—most notably Bravo with two types of series: talent shows such as *Project Runway* (now on Lifetime), and the *Real Housewives of...* Series, including a NYC teen show airing in the summer of 2009.

Disney has also experienced success in recent years focusing on younger teens. The original television movie *High School Musical* led to two sequels, one in the theater, and numerous high schools across the country performing the show at their school. Miley Cyrus' show *Hannah Montana* has had similar success, turning the star into a popular celebrity. Recent stars from Disney include the Jonas Brothers, a popular music group, Demi Lovato (*Camp Rock*), Serena Gomez (*Wizards of Waverly Place*), and Ashley Tisdale.

### Fox

- The Simpsons
- So You Think You Can Dance
- American Idol

### C.W.

- Smallville
- Gossip Girl
- One Tree Hill
- Supernatural
- America's Next Top Model
- 90210 (the remake)

### NBC

- The Office
- Saturday Night Live
- Heroes
- Days of our Lives

### CBS

- Survivor
- Ghost Whisperer

### ABC

- Grey's Anatomy
- Lost
- Ugly Betty

### MTV

- Real World
- From G's to Gents
- The Hills

### Other

- South Park (Comedy Central)
- High School Musical (Disney, more of a made-for-TV movie)
- Degrassi, The Next Generation (The N)
- Hannah Montana (Disney)
- The Secret Life of the American Teenager (ABC Family)

## Spotlight: The Simpsons

The Simpsons, the cartoon family that has taken America by storm, first appeared on the Tracy Ullman Show in 1989. The cartoon consists of a lower-middle class family living in Springfield, a "typical" suburb. Each family member has his or her own quirks. Homer, the father, likes donuts, beer, and works at the town's nuclear power plant. Marge, the mother, loves having a clean household and raising her three children. Bart has been labeled a "punk" by many; he loves to skateboard and is a serious underachiever at school. Lisa is extremely smart and plays the saxophone. Maggie sucks on her pacifier and tries to walk, falling every three steps or so. The town of Springfield is full of many different characters, each with their own unique characteristics that make The Simpsons an interesting array of personalities.

The success of the Simpsons has been worldwide. It is the longest running prime time cartoon show ever. After 19 seasons the cartoon continues to be one of the most popular shows on television. The show addresses real family problems and, despite their many dysfunctional moments, the Simpsons always work things out, showing a truly human quality to their cartoon lives. This is what has kept everyone laughing and watching all these years.

## Keeping Up

What is popular on television including what teens are watching:

- TV Guide online: [www.tvguide.com](http://www.tvguide.com)
- MTV: [www.mtv.com](http://www.mtv.com)
- Major network's websites: [abc.go.com](http://abc.go.com), [www.nbc.com](http://www.nbc.com), [www.cbs.com](http://www.cbs.com), [www.fox.com](http://www.fox.com)
- The N (a partner of Nickelodeon which is directed toward teenagers): [www.the-n.com](http://www.the-n.com)

Teens are watching television online – check out [www.hulu.com](http://www.hulu.com), or the "official websites" of networks.

## Thought Questions

- 1) What themes tend to run through teen TV?
- 2) Is there a difference between what young men and young women watch?
- 3) What cultures are represented in teen TV?

# Rap and Hip-Hop

## The History

By Rebecca Brodegard

Rap, or the synonymous term Hip-Hop, is a unique African-American form of music with chanted, rhyming lyrics and a strong background beat. Rap's roots include African tribal music, the blues, jazz, and soul. It developed in the inner cities, mainly in New York City where DJ Kool Herc brought the influences of reggae and dub poets with him from Jamaica. Hip-hop culture began to take shape, encompassing parties, clothes, and dancing (i.e. break dancing), as well as the music. Rap stayed in the inner city for some time. Record companies felt rap was a passing fad and refused to sign emerging rap artists. In 1979 Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" was an instant success, selling more than 500,000 copies and rose to number one on the pop charts. Rap had hit the mainstream. Rap's popularity spread throughout the country, bringing the hip-hop culture with it.

There are six types of rap: old school, playa, message, gangsta, battle, and alternative.

- Old school encompasses the early, breakthrough rap. It is "generally enthusiastic and upbeat in both music and message."<sup>1</sup>
- Playa rappers are those who rap to make money and live the high life. Some rappers labeled as playa rappers include L.L. Cool J, Run D.M.C., and Fresh Prince (Will Smith).
- Message rap is full of political statements and warnings against drugs and gangs. These rappers have a message and try to use their music to talk to their teenage audience.
- Gangsta rap became the most controversial type. It is full of violence and obscenity, telling of life on the streets with guns, women, gang wars, drugs, alcohol, and more. Gangsta rappers lived just as dangerously as their songs. Some examples include: Tupac Shakur and the Notorious B.I.G. died violently; Snoop Doggy Dog was accused of being an accessory to murder.
- Battle rap is on-the-street freestyle rap. Two rappers face off and the crowd decides who is better. This style of rap is best shown in the movie *8 Mile*.
- Alternative rap is the newest form of rap to emerge. It is a bit "softer" and the lyrics are more stream-of-conscious.

Even from its beginnings, rap has brought up controversy everywhere it goes. Recently, rap has been accused of promoting sex, drugs, gangs, and even murder. The most controversial rapper of the day is Eminem. His first album contained songs that spoke out against homosexuals, spoke of abusing women, and promoted a life on the streets. Parents hated him; kids loved him

For those who believed that rap was just a fad and unimportant were proved wrong at the 2006 Oscars. Not only was the rap song "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp" nominated in the best song category, it took the honors. Rap has imprinted itself on American culture for good and is here to stay.

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<sup>1</sup> Haskins, James. *One nation under a groove: Rap music and its roots*. New York: Hyperion Books, 2000.

## Who's Who

### 1980s

Sugarhill Gang  
 Grandmaster Flash  
 Run D.M.C. (first playa rappers)  
 L.L. Cool J  
 Jazzy Jeff and Fresh Prince  
 M.C. Hammer  
 KRS-One (message rap)  
 N.W.A. (Niggaz With Attitude)  
 Ice-T  
 Ice Cube  
 Salt-n-Pepa  
 Queen Latifah \*  
 Vanilla Ice  
 Beastie Boys\*

### 1990s

2 Live Crew  
 Snoop Doggy Dog\*  
 2Pac (Tupac Shakur)\*  
 Notorious B.I.G.  
 Sean "Puffy" Combs\*  
 Wu-Tang Clan\*  
 Lil' Kim  
 Missy Elliott\*  
 Busta Rhymes  
 Lauryn Hill\*-alternative rap  
 Dr. Dre

### Today

Eminem  
 OutKast  
 Eve  
 50-Cent  
 Black Eyed Peas  
 Gnarls Barkley  
 Jay-Z  
 Rick Ross  
 Jurassic 5  
 Ludacris  
 Lil Wayne  
 Kanye West  
 Mos Def  
 Asher Roth  
 Sean Kingston

\* indicates still popular today

## Spotlight: Eminem



Marshal Mathers, aka Eminem or Slim Shady, was born on October 17, 1972 in Kansas City, Missouri. His childhood was spent moving between Detroit, Michigan and Kansas City, finally settling in Detroit when he was 12. Eminem changed high schools a lot, keeping him on the outside from his peers. Rap, particularly gangsta rap, became his outlet. He dropped out of school and worked different minimum wage jobs. Eminem went into the underground rap scene, trying to become part of the music he loved so much. The movie *8 Mile* is a loose autobiographical sketch of this period of his life. He released an album, *Infinite*, in 1996 but it was rejected. He started to work on his rapping style, doing what he wanted to do. He produced Slim Shady EP—his own album done his way. He went to the Rap Olympics in 1997 in Los Angeles, winning second place in the freestyle competition. Eminem made his way onto a radio show, where he caught the attention of Dr. Dre, a rapper and rap producer. Eminem's career took off from there. His record *The Slim Shady LP* debuted in 1999 and shot straight up the charts. Eminem became the most popular, and most controversial, rap artist of his day. He has since released many more albums including *The Marshall Mathers LP*, *The Eminem Show*, and, in 2009, *Relapse*.

Official Website: [www.eminem.com](http://www.eminem.com)

## Keeping Up

- Book: Haskins, James. *One Nation Under a Groove: Rap Music and its Roots*. Hyperion, 2000.
- Magazine: *The Vibe* — also at: [www.vibe.com](http://www.vibe.com)
- Magazine: *The Source: The Magazine of Hip-Hop Music, Culture & Politics* — also at: [www.thesource.com](http://www.thesource.com)
- Magazine: *M-TV* — also at: [www.mtv.com](http://www.mtv.com)

### Movies

- *8 Mile*
- *Boyz N the Hood*
- *Get Rich or Die Tryin*
- *Snipes*

### Thought Question

- 1) What political as well as cultural statements come from the hip-hop performers and have they had any impact?

# Alternative Music

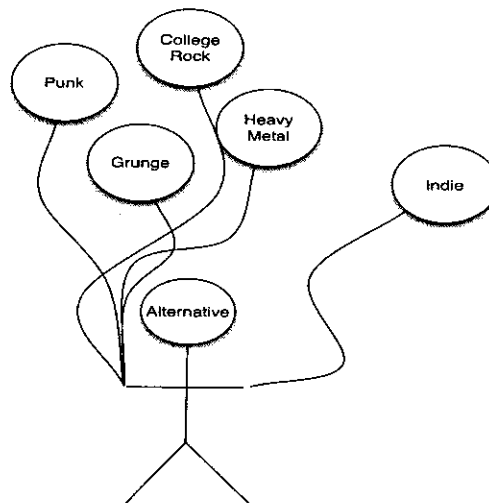
By Rebecca Brodegard

Alternative rock is the result of both grunge and heavy metal music. In the 1960s–1970s, there was a movement away from the public eye. Bands like The Velvet Underground and MC5 were combining intellectual lyrics with musical expression that were a bit different from the rock of the age. This movement developed into punk music, giving alternative music a more accessible format. Punk put the music into 3-chord progressions, simplifying it so anyone could learn and play it. Alternative music went through another change in the 1980s. It spread to college radio with bands like R.E.M., The Replacements, and Sonic Head. Thus it became “college rock” and stayed mostly underground until the release of Nirvana’s album *Nevermind*.

Nirvana brought to the spotlight a new type of music: grunge. “While previously ‘alternative’ was simply an umbrella term for a diverse collection of underground rock bands, Nirvana and similar groups fashioned it into a distinct style of guitar-based rock which combined elements of punk and [heavy] metal; their creation met with considerable commercial success.”<sup>1</sup> As popularity grew throughout the 1990s, many different groups did not agree with the new success of alternative music. Indie rock was formed. Indie artists returned to the original roots of alternative music, preferring to stay away from the public eye.

The term “alternative” encompasses many different kinds of bands. They vary from heavier material, like Linkin Park, to a bit softer style, like R.E.M. Today, alternative music can be found in garage bands and popular artists. Many alternative artists can be found on the Top 40 lists of today.

Alternative has come a long way, from the underground, garage punk bands to the mainstream pop scene. Wherever it is, it continues to change the way rock is created and performed.



<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternative\\_rock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternative_rock)

## Who's Who

### 1980s

R.E.M.\*  
Talking Heads  
Sonic Youth  
Replacements  
The Cure\*  
They Might Be Giants\*  
Jane's Addiction  
Oingo Boingo

### 1990s

Nirvana  
Nine inch Nails  
Stone Temple Pilots  
Blind Melon  
Green Day\*  
Beck\*  
Pearl Jam\*  
Korn\*  
U2\*  
Smashing Pumpkins\*  
Alanis Morissette\*  
Hole  
Tori Amos\*  
Sarah McLoughlin\*  
Weezer\*

### 2000–Now

Blink 182  
Linkin Park  
311  
Dave Matthews  
Good Charlotte  
Godsmack  
Rage Against the Machines  
Liz Phair  
Evanescence  
All-American Rejects  
AudioSlave  
Coldplay  
Fall Out Boy  
Kings of Leon  
3OH!3

\* indicates still touring and releasing albums today

## Spotlight: Nirvana



Nirvana began when lead singer Kurt Cobain and bass guitar player Chris Novoselic joined together in Seattle, Washington. Their first album, *Bleach*, was released in 1989. It hit big in the underground Seattle scene. Nirvana was doing new things with music. They drew on the existing punk and harder rock for its musical style. The band's popularity grew in Seattle and signed with a new record company. Their album, *Nevermind*, was released in October 1991. It was a major hit. The album's lead song "Smells Like Teen Spirit" became the theme song to many teenagers. Grunge, along with alternative music, was thrown to the spotlight. Nirvana had a way of combining depressing lyrics with catchy, upbeat music. Despite the band's fear of the spotlight, they were very much in it. The band became a cult classic. *Nevermind* sold 5 million copies and the band toured around the world. Nirvana's third album, *In Utero*, was released in 1993. The band remained as popular as ever. Tragedy struck in April 1994 when lead singer, Kurt Cobain, committed suicide in his Seattle home. His suicide note indicated his hatred of being in the spotlight and not enjoying his music as he used to. Fans idolized Cobain and he remains an icon to this day. Nirvana's music, although hated by many parents, changed alternative music forever, and is argued to be one of the best bands in history.

## Keeping Up

- *Alternative Music Almanac* by A. Cross
- MTV Magazine or website: [www.mtv.com](http://www.mtv.com)
- Book: *A to X of Alternative Music* by Steve Taylor
- iTunes Music Store: See what's selling

## Thought Questions

- 1) Is there anyone who can really define and identify alternative when they hear it?
- 2) A constant in popular music is change. What is your estimate of how long this type of music will last and in fact, are there already hints of the future?



## Mad About Magazines

Magazines have always been a reading staple of teens. However, the market has been changing in the past several years with fewer teen magazines being published in print form, and more moving into digital format exclusively. In today's market it is harder for print magazines to sustain readership, an interesting contrast with teens who, in 2003, cited magazines as their second favorite reading material.

In 1911 *Boy's Life* magazine was first published, eventually becoming the official magazine of The Boy Scouts of America. However, the first magazine to be published with a target audience of teenagers was *Seventeen* in 1944. *Seventeen* remains the widest read teen girl fashion magazine despite the growing competition and the success of other publications throughout the last fifty years.

In general teen girls read fashion magazines targeted to their audience. While you will often find that older teens read adult fashion magazines, teens remain loyal to the magazines that are published just for them. Despite the dominance of *Seventeen*, other magazines have been popular. *Sassy*, first published in 1988, has been credited with influencing teen fashion magazines by bringing a feminist sensibility and "street creed" to teen magazines. *Sassy* folded after editor Jane Pratt left in the mid-nineties, and the tone of the articles changed to a more traditional girl's magazine. Also left beside the road have been *Teen* magazine (2002) and *YM* magazine (2004, now online at ym.com) despite being around over thirty years. Recently the trend has been towards "little sister" magazines such as *CosmoGirl!* (online only), *Elle Girl* (online only), and *Teen Vogue*. Furthermore, teen fashion magazines are developing to meet niche markets, including ethnic markets. *Teen Latinitas* (online only), *Blackgirl Magazine*, and *Superonda* are examples of magazines marketed to meet the needs of traditionally ignored minorities. Another marketing niche has been Christian teens with magazines such as *Brio* and *Guidposts for Teens*.

Boys lean more towards subject-related magazines. Magazines developed and marketed to male teen readers have not been successful. However, many magazines marketed for adult males are successful with teens. These include sports magazines such as *Sports Illustrated*, music magazines such as *Spin*, and alternative sports magazines such as the Thrasher franchise. One current magazine with a primary teen male readership is the hip-hop title *The Source*. Another niche market successful with teen males (and "gaming girls") is the gaming magazine, like *GamePro* and *Electronic Gaming Monthly*.

### Online Magazines

The Internet has changed the face of publishing teen magazines. Most magazines have online companion sites, or have begun publishing exclusively online. Companion sites have similar content to their print companions, but the dynamic nature of the web allows for updated content. There are two types of e-zines, or digital magazines: original sites and those developed from a print source that are now exclusively online. One successful example of an original site is gURL.com. gUrl's website has quizzes, dispenses advice, conducts polls, provides a moderated online community, and spotlights interviews with different women. Its success has allowed it to branch into publishing books. Another type of e-zine allows teens to submit art or writing for teen comment and criticism. *SpankMag* has been online since 1995 and has evolved into a forum for teen and young adult postings that is peer moderated. *TeenInk* has both an online and print version and also allows teens to publish artwork and writing of all genres.

## ... And in other news

Not all teen magazines focus on fashion or hobbies. There are also teen news magazines, mostly published by Scholastic or Weekly Reader, and delivered through school classrooms. Some titles include:

- *Odyssey Magazine: Adventures in Sciences* (Ages 10–16).  
[www.odysseymagazine.com](http://www.odysseymagazine.com)
- *New York Times Upfront* (Ages 14–18). [www.scholastic.com/upfront/](http://www.scholastic.com/upfront/)
- *Junior Scholastic* (Ages 12–14).  
[www.scholastic.com/juniorscholastic/](http://www.scholastic.com/juniorscholastic/)
- *Science World* (Ages 12–18).  
[teacher.scholastic.com/products/classmags/scienceworld.htm](http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/classmags/scienceworld.htm)
- *Current Events* (Ages 12–16).  
[www.weeklyreader.com/teachers/current\\_events/](http://www.weeklyreader.com/teachers/current_events/)
- *Current Health* (Ages 12–18).  
[www.weeklyreader.com/teens/current\\_health/](http://www.weeklyreader.com/teens/current_health/)
- *Next Step Magazine: Your Life After High School* (Ages 15–18).  
[www.nextstepmagazine.com](http://www.nextstepmagazine.com)

### Teen Magazines Websites

- *Sister 2 Sister* —  
[www.s2smagazine.com](http://www.s2smagazine.com)
- *Ebony* — [www.ebony.com](http://www.ebony.com)
- *Latinitas* —  
[www.latinitas.com](http://www.latinitas.com)
- *Teen Ink* — A magazine written by teens. [www.teenink.com](http://www.teenink.com)
- *J14* — Celebrity gossip for tweens. [www.j-14.com](http://www.j-14.com)

## Spotlight: Magazines beyond Sassy

In 1988, *Sassy Magazine* entered the teen magazine world and brought with it a new perspective on the world of fashion—a feminist approach whose influence continues to live well past its 1994 demise. *Sassy* encouraged teens to examine their sexuality and to challenge sexism. Its influence brought the old guard to take note and revamp their magazines to return to a more wholesome image. *Seventeen* dropped their “make yourself beautiful for a guy” and “you must be thin to be popular” type of articles and have become more of a standard bearer for healthier female aspirations and images. Publishers began to realize that female readers were also interested in cars, humor, music, computer games, and all types of other topics. The websites for magazines are sometimes online versions of the magazine and other times are merely an informational site providing information about the publication. Many sites invite you to sample their magazine either online or by requesting a sample copy.

### Alternative Titles

There is active debate and concern in regards to the negative body image and messages fashion magazines send to teen girls. Several magazines have been developed to offer positive alternatives to the thin, white, perfect models with their overt message of sexuality. For younger girls *New Moon* magazine is ad free, multicultural, and guided by an editorial board of young girls. *Girl's Life* for 10–15-year-olds attempts to achieve a balance of fashion, advice, and informational stories with a more positive image than the traditional magazines.

For more information on the debate visit:  
[www.mindonthemedia.com](http://www.mindonthemedia.com)

### Thought Question

- 1) What magazines are teens close to you interested in? Why?

# Celebrities

By Rebecca Brodegard

We all know who celebrities are. They act in our movies, play the sports we watch, populate our television shows, and sing the music we like. Basically, anyone who gets society's attention in the media is a celebrity. They are young, old, skinny, fat, wild, and calm. So how do celebrities fit into the lives of teens? Open any teen magazine and you'll find out.

Celebrities influence the fashions that teenagers select. The celebrity images in magazines, on television, and at concerts and other public venues are watched closely and their choice of clothing is scrutinized. Magazines feature articles about dressing like the stars and even supply brand names and pricing information. Fashion trends begun on stage by teen idols are soon seen on teens from East to West.

The media barrage of information about the life stories and relationships of many celebrities bring the everyday lives of the celebrities into the world of teens, helping teens to make connections to the stars. All the information makes the stars normal people just like anyone else. Stars occasionally reveal parts of their personal life and those facts show up on television media shows or in teen magazines to be discussed by all who read or see the revelations.

Any actor that has a cute face is splashed all over media that is enjoyed by teenage girls. Girls may think a boy is cool and cute because he looks a little like Orlando Bloom. Teen males strive to emulate the celebrity look by copying hair styles, clothing, and, in some cases, attempting to develop skills held by their idol whether it be related to music, sports, or celebrity life in general. The life of a celebrity woman is followed by both male and female teens. The fashions, hairstyles, make-up, fitness levels, and general body image influence the perception of beauty held by many teen girls (and seem also to be the touchstone used by males to judge the looks of females). Products these celebrities endorse become products teens buy.

Teens, especially reluctant readers, might be drawn into reading through books dealing with these celebrities. Books about any one of these celebrities or about concerts, sports events, and so forth involving these celebrities, might be the factor that draws an adverse reader into a circle of literacy. Many of these celebrities and their popularity are short-lived and thus, books about the celebrity might also be short-lived, but their value for attracting the marginal reader might well be worth the expenditure.

Celebrities will continue to be tracked and followed by teenagers. They play an important role in how teens will act, what fads they'll follow, and what products they'll buy. Teenagers pay good money to see the stars they love, and stars appeal to teens for that very purpose. So, although individuals may come and go, celebrities are here to stay and will remain a strong influence on the teens to come.

The American Library Association (ALA) has used the attraction of teens to celebrities by creating their "ALA Celebrity Reads" project. Celebrities from the world of sports, music, and other venues are invited to pose and be photographed reading a book of their own choice. The photographs are then used to create a poster with only a single word, READ, as its message. These posters represent a powerful endorsement for reading. Find out more about the project by visiting the project's page on ALA's website at [www.ala.org/ala/issues/toolsandpub/keymessages/aboutalaab/celebrityreadfactsheet.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/issues/toolsandpub/keymessages/aboutalaab/celebrityreadfactsheet.cfm)

## Some Major Teen Celebrities

### Movies

Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen\*  
Lindsay Lohan  
Orlando Bloom  
Anne Hathaway  
Blake Lively  
Jessica Alba  
Robert Pattinson  
Kristen Stewart  
Shia LaBeouf

### Music

Beyonce  
Kelly Clarkson  
Hannah Montana (Miley Cyrus)\*  
Taylor Swift  
Mariah Carey  
John Mayer  
Justin Timberlake  
Jonas Brothers

### Sports

Lebron James  
David Beckham  
Tiger Woods  
Tony Hawk  
Shaun White  
Shawn Johnson

### Television

Paris Hilton  
Katherine Heigel\*  
Ashton Kutcher\*  
America Ferrera  
Ashley Tisdale\*  
Zac Efron  
Hayden Panettiere\*

### Disclaimer:

This page goes out of date very quickly. Stars are constantly coming into the spotlight and others quickly get out. Don't depend too much on the list above; look to "Keeping Up" to help stay current.

## Spotlight: Miley Cyrus



Disney Channel has become relevant in teens and tweens lives in the past few years. After a huge hit with *High School Musical*, they launched the sitcom *Hannah Montana* that has become a pop culture phenomenon. In the series, Hannah Montana is a huge pop star, living life as the normal, if geeky, teen Miley Stewart, and hiding her celebrity status. The actress playing Miley Stewart/Hannah Montana is Miley Cyrus, daughter of Billy Ray Cyrus ("Achy Breaky Heart") who also stars in *Hannah Montana*. Miley was born in 1992, making her a true teen star. In 2007, *Hannah Montana 2* was a #1 selling album. *Hannah Montana* hit the big screen in 2009. In 2008 Miley released a CD away from the *Hannah Montana* cover, titled *Breakout*. While *Hannah Montana* and the Disney Channel are geared more to tweens than teens, Miley has become a guilty pleasure for teens (and adults)

## Keeping Up

- Keep an eye on the teen magazines: who's on the cover, note the celebrities that consistently show up in the magazines.
- MTV—website, magazine, and TV
- Watch advertisements: anything that a teen can buy, identify products teen celebrities are endorsing

## Thought Questions

- 1) What additional celebrities could be added to the list included on this page?
- 2) How do celebrities influence young adult literature and other media?
- 3) In addition to ALA READ campaign, what are some other ways that teen celebrities might be used to promote reading?

## **The Kids are Alright... and So is Their Literature**

The notion of what it means to be a teenager has been portrayed in a variety of different ways by media, including news, movies, music, and television. Often teenagers are constructed as "the other," unfathomable to adults, a bundle of hormones that will do crazy things. This is not a new idea and has historical roots. In recent years teens have been demonized and deified, particularly in terms of technology. They are either digital natives, comfortable within the digital world who will and can produce works of art, social change, and/or change the notion of the workplace (Tapscott—Grown Up Digital), or they are lazy, play too many video games, and lack critical thinking skills (Bauerlein—The Dumbest Generation). Those who work with teens know that the truth is more complicated than stereotypical notions, that teens are people and that as such they resist simple categorization.

YA literature suffers from some of the same oversimplified construction in the media. Common themes include a focus on series and the lack of "quality," an outrage over sex that appears and the desire to protect "our children," and the "darkness" or grim nature of YA literature. In 2006 Naomi Wolfe published a criticism in the New York Times of the Gossip Girl and Clique series and managed to leave uniformed readers with the impression that this was all there was for teenage girls to read, ignoring a wide range of quality, complex YA literature available. ("Young Adult Fiction: Wild Things" [www.nytimes.com/2006/03/12/books/review/12wolf.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/12/books/review/12wolf.html)) In 2009 the Wall Street Journal published "It was, Like, All Dark and Stormy," discussing the themes of suicide, eating disorders, and dystopian universes in current YA fiction. Other recent articles and media constructions include Glenn Beck bemoaning the lack of books with strong male characters in 2008, as well as a more thoughtful and positive article from Margo Rabb in the New York Times (July 2008). ("I'm YA and I'm O.K." [www.nytimes.com/2008/07/20/books/review/Rabb-t.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/20/books/review/Rabb-t.html))

The oversimplified construction of YA literature by many adults as being exclusively series fiction and poorly written with questionable moral values has an inevitable role in the working life of those who work with teens, as does the stereotypes of teens embraced by the media. It is the working librarian who is often faced with the concerned and/or angry parent who questions the inclusion of books highlighted by the media in a library collection. Over the years this has included: Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys, Goosebumps, Sweet Valley High, Harry Potter, Gossip Girl, and The Clique. As may be evident from the list, these stereotypes and parental discussions are particularly true for librarians working with the ages we now refer to as tweens (ages 11–13).

As librarians and advocates for teens, awareness of brewing controversy and other media constructions is helpful. Having a well-reasoned response to such concerns, as well as a clear selection policy, at the ready can be particularly helpful. Knowing the answer to "Why do you have this on the shelf?" is an essential component of collection development. But this can also be viewed as an opportunity to advocate for teens and for YA literature. It is a chance to celebrate the diversity of available YA materials, to present titles that may be ignored by mainstream media but embraced by teens.

This is true in dealing with media constructions of teens themselves as well. To return to the example in the first paragraph, librarians working with teens are well

aware of the falseness of this particular dichotomy. While some teens are comfortable in the digital world, others are much less so. Some teens are fans of video games, others less so. This is of concern to the working librarian planning programming to support YA materials. Understanding the role video games play, and the benefits of games, may help alleviate criticism and introduce the adult public to a more positive construction of the experience. Recognizing the wide range of abilities and interests of teens regarding online experience can help when developing web sites and instructional programs.

Part of the role of understanding YA materials is understanding and being aware of the media myths of YA literature, particularly from those not as well versed as you will be/are. Part of the job is responding to and dispelling the myths. Staying aware of them will help you advocate for the diverse group of teens who walk through the library door.

### **Keeping Up**

Useful blogs for keeping up with current media articles about youth:

- [ypulse.com](http://ypulse.com)
- [bookshelvesofdoom.blogs.com](http://bookshelvesofdoom.blogs.com)
- [yzocaet.blogspot.com](http://yzocaet.blogspot.com)

### **Thought Question**

What are your biases regarding genre and quality?

## Promoting Reading Among Young Adults

It is without a doubt that schooling in the United States is particularly concerned with literacy and reading. A number of government reports have highlighted the “literacy problem” in the United States, the most recent the NEA report “Reading at Risk” (2004) highlighting a decline in the reading of literature. However it is important to note the limitations of the NEA report in its reference to “literature” which does not acknowledge the wide range of formats and reading that people participate in. Other reports driving educational policy have also focused on the difficulties young people have reading, with a prescriptive response of teaching reading strategies, and little or no focus on the role of motivation in reading, particularly reading for pleasure.

Elaine K. McEwan<sup>1</sup> presents five basic steps supporting the efforts to increase reading ability overall. In her book focusing on reading achievement she puts forth these five “teacher-friendly” strategies and provides details for implementation:

1. Focus on changing what you can change
2. Teach students who can't read how to read
3. Teach every student how to read to learn
4. Motivate all students to read more, to read increasingly more challenging books, and to be accountable for what they read
5. Create a reading culture in your school

The library can focus on steps four and five of McEwan's strategies, although they play a significant role in all stages of reading development. In particular it is important to be aware of research such as Stephen D. Krashen's research, published in *The Power of Reading*<sup>2</sup>, which clearly shows the benefits of a reading environment that supports and promotes free voluntary reading as a means to increase and improve reading, comprehension, and vocabulary development. Krashen's study recommends that both children and teens will read more if they have easy access to large library collections, both in school and public libraries. This is particularly true of teens that come from less affluent environments where reading materials are not readily available. Libraries, well stocked and professionally staffed, play a large role in making reading material available and accessible to young adult readers. Librarians generally recognize that teen readers have specific reading tastes. Teens want to read a variety of books—preferably paperbacks, magazines, graphic novels, and a wide-range of informational material. Teachers can contribute to the reading environment by providing rotating classroom collections, promoting free voluntary reading, and providing time for that reading. Something fresh and interesting should be available to teens everywhere they turn.

In considering how to promote reading to teens, consider teen's interests and look beyond the curriculum in providing materials. Encourage time for pleasure reading that is not limited by classroom restrictions (i.e. no comic books, no magazines, page numbers, etc.). Provide and promote through display and marketing a variety of materials—fiction, non-fiction, graphic novels, zines, digital material. Many teens are overscheduled: homework, extra-curricular activities, family, and work. Access to reading material is not enough. Teens also need time to read. Promoting free voluntary reading time is important. It is also important to consider the social nature of a teen's life, and promote the social nature of reading through sharing and discussion.

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<sup>1</sup> McEwan, Elaine K. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High School: Five Simple-to-Follow Strategies*. Corwin Press, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Krashen, Stephen D. *The Power of Reading, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Insights from the Research*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

In addition to providing access and promoting material within their library or classroom, teachers and librarians must join hands with all types of literacy organizations to promote, interest, entice, or involve teens in reading. Here are just a few ideas:

- Encourage the reading of music lyrics, writing, poetry slams, and open microphone times in a “coffee house” atmosphere.
- Hold book discussions online, in the classroom, and in the library.
- Display a wide variety of books and magazines for reading fun and pleasure.
- Read aloud to groups of teens (yes, read aloud to teens—read poems, short stories, magazines articles, information about careers, chapters from books.)
- Prepare booktalks for individuals, small groups, or classrooms of readers.
- Use books in interdisciplinary course work—historical fiction in social studies and humanities courses, biographies of scientists and mathematicians in science, mathematics, and career classes, and so forth.
- Promote writing: The more teens write the more they read—email, instant messages (IM), poems, short stories, letters to friends, thank you notes, and so forth.
- Provide images of role models reading:
  - Utilize the READ posters from the American Library Association (ALA)—(Online) [www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org). Click on “Celebrity Read” under the Posters, Bookmarks & More heading.
  - Create your own READ posters—[www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org), click on READ under the digital download section
- Invite members of the community, the city’s mayor, an electrician, a homemaker, retired educators, members of the local sports teams, and others to read during special weeks. Ask readers to share information about their careers and the importance of reading in that career
- Provide time for teens to read. Model the efforts by reading yourself.
- Involve teens in the creation of “best books to read” lists. Publish in the school newspaper or on the school’s website.
- Participate in TEEN WEEK<sup>3</sup> activities sponsored by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of ALA.

### Thought Questions

- 1) How might you make access to literacy easier and more convenient in your community (both school and public libraries)?
- 2) What organizations or reading initiatives have been successful or could be successful in your community?
- 3) What community resources could be asked to sponsor literacy events in your community (author visits, book clubs, etc.)?
- 4) How can teachers capitalize on the various reading activities in their communities (book signings at bookstores, public readings, etc.)?

### Spotlight: State Reading Awards

Many states have annual programs that involve teens in reading nominated books and voting to identify the most popular book. Authors are invited to the state library convention or sponsoring agency to accept the awards that the teens have selected.

Ask about award programs within your state.

- Texas—Tayshas
- South Carolina—Young Adult Book Award
- Minnesota—Youth Reading Awards
- New Jersey—Golden State Book Awards
- Pennsylvania—Young Adult Top Forty
- California—Young Reader Medal
- Georgia—Georgia Peach Award

Visit the gateway to state awards at [www.mcelmeel.com/curriculum/bookawards.html](http://www.mcelmeel.com/curriculum/bookawards.html)

<sup>3</sup> Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). “Teen Read Week.” (Online) URL: [wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Teen\\_Read\\_Week](http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Teen_Read_Week)



## Contemporary Realistic Fiction

The contemporary realistic fiction is a staple of YA. Contemporary realistic fiction is defined as books that have plots, characters, and settings that can be found in real life. The hallmarks of YA—first person narrative, coming of age story—lend themselves well to this genre. The success in the early years of Hinton and Cormier, who both wrote contemporary realistic fiction, helped cement this genre as the most popular in the YA field.

It is tempting to focus on the darker, grittier novels in the YA field but there are a wide variety of novels that do not focus on “edgy” issues that can be considered contemporary realistic fiction. Over the years the field has questioned: Will teenagers read about kids in loving families? About other teens who are doing well in school and headed to college? About kids who are comfortable with their physical development and have solid friendships? Often we find the answer is no, but that does not mean that every realistic novel deals with the extreme. One recent example is *Prom* (2005) by Laurie Halse Anderson written for teens who asked her for a novel about “kids like them.”

Realistic fiction in the 1990s tended to focus less on shock and titillation and more on excitement, romance, and optimism. It presented a wider worldview and less stereotyping. This resulted in parents being shown in a more balanced and convincing fashion. It also presented a diversity of approaches to problems connected with racism and ethnic identification. This has continued in the new millennium.

Contemporary realistic fiction covers a wide range of issues. Here are a few categories to consider as you try to cover the genre.

### Families

“Traditional” family values are evident in stories by Paula Danziger and Isabelle Holland or Robert Newton Peck’s *A Day No Pigs Would Die*. Originally written as contemporary novels, these stories now represent a reality of a decade or more ago and have given way to tales by Walter Dean Myers, Gary Soto, and Jane Kurtz. The families and settings are often dysfunctional and filled with urban problems.

### Coming-of-Age Stories

Judy Blume captured great attention early on with her stories of teenagers, turning the corner from eventful teen problems toward adult living. *Forever* (sex) and *Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret* (puberty) made the rounds of most teen readers. Today, numerous authors have their characters confront the adult world as a result of their teen problems.

### Problem Novels

The contemporary problem novel centers itself squarely in a troubling situation or fractured teen life. Our protagonist may be hooked on drugs, alienated from family, in trouble with the law, facing teen pregnancy, or trying to survive a dangerous neighborhood. Teen readers can often identify with these problems and may find comfort in the fact that others are as miserable or as depressed as they are. In the ‘80s problem novels were often formulaic and didactic. More nuanced novels dealing with complex issues are the hallmark of current fiction, without necessarily “punishing” the character.

### **Contemporary Realistic Fiction and the Reader**

Many believe that reading about problems experienced by others or by those caught up in an adventure can help young readers develop new interests and learn new ways of handling conflicts in their own lives. Coping and critical thinking are behavior traits that are often modeled through the actions of characters in books of realistic fiction.

It is important to remember that what might seem realistic to one reader may not seem realistic to another. A reader living on a farm in Iowa will very likely have a different view of everyday life than a child growing up in the inner city of Chicago or New York. Similarly, a child who has already experienced fleeing from Vietnam, surviving in a refugee camp, and coming to a strange new land will have a decidedly different view of life than a child born in the community where she or he still lives. A wide range of characters and ideas will bring a diversity of perspectives and experiences to realistic fiction. Use this diversity to help readers expand their own view of the world and the society in which they live.

A renewed focus on contemporary problems has some critics pointing to a new realism in books for young adults and openly worrying about books that have an agenda rather than a story to tell. One participant in an Internet forum on censorship quipped, "We need to involve readers with books that tell a good story, not books that have a 'message.' If someone has a message to send, they should use Federal Express." Others cite concerns about the characterization of minorities, the stereotyping of women, problems in contemporary society, gay and lesbian characters, and profane language. Some question whether realistic fiction is really reflecting society or contributing to the way society is developing. Calls for censorship of realistic fiction abound. What one group might view as constructive and valuable, others consider controversial. Another problem lies in the language. Because vernacular changes quickly, the language in these novels can become outdated.

### **Selecting the Best in Your Community**

YA novels are plentiful and have enough diversity that both teachers and librarians will have many choices that will fit in their own community. Being sensitive to community values and to teen interests is essential in choosing the best of the genre that fits. A teacher or librarian who reads widely and talks about books with colleagues and teens is in a much easier position to select titles than a person who just reads reviews and makes as many guesses as educated judgments. For this genre read, talk, read, talk is a great plan to stay current.

## A Few Authors to Watch

Anderson, Laurie Halse  
Caletti, Deb  
Bruchac, Joseph  
Cohn, Rachel  
Crutcher, Chris  
Dressen, Sarah  
Flinn, Alex  
Giblin, James Cross  
Giles, Gail  
Green, John  
Going, K.L.  
Hesse, Karen  
Howe, James  
Johnson, Maureen  
Klass, David  
Koertge, Ron  
Korman, Gordon  
Lockhart, E.  
Lynch, Chris  
Myers, Walter Dean  
Nelson, Marilyn  
Sanchez, Alex.  
Soto, Gary  
Spinelli, Jerry  
Trueman, Terry  
Wersba, Barbara  
Wittlinger, Ellen  
Wolff, Virginia Euwer  
Woodson, Jacqueline

## A Few Coming-of-Age Titles

- Akbar, Said Hyder and Susan Burton. *Come Back to Afghanistan: A California Teenager's Story*. (2005)
- Alexie, Sherman. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007)
- Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Speak!* (2001) *Twisted* (2007) *Wintergirls* (2009)
- Crutcher, Chris. *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes*. (1995)
- Donnelly, Jennifer. *A Northern Light*. (2003)
- Going, K.L. *Fat Kid Rules the World*. (2003)
- Green, John. *Looking for Alaska*. (2005) *An Abundance of Katherines*. (2007)
- Johnson, Angela. *First Part Last*. (2003)
- Klass, David. *You Don't Know Me*. (2001)
- Korman, Gordon. *The Juvie Threer*. (2008)
- Cohn, Rachel and David Levithan. *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist*. (2006)
- Murdock, Catherine. *Dairy Queen*. (2007)
- Schmidt, Gary, D. *The Wednesday Wars*. (2007)
- Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Notes From the Midnight Driver*. (2007)
- Weaver, Will. *Claws*. (2003)
- Wolff, Virginia Euwer. *Make Lemonade*. (2001)

## Read What Others Say About YA Novels

- Teen Reading (ALA): [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/teenreading.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/teenreading.htm)
- [www.teenreads.com](http://www.teenreads.com)
- Richie's Picks: [richiespicks.com](http://richiespicks.com)

## Thought Questions

- 1) What kinds of teens in your community appreciate reading about teens in books that seem to have the same problems they do?
- 2) What topics might have been taboo a decade ago that would not be taboo for today's teen reader?
- 3) What would make a teen novel controversial in your community?

## On the Edge: YA Novels and Tough Issues

It all started with Hinton. Her first novel, *The Outsiders* (1967), provided a picture of teens coping with violence and abuse. Since the publication of *The Outsiders*, YA literature has exposed teens to tough topics. Robert Cormier's vision of teen bullying and implicitly sanctioned violence, portrayed in *The Chocolate War* (1974), made his book the fourth most challenged book between 1990 and 2000. In fact, the success of the gritty teen reality novel has also led to some of the strongest criticism of YA novels. When Beatrice Sparks authored *Go Ask Alice* (1972), a "diary" of a teen drug addict, a formula for the successful teen "problem novel" emerged.

Teen problem novels deal with teens facing "tough issues" and often have tragic outcomes. Paul Zindel wrote of the consequences of sex, pregnancy, and abortion in *My Darling, My Hamburger* (1969). The formulaic nature of the problem novel leaves YA literature open to criticism, and problem novels receive the most attention. Those who bemoaned the death of YA literature in the 1980s were referring to the rise of teen series and the teen problem novel. Teen problem novels tend toward didactic story lines in which characters made "poor decisions" and are suffering the consequences of those decisions. Hence, girls who had sex became pregnant and drug addicts died. On occasion, the problem teen character turned their life around through rehabilitation or some form of "seeing the light."

Throughout the history of teen publishing, the "shocker" has existed. The shocker novel has challenged our notions of appropriate literature for teens, opened teen's eyes to the world around them, reminded teens that they are not alone, and encouraged teens to empathize with peers who might have deeper secrets than they can know.

In the 1970s, novels by S.E. Hinton, M.E. Kerr, Judy Blume, Richard Peck, and Robert Cormier dealt with drugs, bullying, neglect, rape, sex, and gangs. Hinton's *That Was Then, This Is Now* (1971) explored one character's experiences with the drug scene. Richard Peck's *Are You In the House Alone?* (1976) introduced the concept of date rape to teens everywhere. In the 1980s, Chris Crutcher dealt with sexual abuse and suicide in *Running Loose* (1983) and more significantly in *Chinese Handcuffs* (1989). Walter Dean Myers wrote a frank and linguistically graphic view of the Vietnam War with *Fallen Angels* (1988). But perhaps the most innovative and edgy title came with Nancy Garden's *Annie on My Mind* (1982), a love story between two young girls. It was one of the first novels for young adults that dealt with homosexuality in an open and positive manner.

### Issues and Titles: Memoirs

**Hazing:** *Goat: A Memoir* by Brad Land (2004)

**Abuse:** *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou (1970)

**Drugs and Addiction:** *Tweak* by Nic Sheff (2008)

**Family Relationships:** *Three Little Words: A Memoir* by Ashley Rhodes-Courter (2008)

**Internet and Pedophilia:** *A Girl's Life Online* by Katherine Tarbox (2000)

**Mental Illness:** *Devil in the Details: Scenes from an Obsessive Girlhood* by Jennifer Traig (2004)

**Rape:** *Lucky* by Alice Sebold (1999)

**Sexual Abuse:** *Learning to Swim* by Ann Turner (2000)

**Suicide:** *The Burn Journals* by Brett Runyon (2004)

**Weight:** *Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia* by Marya Hornbacher (1998)

When the young adult novel began to make a comeback in the 1990s, there was concern over the bleak nature of some novels. *We All Fall Down* (1991) by Robert Cormier opens with teens randomly and viciously destroying a house. *When She Hollers* (1994) by Cynthia Voigt has a young girl contemplating homicide as a way to escape the sexual abuse she faces. Adam Rapp's *The Buffalo Tree* (1998) provides an unflinching look at juvenile detainees. However, other titles deal with tougher subjects with a lighter hand. Francesca Lia Block's magical realism of the Weetzie Bat books explore love and relationships, Steven Chobsky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) is a modern *Catcher in the Rye*, and Marion Dane Bauer brings together a number of short stories to examine the experience of gay and questioning teens in *Am I Blue?: Coming Out From the Silence* (1994).

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century YA authors continue to introduce stories that many are concerned push the envelope but that explore the realities of some teens (one would hope a very small percentage). Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2008) explores issues of race, identity, alcoholism, and reservation life. Barry Lyga (*Boy Toy*, 2007) and Kathleen Jeffrie Johnson (*Gone*, 2007) explored issues of a sexual abuse between a female teacher and male student. Gail Giles (*Right Behind You*, 2007) and Anne Cassidy (*Looking for JJ*, 2007) introduced readers to adolescents who had killed another child. Elizabeth Scott wrote a terrifying and brutal novel about kidnapping and sexual abuse in 2009 called *Living Dead Girl*. Young Adult fiction continues to explore the margins.

As evidenced by the side bar fiction is not the only genre to deal with tough issues. Non-fiction memoirs introduce readers to everything from gang life (*Almost Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in LA*, 1993) to prison (*A Hole in My Life* (2002) by Jack Gantos) to the foster care system (*A Child Called It*, 1995). Beyond the memoir Janet Bode (*Heartbreak and Roses*, 1994) and S Beth Atkins (*Voices from the Street*, 1996) introduce young readers to real stories—dating abuse, rape, gangs. Often these “real life stories” are quite popular with teen readers.

The nature of adolescence lends itself to titles that explore issues such as developing sexuality, developing addictions, developing spirituality, and defining oneself. Often the journeys can be surprising, even disturbing, and the outcomes can leave us unsatisfied or without a true vision of hope. Honest literature can, however, open new worlds to teens. The stories can provide relief and comfort and can give voice to a teen's own story. Such honest accounts, however, beg challenges by parents and adults wishing to protect “children” from the knowledge these books contain. Walter Dean Myers's *Fallen Angels* faced numerous challenges for depicting the Vietnam War much too graphically. In response, Myers countered with comments about the irony of young men being sent into combat and death (his own brother “Sonny” was killed on his first day as a soldier in Vietnam) but yet censors would shield those same young people from reading about the situation.

Dealing with challenges can be an overwhelming experience, but the possibility of a challenge should not keep a library from providing quality literature to teens. Selection policies, as well as a good challenge policy, will make the process easier. Selection and censorship are discussed in this book in individual sections, and you should re-read those sections in considering sensitive and shocking material to include in your collection.

## Shockers on the Challenged List

- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou
- *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier
- *Forever* by Judy Blume
- *Go Ask Alice* by Anonymous
- *Fallen Angels* by Walter Dean Myers
- *We All Fall Down* by Robert Cormier
- *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton
- *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel
- *Annie on my Mind* by Nancy Garden
- *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* by Judy Blume
- *Athletic Shorts* by Chris Crutcher
- *Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher
- *Running Loose* by Chris Crutcher
- *Sex Education* by Jenny Davis
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chobsky
- *What My Mother Doesn't Know* by Sonya Sones
- *Always Running* by Luis Rodriguez
- *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
- *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker
- *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- *The Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline Cooney
- *Jump Ship to Freedom* by James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier
- *Hurricane Song* by Paul Volponi
- *Guardian* by Julius Lester

## Spotlight: Chris Crutcher

The story goes that after reading *Vision Quest* (1982) by his friend Terry Davis, Chris Crutcher decided to try his hand at selling stories as well. The result was *Running Loose*, a story that dealt with loss, grief, and growing up. Crutcher was well-suited to tell the stories of young people who were struggling to find their place in the world. After working at an alternative school in Oakland, California and with years of experience as a family and children's therapist, Crutcher has a unique insight into the lives of children behind closed doors. In his books, Crutcher deals with runaways and disabilities (*The Crazy Horse Electric Game*, 1987), physical abuse and body image (*Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes*, 1993), suicide and sexual abuse (*Chinese Handcuffs*, 1989), racism and domestic violence (*Whale Talk*, 2001), and emotional abuse (*Ironman*, 1995). His readers gain a lot of insight into the author's own life and perspective as they read his autobiography (*King of the Mild Frontier*, 2005) and they revel in Crutcher's take on the censorship efforts that have plagued his ground-breaking books when he satirizes some common situations in *The Sledding Hill* (2006).

In the beginning of 2005, Crutcher faced a new round of challenges for his novel *Whale Talk* and for a short story in *Athletic Shorts* (1991). He took the opportunity to address the censors and their concerns on his website at [www.chriscrutcher.com](http://www.chriscrutcher.com). Greenwillow/HarperCollins has made available an eight-page booklet "A Guide to Teaching Challenged and Banned Books: Featuring the Novels of Chris Crutcher." Links on Crutcher's website will provide the procedure for requesting a copy. New articles about other initiatives featuring his books are also available on his website. Crutcher believes in giving voice to the difficulties teens face using authentic voice—and that can be shocking!

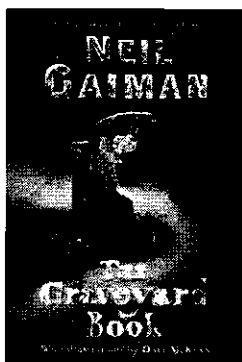
## Thought Questions

- 1) How do you answer a parent concerned about the subject matter of titles recommended for teens?
- 2) What role does community values play in your selection policy in regards to controversial titles?
- 3) Why might patron privacy be important for teens, and in the school setting how do you balance that with *in loco parentis*?

## Quick Picks and Thin Books for Reluctant Readers

There are a number of teens who can be classified as “reluctant readers,” teens who don’t like to read for any number of reasons. Research reveals that teenagers are the most reluctant readers, and boys in particular either stop reading or drastically reduce the number of hours a week they spend reading when they enter puberty. There are several reasons someone may not read.

The first, and perhaps most obvious, reason a teen might be considered a reluctant reader is reading difficulties. Readers who struggle due to a learning disability, gaps in their education, or other difficulties will usually not enjoy reading. They view it as a chore, often related to school. We tend to focus on struggling readers as the majority of reluctant readers, which may be inaccurate. Exceptional students who are overloaded with assigned school reading and homework may not read (outside of classroom assignments) either. Often these teens are reading for school but not for pleasure and will eventually find their way back to reading. Overloaded with work, extra curricular activities, and other obligations, they may not put a value on reading and can be considered reluctant readers. They are entering a time period of their life in which social activities are more important than the pleasures of childhood that may have been more solitary. Hours can be spent on the phone—often texting—surfing social networking sites on the computer (or their Blackberry), or “just hanging” with their friends.



There are books that traditionally appeal to reluctant readers.

Generally these books have cover art that appeals to teens. In today’s publishing world, covers are bright colors with limited graphics. *Juni e3 Me* (2005) by Jamie Adoff is an excellent example of today’s successful cover art. Another enticing cover would be the eerily simple cover for Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book* (2008; Printz Award 2009).

Illustrations and glossy photographs also appeal to reluctant readers, especially with non-fiction titles. The print on the pages should be larger but not too large, making it easy to read and extra white space is used to make the text less intimidating. The DK (a publishing house known for its graphic and captioned scrapbook type of presentation) style of publishing has continued to evolve and is often popular with reluctant readers. If the book is a fiction title, the hook should come within the first ten pages and the characters should be well defined and easy for a reader to visualize. The most successful plots, with struggling readers, are linear, action-filled, and fairly straightforward. Plots that are non-linear and character driven may not be successful. The most popular fiction books are those narratives with a singular point of view, a believable treatment of a topic, and humor.

Non-fiction can be especially helpful in engaging reluctant readers. Topics that are current, sports and hobbies that are hot, and biographies with pictures on popular people often engage reluctant readers. Interest is a large factor in attracting reluctant readers of any age. A book about a high-interest topic can break all the other rules and still attract specific reluctant readers. Knowing your readers is always the best way to successfully engage readers.

For more tips about working with reluctant readers see

- *Strange Terrain: A Poetry Handbook for the Reluctant Reader* by Alice B. Fogel (2008) and *Connecting With Reluctant Teen Readers: Tips, Titles, And Tools* by Patrick Jones, and Others (2006)
- YALSA also has a great list of quick picks books for teens. The list can be found online at [www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/quickpicks/qphome.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/quickpicks/qphome.cfm)

### Books to Know

(selected from the ALA 2009 Quick Pick list – check the list for more titles from 2009, and from past years:

- *Kendra* by Coe Booth (2008)
- *Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (2008)
- *My Father's Son* by Terri Fields (2008)
- *Right Behind You* by Gail Giles (2007)
- *Poison Ink* by Christopher Golden (2008)
- *Identical* by Ellen Hopkins (2008)
- *Thief* by Brian James (2008)
- *Torn to Pieces* by Margot McDonnell (2008)
- *Frostbite: A Vampire Academy Novel* by Richelle Mead (2008)
- *Swords: An Artist's Devotion* by Ben Boos (2008)
- *Freestyle Soccer Tricks* by Sean D'Arcy (2008)
- *Falling Hard: 100 Love Poems by Teenagers* edited by Betsy Franco (2008)
- *Take Me to Your Leader: Weird, Strange, and Totally Useless Information* by Ian Harrison (2007)
- Titles by Chris Crutcher, Will Hobbs, S.L. Rottman, Gary Paulsen, Gail Giles, and Walter Dean Myers

### Spotlight: Orca Soundings

In 2002 Orca, a publishing company based in Canada, began a new line called Soundings. Orca Soundings titles are high/low titles but have been more successful by breaking the traditional model of high/low books. Although all teen selections are written at a second to fifth grade reading level, the subject matter is strictly young adult. The books deal with name-calling, parental relationships, crime, and drugs. Each book is approximately 100 pages long, and well-known young adult authors write the titles. The covers are realistic and eye catching. While the quality of each title varies overall, the Soundings books have proved popular with reluctant readers. [www.orcabook.com](http://www.orcabook.com)

The following titles from Orca's Hi/Low list were on the Canadian Children's Book Centre's 2008 *Best Books for Kids and Teens* list:

*Bang* by Norah McClintock  
*Bull's Eye* by Sarah N. Harvey  
*The Darwin Expedition* by Diane Tullson  
*Down* by Norah McClintock  
*House Party* by Eric Walters  
*I.D.* by Vicki Grant  
*Responsible* by Darlene Ryan  
*Wave Warrior* by Lesley Choyce

### Thought Questions

- 1) What makes readers reluctant?
- 2) How can libraries work with reluctant readers to encourage reading?
- 3) How will programming encourage teens to experience the library?



## **“We Like Pink Books”: Books for Girls**

It would be easy to believe that the “chick lit” revolution started with the British invasion of *Bridget Jones’ Diary* in 1998 followed by the Georgia Nicolson books by Louise Rennison in 2000. This view would overlook so many titles that laid the groundwork for these titles.

*Forever* by Judy Blume (1975) broke barriers when it related the story of two teens that fall in love, have sex, and are not “punished” by death, disease or pregnancy. Rather, they struggled with the emotional implications of a physical relationship.

As young adult literature entered the eighties, series fiction for girls became a staple in the publishing industry. Francine Pascal’s Sweet Valley High series (origin 1983) and its spin-offs are the standard bearers in the series industry and are the touchstones for other series such as Sweet Dreams, and Cheerleaders. Phyllis Reynolds Naylor entered the field with her critically acclaimed “Alice” series (1985). Over the years Alice has grown and developed coping with first boyfriends, peer pressure, and family.

In the late 1990s the British invasion brought *Bridget Jones’ Diary* (Helen Fielding, 1998) followed by Louise Rennison’s books featuring Georgia Nicolson, and everyone began to watch this “new” genre. Meg Cabot capitalized on the phenomenon with The Princess Diaries series and Cecily von Ziegesar entered the market with the Gossip Girl. The Gossip Girl series quickly gained popularity with its focus on high fashion and snarky tone. The series was soon dubbed a high school Sex in the City in print, and skewered in the press. Still it and it’s sister series - The A List and the Clique remain popular with girls.

In 2006 Kristen Miller developed a series about a group of girls who protect New York’s secret underground world, the Shadow City. The anchor title, *Kiki Strike*, features Ananka Fishbein, a young, female mastermind—a girl who lives by her own set of rules (not all of them good). She’s aided by the Irregulars, a group of five girls who have banded together. The obsession with boys, looks, and the glorious life have moved into the real world of adventure and excitement. The characters, as described by Kristen Miller, have “strength [that] comes from what’s inside their heads, not what’s inside their bras.”<sup>1</sup>

Currently the most talked about series is Stephanie Meyer’s Twilight series (*Twilight* [2005], *New Moon* [2006], *Eclipse* [2007], and *Breaking Dawn* [2008]). Following the romance between a vampire and a regular girl, the Twilight series has generated discussion in both the popular media and in the YA Lit world about the nature of the characters and the messages it sends young females. Regardless of the worries of some adults, Edward, Jacob, and Bella have found their way to the big screen and are popular with teens and tweens alike.

Other popular authors such as Sarah Dessen are more traditional girls coming-of-age romances. Dessen’s protagonists often struggle with serious issues such as family, loss, rape, or pregnancy while experiencing first love. Elizabeth Scott and Deb Caletti are similar authors, while Maureen Johnson and e. lockhart write similar novels that are more comedic. Each of these authors contributes solid, quality fiction to the romance/chick lit genre. In fact, both Caletti and lockhart are National Book Awards finalists for *Honey, Baby, Sweetheart* (2004) and *The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks* (2008).

“Chick Lit” has developed into a genre with a wide range of material; serious and funny, quality and “summer beach read,” over-the-top and realistic, focused on fashion or girl power.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from: TeenRead.com. “Interview with Kristen Miller. Online. [www.teenreads.com/authors/au-miller-kirsten.asp#view060601](http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-miller-kirsten.asp#view060601) Accessed July 2006.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Girl Power!

From body image and love to adventure and friendships.

- *Feeling Sorry for Celia* (2000), *The Year of Secret Assignments* (2004), and *The Murder of Bindy Mackenzie* (2006) by Jaclyn Moriarty
- *Sloppy Firsts* (2001), *Second Helpings* (2003), *Charmed Thirds* (2006), *Fourth Comings* (2007), and *Perfect Fifts* (2009) by Megan McCafferty
- *What My Mother Doesn't Know* (2001), *What My Girlfriend Doesn't Know* (2007), and *One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies* (2003) by Sonya Sones
- *Gingerbread* (2002), *Steps* (2003), *Shrimp* (2005), and *Two Steps Forward* (2006) by Rachel Cohn
- *Suite Scarlett* (2008) by Maureen Johnson
- *Rich Boys & Local Girls* (2008) by Jenny O'Connell

### Series Titles

- *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer
- *Vampire Academy* by Rachel Mead
- *Gossip Girl* by Cecily von Ziegesar
- *A-List* by Zoey Dean
- *Kiki Strike* by Kristen Miller
- Ruby Oliver books by e. lockhart
- *The Clique* by List Harrison

### Caution:

It is easy to fall into the trap of categorizing books by gender. This may lead many to make assumptions about readers that prove to be false. Remember: girls may like "boy" books, and boys may like "girl" books!

## Touchstone Titles

- *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* by Judy Blume (1970)
- *The Cat Ate My Gymsuit* by Paula Danzinger (1974)
- *Forever* by Judy Blume (1975)
- *Are You in the House Alone* by Richard Peck (1976)
- *Homecoming* by Cynthia Voigt (1981)
- *Jacob, Have I Loved* by Katherine Paterson (1990)
- *The Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline Cooney (1990)
- *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech (1994)
- *Keeping the Moon* by Sarah Dessen (1999)
- *Angus, Thongs, and Full Frontal Snogging* by Louise Rennison (2000)
- *Dairy Queen* by Catherine Murdock (2006)
- *The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau Banks* by e. lockhart (2009)

## On the Web—More Resources

- Best Riot Grrrr! Reads—Take Back the Power Website: [www.readingrants.org/category/riot-grrrr/](http://www.readingrants.org/category/riot-grrrr/)  
Reading beyond the teen romance—Jennifer Hubert has created a booklist of 33 titles on her Reading Rants site. Includes annotations.
- Vandergrift's Coming-of-Age Stories [www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/YoungAdult/age.html](http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/YoungAdult/age.html)  
This is an extensive list of citations for books that will speak volumes to the young adult female grappling with her own coming-of-age.

## Thought Questions

- 1) What creates the idea that girls will read books with either boy or girl protagonists but boys will only read about boys?
- 2) Why are predictable romantic plots so attractive to female readers?
- 3) What trends in society are influencing the current trend to more emphasis on "real girl power"?

## Boys Do Read

Do boys read? Of course they do, despite cries to the contrary. Research and anecdotal evidence suggest that boys read less and less as they hit puberty, with the idea that reading consists of narrative fiction or the reading done in school. Young adult males read magazines, informational texts, graphic novels, science fiction and fantasy, and hobby books. They may read manuals, game codes, box scores or comics in the newspaper, and email (or text messages) between friends. But are there books that boys will read? The answer is yes.

Before the advent of young adult publishing, books published for teen males were often series. Tom Swift was a popular series, first published in 1910. Next came The Hardy Boys in 1927 and Chip Hilton in the 1950s. Boys looked outside of series for good reads as well. *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) was published for adults, yet teens quickly took it as their own. Holden Caulfield's journey, his disillusionment with the phonies (adults), and the general disaffected tone still speak to twenty-first century teens.

The 1960s changed the way publishers addressed teens, including teen boys. Titles like *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton and Robert Lipsyte's *The Contender* appealed to teen boys. Robert Cormier's titles published in the 1970s, including *The Chocolate War* and *I Am the Cheese*, have male protagonists coping with problems that teen boys faced: bullying, relationships with parents and peers, etc. Jay Bennett specialized in mysteries with male protagonists who actively solved mysteries and faced danger. While early young adult books broke barriers, these books eventually settled into a "problem novel" formula that had little appeal to boys.

In the 1980s authors emerged that had strong male appeal. Walter Dean Myers entered the scene with such books as *Hoops* (1981) and *Fallen Angels* (1988). Gary Paulsen brought adventure and a lot of teen appeal with *Hatchet* (1987), a survival novel that was soon followed by other man vs. nature titles. Chris Crutcher authored novels that focused on athletic young men coping with various problems, including racism, prejudice, abuse, and disabilities.

In the 1990s Will Hobbs' wilderness adventure books attracted wide readership among teen boys. Jerry Spinelli wrote books filled with humor and insight, including *Maniac McGee* (1990). In 1998 Louis Sachar's *Holes* was published and became popular with all readers, particularly reluctant male readers. *Holes* became the 1999 Newbery Award winner and was later made into a successful movie. Paul Zindel began publishing horror/monster stories such as *Loch* (1994) and *Rats* (1999). In recent years the Alex Ryder series by Anthony Horowitz has been a sure-fire hit with reluctant male readers. As more and more attention has been paid to boys and reading, more booklists and books for boys seem to appear. Jon Scieszka started a reading initiative directed at boys called "Guys Read" ([www.guysread.com](http://www.guysread.com)) and has a book: *Guys Write for Guys Read* (2005). These resources provide lists that guys would be attracted to and to help them feel more comfortable with reading. Although this site is flashy, it sometimes lacks a good list of recommendations. A more informative site for the male teen is Dr. Danny Brassell's Lazy Reader's Book Club ([lazyreaders.com](http://lazyreaders.com)). Dr. Brassell tries to recommend books that are 250 pages or less and books that will have appeal to reluctant teen readers. In 2005, a small group of Ontario, Canada school teachers established a website to support literacy for boys. Their site, [boysread.com](http://boysread.com), includes many reviews that will appeal to reluctant teen male readers.

It is important to remember the role of science fiction and fantasy in boys' reading. Popular series include Orson Scott Card's Ender's series, Terry Pratchett's *Discworld*, Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time*, Piers Anthony's Xanth series, Terry Brooks (any books), Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, and of course J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*. In fact, these readers

may frustrate teachers and parents who cannot convince them to read beyond this genre. Don't get frustrated. The important thing is that they're reading.

Another overlooked genre of reading for boys is informational texts. A young man who won't read anything else may spend hours pouring over a book on cars or a biography of their favorite athlete. In 1988 DK publishing introduced the Eyewitness series. The ample white space, graphics, and chunks of text proved a popular format and spawned more publishers to follow. Narrative non-fiction, such as *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers* by Mary Roach (2003) and *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* (2002), have also proved popular with male readers.

### Touchstone Titles

- *The Contender* by Robert Lipsyte (1967)
- *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier (1974)
- *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen (1987)
- *Maniac McGee* by Jerry Spinelli (1990)
- *Ironman* by Chris Crutcher (1995)
- *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling
- *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers (1999)
- *Holes* by Louis Sachar (2000)
- Alex Ryder series by Anthony Horowitz (2001)
- *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini (2003)
- *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan (2005)
- *Ball Don't Lie* by Matt de la Peña (2005)
- *Claws* by Will Weaver (2003)
- *Acceleration* by Graham McNamee (2003)
- *Demon Keeper* by Royce Buckingham, (2007)
- *He Forgot to Say Goodbye* by Benjamin Alire Saenz (2008)
- *Trouble* by Gary D. Schmidt (2008)
- *The Spectacular Now* by Tim Tharp (2008)
- *Pop* by Gordon Korman (2009)

### Thought Questions

- 1) Is there such a thing as "girl books" and "boy books"?
- 2) What are the dangers about making recommendations based on gender?

### Spotlight: Guys Read

Guys Read is a program that was started by Jon Scieszka. He realized that so many boys fall behind in reading and don't count reading on their "Fun Things to Do" list. So Scieszka created Guys Read, a website and support group, to get boys to read. On the website ([www.guysread.com](http://www.guysread.com)), there are lists of books boys of all ages might be interested in. There is also information on how to form your own Guys Read group. These groups are basically getting teachers, librarians, and adults to pay attention to books that boys would like. The website provides free downloads of a poster, bookmarks, and stickers to help bring attention to this program. There are also good hints for adults when dealing with boys and literature.

### Non-Fiction Options

- *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* by John Fleischman (2002)
- *Left for Dead: A Young Man's Search for Justice for the USS Indianapolis* by Pete Nelson (2002)
- *Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case* by Chris Crowe (2003)
- *The Radioactive Boy Scout: The True Story of a Boy and his Backyard Nuclear Reactor* by Ken Silverstein (2004)
- *10,000 Days of Thunder: A History of the Vietnam War* by Philip Caputo (2005)
- *The Trouble Begins at 8: The Life of Mark Twain in the Wild, Wild West* by Sid Fleischman (2008)
- *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* by James Swanson (2009)
- *Is It Still Cheating if I Don't Get Caught* by Bruce Weinstein, PhD. (2009)

## Series Titles for Young Adult Readers

Teen readers, as do younger readers before them, gravitate toward books written as a series but are often ignored by educators as they are perceived to be somewhat of a lesser quality than books written as individual titles. But series books are often immensely popular with readers. The comfort of not having to acclimate oneself to a new set of characters or a new setting with each book allows the reader to get right into the action or plot of the stories. Some readers are adamant about reading every book in absolute order. Because much of what is considered young adult literature ignores series fiction, librarians have some difficulty in managing it and in helping those readers know the series order of individual titles. Some books are written to a formula for the writing, but other series are fresh and unique. The familiarity of series reading is a great aid to developing fluency among readers and building confidence in the less-able reader. There are series of books for younger teens, for older teens, for males, for females, for horse lovers, for mystery lovers, and for everyone in-between. Bibliographic resources that might be of assistance include:

- Thomas, Rebecca L. and Catherine Barr. *Popular Series Fiction for Middle School and Teen Readers*. Libraries Unlimited, 2008.
- Levetzow, Maria. "Young Adult Books in Series and Sequels." *Bettendorf Public Library Teens' Page*. [www.bettendorflibrary.com/bpl-bin/series.pl](http://www.bettendorflibrary.com/bpl-bin/series.pl)
- *Mid-Continent Public Library—Juvenile Series and Sequels*. [www.mcpl.lib.mo.us/readers/series/juv/](http://www.mcpl.lib.mo.us/readers/series/juv/)

### Selected List of Popular Series for Readers

- *Ranger's Apprentice* by John Flanagan—A battle of good and evil finds Will at the center as a Ranger in training, a medieval CIA agent.
- *Artemis Fowl* by Eoin Colfer—Boy genius holds a fairy for ransom in the hopes of building his family fortune.
- *His Dark Materials* by Phillip Pullman—Children cross worlds to fulfill their destinies in this unforgettable trilogy.
- *Sweep* by Cate Tiernan—New boy Cal introduces Morgan to Wicca, where she discovers she is a "blood witch."
- *The Clique* by Lisi Harrison—Mean girls in middle school.
- *Redwall* by Brian Jacques—In this animal kingdom, battles of good and evil are center stage.
- *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* by Rick Riordan—The modern day son of Poseidon, Percy often finds himself on an adventure to save his friends, or even Mt. Olympus.
- *Maximum Ride* by James Patterson—Genetically engineered teens with wings must save themselves and fight the secret government lab.
- *Chronicles of Prydain* by Lloyd Alexander—Adventure and enchantment, epic quest tales where good conquers evil.
- *Cirque du Freak* by Darren Shan—Two boys visit a weird traveling circus and adventure ensues, from joining vampires to training large spiders.

## More Series Titles

- *Clique* by Lisi Harrison
- *A-List* by Zoey Dean
- *Gossip Girls* and *The It Girl* by Cecily von Ziegesar
- *Alice* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
- *Discworld* by Terry Pratchett
- *Hatchet* by Gary Paulson
- *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien
- *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeline L'Engle
- *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery
- *A Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket
- *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* by Anne Brashares
- *Sammy Keyes* by Wendelin Van Draanen
- *The Dark is Rising* by Susan Cooper
- *Pretty Little Liars* by Sara Shepard
- *TrueColor* series by Melody Carlson
- *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer
- *Young Bond* by Charlie Higson
- *The Circle Opens* by Tamora Pierce

### Author Series

- Caroline B. Cooney
- R.L. Stine
- Cynthia Voight
- Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
- Lois Duncan

## Spotlight: Meg Cabot

Meg Cabot was born in Bloomington, Indiana. From a very young age, she found, and loved, the library. After getting a BA from Indiana University, she moved to New York to be an illustrator. That didn't work out, so she began writing. She wrote for adults and teenagers, finding the most success with teens. She created *The Princess Diaries* series, which was later made into two movies by Disney. Other series include *I-800-Where-R-You* (written under her pseudonym Jenny Carrol, now a TV series) and *The Mediator*. She has added new series: *All American Girl*, and *Avalon High*, as well as series for adults, such as Heather Wells mysteries that cross over well for older teens. She has written many other YA novels that have found success in the tween-teen market. Although her series are very formulaic, Cabot has found the way to make the modern *Babysitter's Club* or *Sweet Valley High*. New times call for new formulas, and Meg Cabot has found that new formula.

## Keeping Up

Run, don't walk, to the nearest bookstore and inspect the teen series shelves. You may discover, as we did, no *Sweet Valley* series and no *Fear Street* series. Of course, this will differ from what you find, but a comparison of bookstore shelves with library series shelves will be quite revealing and the only way to keep your pulse on this ever-changing market.

## Thought Questions

- 1) Check the circulation system of a library near you to discover what teen series circulate. Compare this with the impression of the teen librarian of which series are actually read. Do these two sources of data match? If not, why not?
- 2) Interview several teenage girls and boys about their preferences for series books. What percentage of their reading is series versus non-series?

## Don't Judge a Book by its Movie

For many or perhaps most teens, movies have replaced books as the central focus of entertainment. We may complain about the "Hollywoodization" of literature that we are certain should have been experienced only as a print/personal experience, but most teachers and librarians are resigned to the fact that movies may be the only way to motivate teens to experience a real book. There are exceptions, of course, as the *Harry Potter* phenomenon or *Lord of the Rings* trilogy books-to-movie events have brought intense scrutiny into the filmmakers' interpretation. For these few exceptions, there is no end to the possibilities for discussion, comparison, and delicious controversy sparking both movie and literary criticism.

As anyone who has been to the movies lately knows, Hollywood is in desperate need of good scripts to feed their multi-billion-dollar industry. And Hollywood often turns to books for plots and ideas. We usually classify the tie between movies and books into three categories:

- Movies made from books in an attempt to be faithful to the original.
- Adaptations or modernizations of a book
- Original movies for which a novel appears close to the movie release date.

In the first category, *Twilight*, *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, the Harry Potter movies, *Holes*, or *The Mighty (Freak the Mighty)* try to stick as close to the books as possible given that a typical movie script is about 40 pages of dialogue compared to several hundred pages of feelings, actions and dialogue in the book. Just say to almost any teen: "*The Fellowship of the Ring* was the most faithful to the book, but I liked *The Return of the King* best," and you are sure to get a response that might make you wish you hadn't expressed an opinion. English teachers desperate to teach the classics often search for the best play-to-movie interpretation to help young people understand the plots so they can teach the nuances of the language and the deep meanings of the text as both film and word merge. For many teens, if they experience the "classics" at all, it is through film, and we hope they have seen a good one. History teachers may also use film adaptation to encourage the reading of books and the in-depth study of events. Examples include *Schindler's List*, *Cold Mountain*, *Seabiscuit*, or even *October Sky*.

In the category of adapted films, Hollywood takes great liberties with the original text to create something they feel will appeal to a modern audience. The most obvious example is Disney's adaptation of the story of Aladdin and the folktales of Snow White, Cinderella, and Mulan. Hollywood never tires of adapting Shakespeare as evidenced by *10 Things I Hate About You (Taming of the Shrew)*, *O (Othello)*, and *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (1996 with Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes). Sometimes Hollywood's version actually improves upon the book, such as *Forrest Gump*. In any case such adaptations provide plenty of opportunity for teachers and librarians to compare and contrast what Hollywood does versus the original intent of the author. For example, *The Village* was adapted from *The Messenger* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. Both versions are fascinating in their own right as they sometimes duplicate and at other times depart in the plot and action sequences.

In the last category, original scripts are adapted to print as a promotional event corresponding with the release of the movie. We think of *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* that have triggered entire series of books because their movie scripts grabbed the imagination of audiences everywhere and left enough space for more stories to be told. Other successful movie novelizations include *Whale Rider*, *The Matrix*, *Titanic*, and *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer*.

To teens, informational books that supplement the movie are more interesting. DK publishing has had success with its Star Wars Visual Dictionaries and Cross-Sections. *The Matrix* (1999) was very popular with teens, and the two books, *The Art of The Matrix* (2000) and *Beyond the Matrix: Revolutions and Revelations* (2004), also have a teen audience. As special effects become more complicated, more books that detail the movie making find their way into the market.

There is now a whole new culture developing around movies and books as Hollywood tries to maximize its revenues. DVDs with Director's cuts, accompanying books packaged with the DVD, websites, discussion groups, chat rooms, documentaries on making of the movie, and action figures are just a small sampling of spin-offs. These give plenty of room for movie-book discussions, screenings, read-ins leading to critical writing, and perhaps even teens creating a movie adaptation of their own.

### YA Books to Films and Films to YA Books

#### Movie Title (Book Title)

- *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen*
- *The Golden Compass*
- *Speak*
- *Princess Diaries\**
- *How to Deal (That Summer and Someone Like You)*
- *Whale Rider*
- *Cheaper by the Dozen*
- *Millions\**
- *Holes* (Book by Louis Sachar)
- *I Know What You Did Last Summer*
- *The Outsiders, Tex, and Rumble Fish*
- *A Cry in the Wild (Hatchet)*
- *The Mighty (Freak the Mighty)*
- *Angus* (Short Story in *Athletic Shorts*)
- *Drive Me Crazy (Girl Gives Birth to Own Prom Date)*
- *Because of Winn-Dixie\**
- *Harry Potter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6*
- *The Chosen*
- *The Seeker (The Dark is Rising)*
- *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*
- *The Chronicles of Narnia* (2 movies)
- *Hoot*
- *Twilight*
- *Inkheart\**

\* For a younger audience  
To keep up-to-date on this genre, visit  
[www.teenreads.com](http://www.teenreads.com)

### Spotlight: Mean Girls

In 2002 Rosalind Wiseman published *Queen Bees and Wannabees*. The book was an exploration of emotional bullying and teen girls' social structure. The audience was composed of the parents of teen girls, and the book was a revelation to many.

Tina Fey, of Saturday Night Live fame, read the book and saw in it potential for a movie. She adapted the book for a movie, and in 2004 *Mean Girls*, starring Lindsey Lohan, hit movie screens across the United States. It was a novel idea: turn a pop psychology book for parents into a movie for teens. The outcome may have been considered less than successful. While the movie successfully illustrated the techniques girls use to manipulate and control one another, the overall message of the book may have been lost in the comedy of the movie. Still, it was an interesting experiment in crossover appeal.

Also published on the topic are *Odd Girl Out* (2002) (also a movie on Lifetime television) and *Odd Girl Speaks Out* (2004) by Rachel Simmons.

### Thought Questions

- 1) What techniques could teachers use to explore classical literature through the use of film?
- 2) What types of activities centered in the library could capitalize on the interest of a teen blockbuster in the original book?
- 3) What book would you like to see as a movie? Who would star in the film?



# Christian Romance

By Tracey Wilson

Most of the Christian fiction books marketed for young women tend to be romance stories. A great number of these books deal with the issue of sexual abstinence before marriage, a commonly held belief among many Christians that is based on Biblical passages. Understandably, this is a topic of much concern among Christian teens that find that most of their non-Christian peers are already sexually involved. These books deal with the reality of peer pressure and attempt to provide a Biblical perspective on relationships and intimacy. Christian romances usually describe situations in which the protagonist struggles with the pressure to become sexually involved, but with support from a network of Christian friends or family the protagonist finds that she can be romantically involved without having sex. Christian publishers tend to market books with similar themes in the genre, explaining why several books have only slightly different plots. For example, many of the female protagonists in fantasy or period romances were sterling models of Christian behaviour, and though they face various temptations, they successfully resist those temptations. Publishers know these are popular with a particular audience, so they continue to market them.

Upon saying that, there is an effort by authors to expand fiction romance to address a public that is embracing secular romances and romantic comedies. As a result, a number of series are loosely based on secular movies or books. For example, *The Yada Yada Prayer Group* series by Neta Jackson is a Christian version of the secular *Ya Ya Sisterhood*. In general most Christian fiction has a very strong thread of morality throughout. Conversion remains the backbone of evangelical stories, but more and more Christian novels being published today concern the messiness and issues of everyday life. Christian fiction has become less dogmatic and overt in an effort to embrace a larger readership.

Young adult romance is marketed to the following audiences: pre-teen and teen. Pre-teen romances are generally more "innocent" and predominantly deal with issues of friendship and first love. Romantic plots and sub-plots are less obvious and are not always the primary theme. In contrast, teen romance tends to feature a protagonist of marrying age and more complex romantic plots with more permanent outcomes. They are frequently more reality-based. Aside from age divisions, these romances can also be divided into the following categories: period romance, allegories, realistic fiction, and devotionals. Period romance takes place in a historical setting and portrays life as it most likely was experienced during that historical period. Allegories feature symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence, and realistic fiction deals with modern issues confronted by today's Christian teenagers: sex, peer pressure, body image, drugs, and other relevant issues. Devotional romances are typically written to be meditative and often pose questions to the reader intended to prompt reflection.

## A Sampling of Romance

- Chaikin, L.L. *Port Royal (The Buccaneers Series)*. Moody Publishers, 1995
- Gunn, R.J. *Only You, Sierra (The Sierra Jensen Series)*. Focus on the Family Publishing, 1995.
- Gunn, R.J. *Whispers (The Glenbrooke Series)*. Multnomah Publishers, 1999.
- Leppard, L.G. *Mandie and the Secret Tunnel (Mandie Mysteries)*. Bethany House Publishers, 1983.
- Lewis, B. *Holly's First Love (Holly's Heart Series)*. Zondervan Publishing House, 1993.
- McDowell, J. & Hostetler, B. *Truth Slayers: The Battle of Right from Wrong (The Powerlink Chronicles)*. Word Publishing, 1995.
- Roberts, Laura Paton. *Get a Life*. Bantam Books. 1998.

### Thought Question

- 1) Can you make a list of YA romance books, not necessarily Christian, where the players decide to remain virgins?

## Web Resources

Best-selling author Robin Jones Gunn's website:  
[www.robingunn.com](http://www.robingunn.com)

Christian and inspirational fiction information and links:  
[www.overbooked.org/genres/inspirational/](http://www.overbooked.org/genres/inspirational/)

Christian Romance Book Club:  
[www.heartsongpresents.com](http://www.heartsongpresents.com)

Christy Awards: [www.christyawards.com](http://www.christyawards.com)

Evangelical Christian Publishers Association:  
[www.ecpa.org](http://www.ecpa.org)

## Other Recent Recommended Romantic Reads

Gunn, Robin Jones. *Until Tomorrow*. Bethany House, 2008

Ryan, Carrie. *In the Forest of Hands and Teeth*. Delacorte, 2009.

Adima, Shelley. *The Fruit of My Lipstick*. Faithwords, 2008

Samson, Lisa. *Hollywood Nobody*. NavPress, 2007.

Buckman, Michelle. *Maggie Come Lately*. NavPress, 2007

Carlson, Melody. *Stealing Bradford*. Zondervan, 2008.

Herald, Diana Trixie. *Genreflecting: Christian Fiction*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Libraries Unlimited, 2005

## GLBTQ Literature for Teens

Different studies suggest different numbers, but it is safe to assume that there are Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning teens (GLBTQ) in your classroom or library. The history of GLBTQ literature for teens is not unlike the history of young adult literature in general. According to [www.glbtc.com](http://www.glbtc.com) only five novels were published in the eight years between 1969 and 1976, with gay and lesbian themes: John Donovan's *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip* (1969), Isabelle Holland's *The Man without a Face* (1970), Sandra Scoppettone's *Trying Hard to Hear You* (1974), Rosa Guy's *Ruby* (1976), and Mary W. Sullivan's *What's This About, Pete?* (1976). But since then, the number has increased significantly. As the field struggles to catch up with mainstream titles, GLBTQ literature continues to be dominated by male characters in white middle class settings. But that has begun to change—just as mainstream young adult literature has emerged with more diversity than it once had.

Nancy Garden's *Annie on My Mind*, in 1982, created a milestone in GLBTQ literature when she wrote the gentle love story between two girls, which isn't to say it doesn't have its share of teen angst and eventual sorrow. However, the quality of the story redeemed it from being another problem novel in which the characters are punished for their homosexuality. While the two lesbian teachers are fired from their teaching positions, the main characters find some support from family and potentially find their way back to each other. In 2003 Nancy Garden received the Margaret A. Edwards award, largely from the strength of *Annie*. The '80s also brought readers *Night Kites* (1986) in which the main character's family struggles not only with the news that the oldest brother is gay, but that he is dying of AIDS. Other titles during that era, in which characters dealt with AIDS, placed the disease on family members instead of the main character.

A new era was ushered in when two decades ago, in 1989, Francesca Lia Block authored *Weetzie Bat*. Block introduced characters that dealt with their sexuality in a frank manner. It was not, however, the major conflict in the novel. When Dirk came out the result was a blended family: Dirk; Weetzie; Weetzie's Secret Agent Lover Man; his daughter, Witch Baby; and their daughter, Cherokee Bat. Ellen Wittlinger's *Hard Love* (1999), published on the cusp of the millennium, explored a new theme: a relationship between a straight boy with a crush on a lesbian. Titles began to appear in which gay and lesbian characters had healthy, productive lives; or openly gay characters face other problem-novel type issues.

David Levithan's book *Boy Meets Boy* (2003) introduced a world where characters not only know they are gay by kindergarten, but their homosexuality is accepted, the cheerleaders ride Harley's, and the quarterback is also the homecoming queen. *Boy Meets Boy* is light-hearted; it treats all characters equally whether they're gay, straight, or cross-dressing. In 2004, Julie Ann Peters published *Luna*, a story about a transgender teen, and three years later Ellen Wittlinger published *Parrotfish* (2007) about the same topic. In the new millennium Alex Sanchez, Brent Hartinger, Julie Peters, and Brian Sloan consistently publish novels that show a diverse range of quality GLBTQ literature.

For a thorough and analytical analysis of history of GLBTQ literature read Melinda Kanner's essay on Young Adult Literature in the online publication: *GLBTQ: An Encyclopedia of Gay, lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer Culture*. The essay (updated August 2008) can be read at [www.glbtc.com/literature/young\\_adult\\_lit.html](http://www.glbtc.com/literature/young_adult_lit.html)

### Titles to Consider

In addition to the titles cited in the preceding paragraphs consider reading the following exemplary GLBTQ teen books.

- *Keesha's House* by Helen Frost (2007) — Narrative poems
- *The Geography Club* by Brent Hartinger (2004) — Being homosexual in a small town; organizing a Gay Straight Alliance at their school. Series continues with: *Order of the Poison Oak* (2006), *Split Screen* (2007)
- *Wide Awake* by David Levithan (2006) — Romance with political element
- *The God Box* by Alex Sanchez (2007) — Religion, the Bible, and homosexuality
- *Getting It* by Alex Sanchez (2006) — Carlos seeks advice (and friendship) from Sal, a gay classmate
- *Rage: A Love Story* by Julie Ann Peters (2009) — A dangerous love story
- *Tale of Two Summers* by David Sloan (2006) — Two friends (one gay, one straight) share their summer adventures through a private blog

### Keeping Up—Professional Resources

*The Heart Has Its Reasons: Young Adult Literature with Gay/Lesbian/Queer Content (1969-2004)* by Michael Cart and Christine A. Jenkins (Scarecrow, 2006). Examines historical changes and critical commentary with annotated bibliographies of related fiction.

### Spotlight: Julie Ann Peters

Julie Ann Peters spent decades establishing herself as an author of children's books. Having just completed *Define "Normal"*—the story of a psycho freaky punker and a "normal" teen—she was feeling quite successful. And then, in 2000, Peters's editor asked her to write a book about teenage lesbians falling in love. Peters was very surprised and very apprehensive. At first she thought writing such a book might be the death of her writing career. As an "out lesbian" she knew the subject well and also knew the need for literature that dealt with the subject honestly. But she also knew writing such a book was likely to change her life forever. And it did, but not exactly in the way Peters envisioned. Three years later, in 2003, *Keeping You a Secret* was released to stunning success. That success encouraged her to write more books for the GLBTQ teen reader. Peters's book about a transgendered teen, *Luna* (2004), was nominated for a National Book Award. It did not win but the experience was affirming for both Peters and her partner of more than three decades, Sherri Leggett. It was Sherri who inspired the character in *Far from Xanadu* (2005). Mike, a butch lesbian, falls in love with a straight female. This book, besides having the gay theme, is hilariously humorous. *Between Mom and Jo* (2006) is an exploration of the relationship between a young man and his mother and with his other mom. When the moms break up, the teenager is caught in the middle and wants to stay with his non-biological mom. Fortunately for him, his biological mom loves him enough to let him go.

More recently *Rage: A Love Story* (2009) explores a dangerous relationship between two teenage girls. In 2010, Peters explores another aspect of teen existence. The book, *By the Time You Read This, I'll Be Dead*, has the reader going along with Daelyn as he looks at "23 days and counting." Learn more about Julie Anne Peters and her books on her website [www.julieannepeters.com](http://www.julieannepeters.com).

### On the Representation of GLBTQ Teens

"It is no only a librarian's job to make this representation as welcoming and as accurate as possible. It is a librarian's obligation to do so." — David Levithan  
From "Supporting gay teen literature: an advocate speaks out for representation on library shelves." *School Library Journal*. October 2004.

## Teen Books in a Variety of Formats

In the wonderful world of technology, new formats have opened the doors for many teens to enjoy literature and non-fiction both for school and for pleasure. The most obvious format is audio books, which is now available as cassettes, CDs, or MP3 files for iPods or other listening devices. Still other formats, such as Braille, large print books, or e-books that can be either read by the user or read by technology to the user, provide avenues for those with disabilities and everyone else through devices such as the Kindle. Today, literally any print that can be shown on a screen can also be read aloud by a computer. This includes email, word-processed documents, and also pdf formats. Consider the many reasons for using these technologies to promote reading.

1. Teens with language difficulties
2. Learning disabilities
3. Visual problems
4. Teens who lag behind in comprehension or are challenged with normal reading
5. Teens who are accustomed to reading and writing online and to using Kindles

Even to avid readers who have time to spare while riding in cars or buses or that just enjoy books being read aloud, audio books can provide a wonderful change of pace, particularly when the performers are exceptional, making an audio experience superior in some ways to the reading experience. For example, one thinks of Judy Kaye's reading of any of the Sue Grafton novels that bring Kinsey Millhone's personality alive. Or one can experience the Grammy-Award-winning Jim Dale's reading of the Harry Potter series. And then there are the Los Angeles Players' renditions of many plays read aloud that are understandable and exciting when done in the audio format. Few teens would read *Away Laughing on a Fast Camel: Even More Confessions of Georgia Nickolson* by Louise Rennison, but they would be fascinated by the hilarious audio rendition read by the author (Listening Library, 2005) in the real British flavor.

In any case for an audio experience, the reader is everything. Let us repeat: the reader is everything. Nothing is worse than a voice with a drone or a gushy overdramatic rendition. Once you've heard Jim Dale's presentation of *Harry Potter*, you know what high quality audio is, and you can use him as the standard to achieve by any other audio reader. The pace of the reading and flawless pronunciation are also important qualities for any audio reader. Some readers try to change their voices for different characters, such as Dale's 20+ voices for differing characters. Others are successful at reading multiple parts using cadence rather than vocal character imitation. By the time you have listened to 10 or more audio renditions, you certainly pick up the ability to judge quality when choosing audio books.

For books in unique formats, such as large print or print that must be spoken by computer or magnified by cameras such as Jordy or Kindle, working with individual teens with disabilities will provide a repertoire for what works and what doesn't work for particular individuals. All libraries and classrooms should have a variety of assistive devices to help open the world of print to every teen. And, don't forget the services to the blind from the Library of Congress. They are now distributing audio books as MP3 files that can be downloaded directly from their website and they have a new digital cartridge player (2009).

## List of Great Audio Books

- *Abhorsen* by Garth Nix (2003). Read by Tim Curry. Listening Library.
- *Because of Winn Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo (2001). Read by Cherry Jones. Listening Library.
- *Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis (2001). Read by Rita Wolf. Listening Library.
- *Dragon's Kin* by Anne McCaffrey (2003). Read by Dick Hill. Brilliance.
- *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini (2003). Read by Gerard Doyle. Listening Library.
- *Fat Kid Rules the World* by K. L. Going (2003). Read by Matthew Lillard. Listening Library.
- All *Harry Potter* books by J.K. Rowling. Read by Jim Dale. Listening Library.
- *Horse Thief* by Robert Newton Peck (2002). Recorded Books.
- *Maggie's Door* by Patricia Reilly Giff (2003). Read by Fionnula Flanagan. Listening Library.
- *Truth About Forever* by Sarah Dessen (2005). Read by Stina Nielsen. Recorded Books.
- *The Graveyard Book* (2009). by Neil Gaiman. HarperCollins Audio.
- *The Bible Has a Voice* (2008) Old and New Testaments; many actors. Zondervan.

## Spotlight: Jim Dale

Jim Dale has been a performer his whole life. He grew up in England, and at the age of 9 Dale started to take dancing lessons. He performed in many amateur shows. By age 18, when he joined the Royal Air Force, he added comedy to his performance and entertained troops in England and Germany. Dale is a British pop phenomenon; he has been in countless plays, television programs, and movies. He has been nominated several times for the Tony award, winning once for his performance in the play *Barnum*. Dale has been the reader for the *Harry Potter* audio books, being nominated for the Grammy for each book. He won the Grammy for *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. On a fun note, Dale also holds the Guinness World Record for the "Most Character Voices in an Audio Book." Dale's other accomplishments include being honored with a MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire), Audie Award, and numerous Audio File Earphone awards.

Visit Dale's website at [www.jim-dale.com](http://www.jim-dale.com)

## Companies Making Quality Recordings Available for All Readers

Recorded Books  
[www.recordedbooks.com](http://www.recordedbooks.com)

Full-Case Audio  
[www.fullcastaudio.com](http://www.fullcastaudio.com)

Listening Library  
[www.listeninglibrary.com](http://www.listeninglibrary.com)

In addition to these specific sites many book publishers are making audio recordings available and those are obtainable through the publishing house or through such venues as [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), [BarnesandNobel.com](http://BarnesandNobel.com), and [Audible.com](http://Audible.com)

## Thought Question

- 1) What do you need to do to enhance your understanding of the world of audio or other technology assists to help every teen succeed in the world of print?

## Self-Help Books

Navigating teenage years is a difficult and confusing process. Teens have questions and face new situations that range from etiquette questions to relationships with friends, family, and the opposite sex. They have concerns about puberty and sexual health. They struggle with identity and finding a place in the world where they are comfortable. While today's teens seem more willing to talk to their parents regarding their questions, there is still a market and a need for materials that answers teens' questions and perhaps provide guidance as teens make their way through the turbulent waters of adolescence.

Originally, etiquette books seemed to be connected to debutantes and the upper class, but they have found their way into the teen market. While some etiquette books still cover topics teens are less likely to participate in, such as fox hunting and croquet, there are others that take a more humorous approach and cover topics such as relationship rules and hygiene. Free Spirit publishing publishes a set of *How Rude!* handbooks that cover rules of family life, dating, friends, and school such as: *The How Rude! Handbook Of School Manners For Teens: Civility In The Hallowed Halls*, 2004, or the *The Teen Girl's Gotta-Have-It Guide to Embarrassing Moments*(2007)

Etiquette books are not the only self-help titles available. There are plenty of advice books for teens that cover family, relationships, sexual health and identity, drugs, and school. Gurl.com has a book for girls, *Deal with It! A Whole Approach to your Body, Brain and Life as a gURL* (1999), that covers body, sexuality, brain, life, emotions, religion, friends, and family. Mavis Jukes has several titles for girls as well as *The Guy Book, An Owner's Manual* (2002) in which she answers similar questions about life. Another title for boys is *The Teenage Guy's Survival Guide* (1999), which features graphic design and covers the topics common to advice titles. *Boyology: A Teen Girl's Crash Course in All Things Boy*(2009) combines advice with an attractive format to attract the readers attention. The Girlosophy series cover a wide variety of advice across a wide range of topics. Check out the SOS series – Stressed Out Student's Guides published late 2000s. As one compares the earlier titles with the later ones, format, format, format is everything in an attempt to attract the current teen scanner/skimmer.

Puberty presents new issues and questions, and there are several health books that address the changes teens are experiencing physically. The classic *What's Happening to My Body*, 3rd ed. 2007, for boys and girls explain the changes of puberty as well as information on sexual health Another popular title is *The Teenage Body Book* (2008).

Other self help titles fall more into the psychology area. Some titles deal directly with teen behaviors, such as cutting, eating disorders, and teen depression. Other titles are more inspirational and fall within the realm of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul*-type books, including *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul* (I and II) and *Tasteberries* for teens. Popular psychology books for adults often appear in teen versions such as *Seven Habits for Highly Effective Teens* (1998) and sequels, *Knowing Me, Knowing You: The I-Sight Way to Understand Yourself and Others* (2001), and *Who Moved My Cheese? for Teens: An A-Mazing Way to Change and Win!* (2002). The *Top 20 Teens* (2006) is targeted at teens but provides great advice for "teens" of all ages. Older teens will appreciate the popular *Change the Way You See Everything through Asset-Based Thinking* (2006).

Self-help titles for teens usually take a humorous approach to answering difficult questions. An excellent example of this is Shaw's *What's That Smell* (2005). While diverse in topic, and occasionally tone, self-help titles are an essential element of any collection for teens.

As with all advice, whether in a printed book or the plethora of websites, and, of course, personal friends, every teen needs to learn who ask basic questions: "Who is saying what to me, for what reasons, and for what gain?" Advice from spiritual advisors may be quite

different than advice in teen magazines, books, or websites. Sources that recommend to teens that they consider advice from a variety of trusted sources before making major life decisions are preferable to sources that give advice freely with a decided bent. For example, who do I believe and take into consideration when trying to decide if I will become sexually active? Parents, spiritual advisors, friends, my boyfriend, a person of the same sex...

### Core Titles

- Bell, Ruth. *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives: Expanded Third Edition*. Three Rivers Press, 1998. A book for teens on sex and relationships.
- Madaras, Lynda. *What's Happening to My Body? Book for Boys: A Growing Up Guide for Parents and Sons*. Newmarket Press, 2000.
- Madaras, Lynda. *What's Happening to My Body? Book for Girls: A Growing Up Guide for Parents and Daughters*. Newmarket Press, 2000.
- Jukes, Mavis. *Guy Book: An Owner's Manual*. Random House, 2002.
- Drill, Esther, Heather McDonald, and Rebecca Odes. *Deal with It! A Whole New Approach to Your Body, Brain, and Life as a Gurl*. Pocket Books, 1999.
- Fox, Anne. *Can You Relate? Real World Advice for Teens on Guys, Girls Growing Up and Getting Along*. Free Spirit Publishing, 2000.
- Heugal, Kelly. *GLBTQ (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning): The Survival Guide For Queer & Questioning Teens*. Free Spirit Publishing, 2003.
- MacGregor, Marium. *Everyday Leadership*. Free Spirit, 2007.
- Volkmann, Chris and Toren Volkmann. *From Binge to Blackout: A Mother and Son Struggle with Teen Drinking*. Penguin Group, 2006.
- Keel, Philipp. *All About Me Teenage Edition: The Story of Your Life*. Broadway, 2004.
- Hyde, Margaret O. *Safe Sex 101: An Overview for Teens*. Twenty-First Century Books, 2006.
- Bradley, Michael J. *Yes, Your Parents Are Crazy!: A Teen Survival Guide*. Harbor Press, 2004.

### Spotlight: Free Spirit Press

Free Spirit publishers offer a wide range of self-help books for teens. Free Spirit began publishing in 1983 with a mission to bring high-quality materials to help children and teens. Free Spirit focuses on self-help titles including books for learning populations, such as *The Survival Guide for Kids with LD* and *The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook*.

The titles in the Free Spirit catalog include titles for professionals and parents as well as teens. They publish a number of items focusing on character education, behavior disorders, gender issues, and bullying in the classroom as well as titles on school success, test taking, stress, and service learning.

The self-help titles for teens include *Boy V. Girl? How Gender Shapes Who We Are, What We Want, and How We Get Along* (2002); *Bringing up Parents* (1992); *Life Lists for Teens. Tips, Steps, Hints, and How-Tos for Growing Up, Getting Along, Learning, and Having Fun*; and *Wise Guys: How to Thrill, Chill & Get Away From It All Without Alcohol or Other Drugs* (2006). The titles cover school, sexual identity, healthy alternatives to drugs, and other areas in which teens might have questions.

Free Spirit is not the only publisher producing self-help titles for teens, but it has been a leader in the industry.

### Thought Questions

- 1) What role does the library play in developing teens' lives?
- 2) What are the issues teens struggle with and how might the library fill an information void?



## Sports

Historically, sports books have been used to attract males to reading. There was Matt Christopher for younger readers and Thomas J. Dyard for older teenagers. Interest in sports literature has gained many enthusiasts in the United States and Canada, in the past decades. Currently the interest has gone beyond the major sports of baseball, football, and basketball. Teen readers have developed an interest in other sports, such as golf, rollerblading, skateboarding, soccer, snowboarding, BMX, and others. And females have become part of the target audience.

### Mastering the Current Scene

Attracting readers demand books (and authors) who know the vocabulary and who have built a repertoire sufficient to attract the teen into the print world. Those writers who succeed in writing authentic stories/information books on sports topics will certainly attract the attention of avid sports enthusiasts who will revel in the authenticity.

Instilling the idea of sports in print might begin with the magazine shelf in libraries, grocery stores, and bookstores, plus the ESPN networks and sports news broadcasting on television. All are good places to start. *Sports Illustrated* is still the number-one title, but every popular sport from biking to snowboarding has a periodical trying to find space on the commercial shelf. Teens know these sources; ask them for recommendations. Look for ephemeral biographies of sports figures. Use the sports pages of both local and national newspapers as reading materials and parlay the interest into research and reading. Articles will often refer to other sources and to websites with more information.

Next, keep up-to-date on the sports movies that continue to be produced in Hollywood with a few classics such as *The Pride of the Yankees* (1942), *The Natural* (1984), *Field of Dreams* (1989), *Raging Bull* (1980), the Rocky movies, and *The Hustler* (1961). Then there are the recent favorites such as *The Tao of Pong* (2004), *Grind* (2003), *Million Dollar Baby* (2004), and *The Final Season* (2007).

### Into the Book World

Finally in 2009, a couple of sports-themed books appeared on the YALSA "Best Books for Young Adults List." Tim Wendel's and Jose Luis Villegas's nonfiction title, *Far From Home: Latino Baseball Players in America* made the list as did a book that used baseball as one of the story elements, Matt de la Pena's *Mexican WhiteBoy*. No sports titles appeared on the 2008 list, but Alan Gratz's *Samurai Shortstop* (2006), a historical sports novel with a lot of information about the Japanese culture, made the list as one of YALSA's top 10 best books in 2007. In 2006, no sports book even made the consideration list. Currently, Chris Crutcher receives much praise from librarians who are interested in good sports-themed literature. There are a number of sub-genres in the sports book world. One title that is sure to be a huge favorite in the coming years is *Baseball's Greatest Hit: The Story of Take Me Out to the Ball Game* by Robert Thompson, Tim Wiles, and the most enthusiastic baseball fan, Andy Strasberg. Together the three authors take readers through fascinating anecdotes, musical renditions, and many inside tales about the 100-year history of this song first written by Jack Norworth. Younger teens will enjoy the reissue of Fred Bowen's All Star series; and two new titles in 2009: *Touchdown Trouble* and *Soccer Team Upset*. Bowen writes fiction but each title has a basis in a real person or event that he weaves into the story. The final chapter explains the historical element used in the story. Great reads! Find out more about Fred Bowen and his books at [www.fredbowen.com](http://www.fredbowen.com).

Like Fred Bowen, Mike Lupica is a sports columnist. Younger teen readers will relish reading books in his "Comeback Kid" series. Readers who love sports will enjoy such titles as *Hot Hand*, *Long Shot*, *Safe at Home*, and others, while any player who has been cut from a sports team will identify with the situation in Lupica's *Travel Team*. Lupica's books deal with more than sports. For example: *Safe at Home* is a story of a foster child who loves baseball and readers find that "safe at home" has more than one meaning. Lupica's *The Big Field* explores father and son relationships. Mike Lupica's website, [www.mikelupicabooks.com](http://www.mikelupicabooks.com), will provide additional information.

## EXTREME SPORTS

- Bass, Scott. *Surf! Your Guide to Longboarding, Shortboarding, Tubing, Aerials, Hanging Ten and More.* (2003)
- Clark, Liz. *One Helluva Ride: How NASCAR Swept the Nation.* (2008)
- Dedijer, Jevto. *Base 66: A Story of Fear, Fun, and Freefall.* (2004)
- Ferruggia, Jason. *Fit to Fight: An Insanely Effective Strength and Conditioning Program for the Ultimate MMA Warrior.* (2008)
- Hawk, Tony, and Sean Mortimer. *Hawk: Occupation Skateboarder.* (2002)
- Larsen, Christopher E. *Paintball and Airsoft Battle Tactics.* (2008)

## INFORMATION AND SPORTS REFERENCE

- Blumentahal, Karen. *Let Me Play: The Story of Title IX, the Law That Changed the Future of Girls in America.* (2005)
- Brown, Gerry and Michael Morrison. *ESPN Sports Almanac 2009: America's Best-Selling Sports Almanac.* (2008)
- Curlee, Lynn. *Ballpark: The Story of America's Baseball Fields.* (2005)
- Sports Illustrated editors. *Sports Illustrated: The Football Book Expanded Edition* (2009)
- Sports Illustrated editors. *Sports Illustrated: Almanac 2009.* (2008)

## POETRY AND SPORTS

- Carroll, Lewis and Christopher Myers. *Jabberwocky.* (2007)
- Morrison, Lillian. *Way to Go! Sports Poems* (2007)
- Smith, Charles R., Jr. *Short Takes: Fast-Break Basketball Poetry.* (2001); *Hoop Kings.* (2004; 2007 pb)
- Hoop Queens.* (2003; 2007 pb)

## SPORTS AND MYSTERIES

- Alphin, Elaine Marie. *Perfect Shot.* (2005)
- Deuker, Carl. *Runner.* (2006)
- Feinstein, John. *Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery* (Final Four Mysteries). (2005)
- Gorman, Carol. *Stumptown Kid.* (2005)
- Grisham, John. *Playing for Pizza: A Novel.* (2007; adult)
- Gutman, Dan. *Roberto e' Me.* (Baseball Card Adventures) (2010)
- Parker, Robert B. *Edenville Owl.* (2007)

## SPORTS AND PROBLEM NOVELS

- Smith, Roland. *Peak.* (2007)
- Cross, Shauna. *Derby Girl.* (2007)
- Deuker, Carl. *Gym Candy.* (2008); *On the Devil's Court.* (2008 pb)
- McKissack, Fredrick, Jr. *Shooting Star* (2009)
- Mackey, Weezie Kerr. *Throwing Like a Girl.* (2007)
- Murdock, Catherine Gilbert. *Dairy Queen.* (2006)
- Takehiko, Inoue. *Slam Dunk, Volume 5.* (2009, Manga)

## SPORTS AND A TOUCH OF ROMANCE

- Bennett, J. *Plunking Reggie Jackson.* (2001)
- Klass, David. *Home of the Braves.* (2002)
- Ripslinger, Jon. *How I Fell in Love and Learned to Shoot Free Throws.* (2003)
- Zusak, Markus. *Getting the Girl.* (2003)

## SPORTS BIOGRAPHIES

- Cohen, Sasha and Kathy Goedeken. *Fire on Ice: Autobiography of a Champion Figure Skater*. (2005)  
Hawk, Tony and Sean Mortimer. *Hawk: Occupation: Skateboarder*. (2000)  
Rhodes, Dusty with Howard Brody. *Dusty: Reflections of an American Dream*. (2006)  
Sheen, Barbara. *Danica Patrick*. (People in the News) (2009)  
Todd, Anne M. *Venus and Serena Williams*. (Women of Achievement) (2009)

### Selected Magazines for All Sports

*Golf.Com* (up-to-date news of  
the golf world) at  
[www.golf.com](http://www.golf.com)

*National Geography Adventure*  
(Adventure and sports)  
[www.nationalgeographic.com/  
adventure/](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/)

*Sporting News*  
[www.sportingnews.com](http://www.sportingnews.com)

*Sports Illustrated*  
[www.si.com](http://www.si.com)

*SportsFan Magazine*  
[www.sportsfanmagazine.com](http://www.sportsfanmagazine.com)

*Tennis Magazine*  
[www.tennis.com](http://www.tennis.com)

### Websites for More Sports Books

Plymouth District Library:  
[plymouthlibrary.org/  
yasportsbib.htm](http://plymouthlibrary.org/yasportsbib.htm)

Carnegie Library of  
Pittsburgh:  
[www.carnegielibrary.org/  
teens/books/sports.cfm](http://www.carnegielibrary.org/teens/books/sports.cfm)

San Francisco Public Library:  
[sfpl.lib.ca.us/sfplonline/teen/  
booklists/sportsnew.htm](http://sfpl.lib.ca.us/sfplonline/teen/booklists/sportsnew.htm)

### Spotlight: John H. Ritter

John H. Ritter grew up in the hills of San Diego where he spent many days playing "one-on-one" baseball with his brothers. His family was a "baseball family" but they also enjoyed music, poems, and enjoyed mathematics. His father was a sports editor for the *San Diego Union*. Ritter was only four when his mother died and his father moved the family to a rural area near the Mexican border. It was in those rural hills that Ritter began to imagine baseball games—to finish the action he and his brothers started. Those imaginary games entered into his writing life as he wrote *Choosing Up Sides* (1998) and told the story of Luke Bledsoe who is torn between his religion's demand for him to use his right hand and his success as a baseball player using his left hand. Ritter's success as a writer enabled him to leave his 25-year career as a house painter behind and to become a full-time writer. More sports books followed: *Over the Wall* (2000), *The Boy Who Saved Baseball* (2003), *Under the Baseball Moon* (2006)

One of his most recent books, *The Desperado Who Stole Baseball* (2009), brings sports to the Old West. In a rollicking narrative Ritter reveals the secret behind Dillontown and Cruz de la Cruz. Who is Cruz and what does Billy the Kid have to do with all of this? A Junior Library Guild Selection.

Learn more about Ritter at: [www.johnhritter.com](http://www.johnhritter.com)

### Keeping Up

Websites to keep one up-to-date on the latest sports happenings.

- Sports teams and leagues, federations and other sports related topics:  
*Sports Links Central*—[www.sportslinkscentral.com](http://www.sportslinkscentral.com)
- Links to statistical sites and information for fans  
*Sports Reference*—[www.sports-reference.com](http://www.sports-reference.com)

### Thought Questions

- 1) Should a collection of young adult literature include books about sports heroes that are destined to be short-lived? Why or why not?
- 2) Defend this comment: Young adults are often more interested in books that talk about the sport rather than fiction titles about the sport. What evidence can you cite to support your position?

## Adventure and Nature

Early adventure stories, including animal and survival tales, were often told from the animal's perspective. These classic tales include *Black Beauty* by Anne Sewell (1877) and *Call of the Wild* (1903) by Jack London. Then came the "boy and his dog" genre which was popularized by Fred Gipson's *Old Yeller* (1957). Soon there followed: boy and his falcon, boy and his bear, and of course, boy and his horse. Animal and adventure tales gained in popularity with teenage readers. Books in any genre, with female protagonists, were often lacking in action so animal/adventure tales with animals allowed female readers to circumvent always having to read "male" books in order to read interesting adventurous tales—although most human characters were still male. Lynn Hall contributed "girl and her horse" stories—and they became very popular, while Marguerite Henry's titles, *King of the Wind*, *Misty of Chincoteague* (and others), were characterized by the historical events that were the basis for many of her stories.

The Western genre that began with James Fenimore Cooper, Owen Wister, and Cormac McCarthy evolved, in the 1950s (thanks in part to the movie hero John Wayne), into popular reading fare. Fueled by the novels of Louis L'Amour the romance of the West and the American cowboy became popular topics. Largely written for an adult audience, young adults sought the adventure that they held.

When publishers began to recognize the young adult audience, success came with the survival novel. Teen readers relished the idea of being independent and self-reliant; being able to survive on their own without the help of (or interference from) adults. Building on the success with *My Side of the Mountain* (1959), a Newbery honor book, Jean Craighead George wrote *Julie of the Wolves* (1972) while Gary Paulsen found his own phenomenal success with *Hatchet* (1987). As writers have begun to look for ways to tell stories, survival and adventure elements have been mixed with fantasy, such as, *Airborn* by Kenneth Oppel (2004), or be set in a post-apocalyptic environment, like the *Tomorrow* series by John Marsden or *Peak* by Ronald Smith (2007). The 2007 Broken Key trilogy by Brian S. Pratt that included *Shepherd's Quest*, *Hunter of the Horde*, and *Quest's End* is a touchstone example of a fantasy adventure series for young adult readers. Elements of the Western genre are often incorporated into other types of stories. A recent example includes John H. Ritter who mixed the appeal of a Western with a 2009 sports book, *The Desparado Who Stole Baseball*.

Don't overlook true stories of survival and adventure that appeal to teens with a wonderlust or just for a taste of real courage. From the classic retelling of Heinrich Harrer's *Seven Years in Tibet* (1952; 1997) to the quest onto the highest Himalayan peaks in Peter Matthiessen's *The Snow Leopard* (2008) these tales will stop the heart from beating. Historical survival tales include Slavonmi Rawicz's account, *The Long Walk: The True Story of a Trek to Freedom* (2006), of a Polish prisoner of war who escapes from the Red Army (in 1939) and flees 200 miles, on foot, to safety.

### Adventure of Another Kind

Sometimes an adventure goes astray and that is what happened when Greg Mortenson, an American nurse, attempted to climb the world's second tallest mountain (K2). He returned from the mountain and his failed attempt, seriously ill. For seven weeks, he was nursed back to health by Pakistani villagers. *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time* (2007) is Mortenson's tale of his return to health and his promise to the Pakistanis who helped him. Along the way readers meet a myriad of people, of all types. This

book is best read for its inspirational value and the adventure—not necessarily for its literary value. It is captivating and full of suspense and adventure.

### Stories of Survival

- Cowley, Joy. (2003) *Hunter*. A plane crash survivor alone on a deserted island shares visions with a Maori boy living in the early 1800s.
- Hobbs, Will. (2006) *Crossing the Wire*. Fifteen-year-old Victor must deal with ruthless drug traffickers as he strives to cross the border, survive in the north, and provide for his fatherless family. Hobbs's *Far North* (1996) is a classic survival tale.
- Martel, Yann. (2002) *The Life of Pi*. A young man is caught on a life raft with a tiger.
- Mikaelsen, Ben. (2004) *Tree Girl*. Based on survivor's accounts of the 1980s Guatemalan civil war. Gabriela Flores tells of her own survival and its aftermath.
- Neale, Jonathon. (2003) *Himalaya*. Alternating chapters detail a mountain climbing expedition.
- Paulsen, Gary. (1987) *Hatchet*, (1991) *The River*, (1996) *Brian's Winter*, (1999) *Brian's Return* and (2003) *Brian's Hunt*. When Brian is the only survivor of a small plane that crashed into a river, he must use his hatchet to survive the wilderness until help arrives. Sequels explore similar adventures/survival episodes
- White, Robb. (1972) *Deathwatch*. Stranded in the desert and being hunted by a man with a rifle Ben fights to stay alive.

### Don't Try this at Home: True Stories of Survival

- Armstrong, Jennifer. (1998) *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World*. Details Shackelton's Antarctic expedition.
- Goldsmith, Connie. (2004) *Lost in the Desert: The True Story of Four Families in California's Gold Rush*. Lesser known than the Donner Party, this tells the story of a group crossing Death Valley in 1849.
- Junger, Sebastian. (1997) *The Perfect Storm*. In 1991, the Andrea Gail was caught in the "perfect storm" and lost at sea.
- Krakauer, Jon. (1997) *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Everest Disaster*. The story of the ill-fated climb to the top of Everest.
- Niven, Jennifer. (2003) *Ada Blackjack: A True Story of Survival in the Arctic*.
- Ralston, Aron. (2004) *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*. After a climbing accident leaves him pinned, he must make a gruesome sacrifice.
- Read, Piers Paul. (1974; 2005) *Alive: The Story of Andes Survivors*. A team of rugby players crashed in the remote snowy peaks of the Andes (1972). Ten weeks later, only sixteen of the forty-five passengers were found alive. This is the story of those ten weeks.

### The Great Outdoors: Adventure in the Wilderness

- Allende, Isabel. (2002) *City of the Beasts*. On the hunt for a "beast" in the Amazon the supernatural and the natural cross over.
- Bauer, Joan. (1999; 2005) *Backwater*. Ivy is "different" and she thinks her long-absent aunt (a hermit in the mountains) holds the secret to her own differentness—a trip deep into the Adirondacks brings danger and face-to-face encounters with her own fears.
- Hobbs, Will. (2004) *Leaving Protection*. Robbie manages to get his dream job on a salmon fishing troller—but the dream soon turns dark when he discovers the captain's secret.
- Klass, David. *California Blue*. (1994; 1996) After discovering a new butterfly, Jon finds himself thrust into a battle between environmentalists and the timber industry.

- Malnor, Carol and Bruce Malnor. (2009) *Earth Heroes: Champions of the Wilderness*. Eight environmentalists face dangers and struggles to protect the environment.
- Torrey, Michele. (2004) *Voyage of Ice: Chronicles of Courage*. In the 1850s two teens find work on a whaling ship.
- Weaver, Will. (2001) *Memory Boy*. Miles and his family begin a new life in the wilderness after a cataclysmic volcanic eruption.

### Suggestions for the Near Adult Reader

Visit NileGuide: Top 50 Adventure Books of All Time at

<http://blog.nileguide.com/2009/01/21/top-50-adventure-books-of-all-time/>

### Roland Smith

When, at the age of five, Roland Smith received an old typewriter from his parents, his writing career began. When Smith was grown, he got a job at a children's zoo. He soon impressed the zookeepers with his ability to find and catch escaped animals and birds. At one point he decided that some of his experiences might make good books, and, eventually, he was able to have several of his books published. Some of his earlier books included informational books about animals in the zoo: whales, dolphins, porpoises, big cats, snakes, primates, elephants, and other animals. *Thunder Cave* (1995), *Jaguar* (1997), and *Sasquatch* (1998) became very popular adventure stories. *The Last Lobo* (1999) was the last of the thrilling action-filled environmental adventure featuring Jacob Lansa. Later books included fast-paced adventure touched with drug trafficking (*Zach's Lie*, 2001; and its sequel, *Jack's Run*, 2005), anthropology (*Cryptid Hunter*, 2005), and a quest to be the youngest person to reach the Everest summit (*Peak*, 2007). In 2008, Smith published the first book, *I, Q* (2008) of a new series (I,Q Series). When Q's (Quest's) father marries 16-year-old Angela's mother the two are faced with an entirely new life—adventure, suspense, humor, fascinating characters, magic, spy games, and martial arts. The second book in the series, *The White House*, was released in 2009.

For more information check out the author's website at [www.rolandsmith.com](http://www.rolandsmith.com).

### Newer Western Titles for Teens

- *Sacajawea* by Joseph Bruchac (2000)
- *Spanish Jack: A Novel of the Real People* by Jack Conley (2001)
- *Cowboy Ghost* by Robert Newton Peck (2001)
- *Stop the Train!* by Geraldine McCaughrean (2003)
- *Twelve Travelers, Twenty Horses* by Harriette Gillem Robinet (2003)
- *Blood Gold* by Michael Cadnum (2004)
- *Black Storm Comin'* by Diane Lee Wilson (2005)
- *The Misadventures of Maude Marche: Or Trouble Rides a Fast Horse* (2005) and *Maude Marche on the Run* by Audrey Couloumbis (2007)
- *Cowboy Stories* collected and illustrated by Barry Moser (2007)
- *Adventurous Deeds of Deadwood Jones* by Helen Hemphill (2008)
- *I Witness: Hard Gold: The Colorado Gold Rush of 1859: A Tale of the Old West* by Avi (2008)
- *Bull Rider* by Suzanne Morgan Williams (2009)

### Thought Question

- 1) What role does the outdoor adventure and survival novel play in today's increasingly developed world?

# History and Historical Fiction

History is a story well told. Few (if any) history textbooks can compete with the stories of individuals that are connected emotionally with historical events. Today's selection of books includes an enormous amount of historical material leaving little excuse for lack of interest (or knowledge) by teens. The publishing world offers much to young adult readers.

## Events

Specific events comprise the totality of history. Several authors zero in on significant events that shaped part of the historical landscape. Some powerful examples include:

- Susan Campbell Bartoletti's *Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Famine, 1845–1850* (2001); and *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow* (2005);
- Rhoda Blumberg's *The Incredible Journey of Lewis & Clark* (1999); and *York's Adventures with Lewis and Clark: An African American's Part in the Great Expedition* (2003);
- Wilborn Hampton's *Meltdown: A Race Against Nuclear Disaster at Three Mile Island* (2001);
- CBS News journalists' collection, *What We Saw: The Events of September 11, 2001—In Words, Pictures, and Video* (2002); and
- Sid Jacobson's and Ernie Colon's *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation* (2006).

## Time Periods

Teens are often required to research the life and times of peoples or countries. In this case, a good timeline such as *Timelines of World History* by John B. Teeple (2002) can provide facts, excellent maps, and illustrations to stir interest. *The Century for Young People* (1999) by Peter Jennings et.al. provides excellent narrative and photographs of the various decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—a topic often studied by teens. Searching the Library of Congress site ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)) and its American Memory section will yield more titles and suggestions for studying the decades.

## Places

Atlases provide graphical representations of events that can help visualize geographic settings over a period of time. Derek Hayes and the University of California Press have worked together to publish several extraordinary historical atlases for regions in the United States and Canada. Representative titles include: *Historical Atlas of the United States* (2006), *Historical Atlas of the American West* (2009), and *America Discovered: A Historical Atlas of North American Exploration* (2009). Hayes's titles are noted for their comprehensive maps and the expansive text that provides information about the importance of maps in the history of area being examined.

## Revisionist History

While many authors write sympathetic histories, usually of recent events, other authors create quite different interpretations of what really happened. For example, many Revolutionary War histories ignored the contribution of African Americans in the conflict. Clinton Cox sets the record straight in his *Come All You Brave Soldiers: Blacks In The Revolutionary War* (1999). In fact, Cox doesn't dispute the historical facts that have been reported, he adds information that many historians have left out—information about the 5,000 plus Black soldiers who fought in the American Revolution.

## Primary Sources

Current research practices have put a new emphasis on the use of primary sources in addition to secondary sources—the best resource for primary sources is the Library of Congress' American Memory Collection. (Online at [memory.loc.gov](http://memory.loc.gov))

## Oral History Recorded in Print

History is not just an account of happenings in far away places and people, but also of places and people next door. Local history can be collected by interviewing, filming, and recording events and their neighbors' stories. Teens might interview a World War II hero, the oldest mayor in town, grandparents, or even teen sports stars. Such experiences can lead to a fascination with both history

and biography. Peter Hoehnic compiled a history of his community (Amana, Iowa) in *Amana People: History of a Religious Community* (2003). This book can serve as a model for parlaying factual information into a readable local history narrative.

### Don't Forget Historical Fiction

Thanks to wonderful teen book authors, literally any historical time period can be brought to life with fictional stories. The line between history and historical fiction is blurred because so many authors use narrative in both fiction and information titles. Interest in historical fiction has increased dramatically in the last decades due to such authors as Avi (*The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* [1990]), Karen Cushman (*The Midwife's Apprentice* [1995]), Richard Peck (*The River Between Us* [2003]), Christopher Paul Curtis (*The Watsons Go To Birmingham—1963* [1995]), and Laurie Halse Anderson (*Chains* [2008])—authors who provide a bridge from the world of fiction to the world of real history. For more information about historical fiction read “Getting It Right: Historical Fiction or Not?” by Sharron L. McElmeel. *Library Media Connection*, Jan/Feb2009, Vol. 27 Issue 4, p40-41.

### History in Film

Numerous filmmakers try to document historical events or persons either loosely constructed on the facts or in some form of documentary. These films can spark conversation and further exploration as teens view the films. Some examples include Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* (an expose on George W. Bush), *Thirteen Days* (the Cuban Missile Crisis), *Apollo 13* (a dramatic retelling of disaster), *Schindler's List* (concentration camps of WWII), *Titanic*, *Seabiscuit* (Depression era), *The Patriot* (Revolutionary War), *The Aviator*, and *Cinderella Man*.

#### Other Readable Histories

- Giblin, James Cross. *The Many Rides of Paul Revere*. (2007)
- O'Connor, Jane. *The Emperor's Silent Army: Terracotta Warriors of Ancient China*. (2002)
- Murphy, Jim. *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever*. (2003)
- Lawton, Clive A. *Auschwitz: The Story of a Nazi Death Camp*. (2002)
- Sis. Peter. *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*. (2007)
- Beah, Ishmael. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. (2008)

#### Spotlight: Local History Photographed

In a variation on collecting only historical narratives, in 1984, Peter Feldstein photographed residents of a small town; twenty years later he photographed them again. Feldstein's photographs showed the passage of time while Feldstein's friend, Stephen G. Bloom, helped to mold the residents' words into a personal and collective history. Their book, *The Oxford Project* (2008), was named a 2009 Alex Award book and was included on many best book lists.

#### Thought Questions

- 1) What historical events captured in film represent the best and most authentic retelling of history?
- 2) How can a single historical fiction novel lead the way to a fascinating exploration of the time or period presented?
- 3) What historical museums are in your local area that teens could benefit from visiting?



# Biography

Biographies allow young adults to explore the lives of other people and experience a slice of the time-period, often historical, in which the subject lived. An account of a person's life, whether written by someone other than the subject (biography) or by the subject him- or herself (autobiography) provides the reader with a view into another time period or culture. The setting in any biography must be historically accurate, but the focus must remain on its subject and the people who influenced him or her.

Traditionally, biographies were most often written about hero types who were intended to be models for the type of life young readers should live. Even if the subject was not entirely moral and worthy of emulation, the biography focused only on the positive traits. Jean Fritz became one of the first biographers for young readers to include some of the frailties of her subjects. Presently the standards for the biographies require a balanced profile of the subject, showing both their strengths and their weaknesses. James Cross Giblin does that remarkably well in *Good Brother, Bad Brother: The Story of Edwin Booth and John Wilkes Booth* (2005). Giblin manages to keep the focus on the Booth Brothers and their compelling theatrical presence. But the solid research also shows John Wilkes as a man consumed with his love for the Confederacy and the plots he and his colleagues hatched to kidnap Lincoln. It portrays John as a man who is impulsive and his brother as an actor whose life's accomplishments were always in the shadow of his brother's role in assassinating President Lincoln.

Subjects for biographies generally fit into three basic categories:

- Historically/culturally significant
- Contemporarily significant
- Ordinary people with extraordinary stories.

Many biographies are written about well-known figures whose influence and accomplishments will endure through generations. The biographies about them would be considered historically and culturally significant. Examples include:

- *Vincent Van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist* by Jan Greenberg (2003) — a brilliant Dutch painter;
- *Gregor Mendel: Planting the Seeds of Genetics* by Simon Mawer (2006) — father of modern genetics.
- *Malcolm X: A Graphic Biography*. Edited by Andrew Helfer (2007) — A frank account.

A second category of subjects includes those that are significant in the current culture or political scene — contemporarily significant. The major claim to fame by these subjects is their present popularity or notoriety. Some retain a relatively small amount of significance but others are considered “flashes in the pan.” Barbara Bush, the First Lady during George Bush's presidency, was the subject of Arleen McGrath Heiss's *Barbara Bush* (1992). Interest in her has waned and the book is now out-of-print. She will be included in collective biographies of presidential wives so she cannot be legitimately considered a “flash in the pan.” Books such as *Hilary Duff: A Not-So-Typical Teen* by Nancy Krulik (2004), *Christina Aguilera: A Star is Made: The Unauthorized Biography* by Pier Dominguez (2002), or *John Lennon: All I Want is the Truth* by Elizabeth Partridge (2005) are books whose subjects may or may not be short-lived depending on their over-all contribution to society in general. Once the subjects' popularity wanes, so too will the interest in the presently popular figure.

Increasingly biographies are being written about ordinary people with extraordinary stories. As an adult Livia Bitton-Jackson looked back and told her story, *I Have Lived a Thousand Years*, (1997) of being one of the few teenage prisoners in the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. The diary of nineteen-year-old Thura al-Windawi records her account of the war

in Iraq in *Thura's Diary* (2004). Adeline Yen Mah, a successful physician, writes about her childhood and struggles to rise above her family's perception of her as being "bad luck" after her mother dies giving birth to her. *Chinese Cinderella: The True Story of an Unwanted Daughter* (2001) puts a personal face on the struggle to rise above the cultural mores present in the Chinese culture in the 1940s. Thura al-Windawi, Livia Bitton-Jackson and Adeline Yen Mah are ordinary people, but their stories are riveting tales with a unique perspective on a culture/period of time that many have only facts and outsider observations available.

Books of biography (and autobiography) generally are of two types:

- *Event Account*—focuses on a historically or culturally significant event in a subject's life. Russell Freedman's *Lincoln: A Photobiography* (1987) focuses on Lincoln's presidency while providing functional information about Lincoln's life. Tanya Lee Stone's collective biography, *Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream* (2009) focuses in on one period of the lives of 13 women who aspired to be among the first in space.
- *Life Account*—a birth to death (or birth to present) account of the subject's life. In Daniel Tammet's autobiography, *Born on a Blue Day: A Memoir Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant* (2007), we learn of an extraordinary 27-year-old with an extraordinary mind and intriguing life.

Some teens are ready for the world of adult biography with its friendly, adversarial or reassessment of people in their times and places. It is difficult to find a better biography than David McCullough's *John Adams*, *Truman*, or *Mornings on Horseback: The Story of an Extraordinary Family, A Vanished Way of Life and the Unique Child Who Became Theodore Roosevelt*. Advanced teen readers will enjoy the magnificent writing and a picture of time, place, and personality that is unique to these complete and intriguing biographies.

### Checklist for Evaluating Biographies and Biography Collections

- Language or dialect must be consistent with the time and place.
- Realistic and balanced approach—recognize warts and all.
- Equal representation in collections—Ratio of minorities in the collection and a representation of both male and female should be appropriate.
- Facts and details accurate.
- Facts and storyline are seamlessly presented.
- Source material acknowledged.
- Characters accurately portrayed without stereotypes.
- Writing is readable and interesting.

#### Other Significant Biographers:

- Russell Freedman
- James Cross Giblin
- Patricia and Fredrick McKissack
- Milton Meltzer

#### Thought Questions

- 1) How can biographies contribute to the knowledge of a historical period of time?
- 2) Are biographies superior to or equal to historical fiction about the same person? How do the genres compare?
- 3) Can we consider memoirs to be biographies? Investigate and explain why or why not.

#### Spotlight: Candace Fleming

On her website, [www.candacefleming.com](http://www.candacefleming.com), Candace Fleming tells us that she became interested in writing and history in her elementary school days. She says, "History is really just an extension of my love of stories. After all, some of the best stories are true ones—tales of heroism and villainy made more incredible by the fact they really happened." Her biographies have set a new benchmark for the genre. She combines facsimiles of tickets, posters, ledgers and other primary source material with solid research to compile stunning and incredibly interesting scrapbook accounts of her subjects: *Ben Franklin's Almanac: Being a True Account of the Good Gentleman's Life* (2003); *Our Eleanor: A Scrapbook Look at Eleanor Roosevelt's Remarkable Life* (2005); *Lincoln: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary* (2008); and, *The Great and Only Barnum: The Tremendous, Stupendous Life of Showman P.T. Barnum* (2009).

**More Biographies** (In addition to the titles included in the preceding narrative try these biographies, autobiographies, and collective biographies)

- Andreason, Don. *River Boy: The Story of Mark Twain*. (2003)
- Armstrong, Lance. *It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life*. (2000)
- Beah, Ishmael. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. (2007)
- Belth, Alex. *Stepping Up: The Story of Mark Twain*. (2006)
- Bolden, Tonya. *Maritcha: A Nineteenth Century American Girl*. (2005)
- Caravanes, Peggy. *Petticoat Spies: Six Women Spies of the Civil War*. (2002)
- Chen, Da. *China's Son: Growing Up in the Cultural Revolution*. (2003)
- Edelson, Edward. *Gregor Mendel: And the Roots of Genetics*. (2001)
- Fleischman, John. *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome But True Story About Brain Science*. (2002)
- Fradin, Dennis. *The Signers: The Fifty-Six Stories Behind the Declaration of Independence*. (2002)
- Fradin, Judith Bloom and Dennis B. Fradin. *5,000 Miles to Freedom: Ellen and William Craft's Flight From Slavery*. (2006)
- Giblin, James Cross. *Life and Death of Adolf Hitler*. (2002)
- Giblin, James Cross. *The Rise and Fall of Senator Joe McCarthy*. (2009)
- Greenberg, Jan. *Vincent Van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist*. (2003)
- Harness, Cheryl. *Rabble Rousers: 20 Women Who Made a Difference*. (2003)
- Heiligman, Deborah. *Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith*. (2008)
- Helfer, Andrew. *Malcolm X: A Graphic Biography*. (2006)
- Kirkpatrick, Katherine. *The Snow Baby*. (2006)
- Krull, Kathleen. *Lives of Extraordinary Women: Rulers, Rebels (and What the Neighbors Thought)*. (2000)
- Lasky, Kathryn. *A Voice of Her Own: The Story of Phillis Wheatley, Slave Poet*. (2003)
- Lipsyte, Robert. *Heroes of Baseball: The Men Who Made it America's Favorite Game*. (2006)
- Lobel, Anita. *No Pretty Pictures*. (1998)
- Lutes, Jason. *Houdini: The Handcuff King*. (2007)
- Macdermot, Molly. *Mandy Moore: The Unofficial Book*. (2000)
- Myers, Walter Dean. *Bad Boy, A Memoir*. (2002)
- Oppenheim, Joanne. *Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and A Librarian Who Made A Difference*. (2006)
- Reef, Catherine. *e.e. cummings: a poet's life*. (2006)
- Robinson, Sharon. *Promises to Keep: How Jackie Robinson Changed America*. (2004)
- Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Searching for Anne Frank: Letters from Amsterdam to Iowa*. (2003)
- Sinnott, Susan. *Extraordinary Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders*. (2003)
- White, Tom. *Bill W: A Different Kind of Hero: The Story of Alcoholics Anonymous*. (2003)
- Zenatti, Valérie. *When I Was A Soldier: A Memoir*. (2005)

## Real Science and Technology

In elementary school libraries, books about animals are prevalent, plus topics such as dinosaurs and picture books on space, rockets, and other amazing phenomenon. Somewhere between childhood and the teenage years, interest in science seems to wane. Difficulty in building any science or technology collection and promoting it to teens is partially the result of the speed at which volumes and even websites go out of date. Couple that with the new discoveries and scientific theories that crumble almost yearly and we know we must evaluate carefully the material we offer young adult readers. Despite those factors science teachers interested in extending student learning beyond the textbook will find many possibilities. For example, a biology teacher who introduces his/her students to Nancy Werlin's *Double Helix* will find students often develop a renewed interest in genetic engineering. Consider the following categories in which to find titles of interest to teens:

- The way things work
- Lavishly illustrated books of space or the micro worlds under a microscope
- Computer graphics and special effects in movies
- Books of the ocean depths
- Natural disasters such as volcano eruptions, earthquakes, or tornados
- Reference books on diseases that affect teenagers such as AIDS, addictions, or depression
- Career resources in science and technology
- Interactive science experiments going on in real time by National Geographic or others
- Materials for Science Fair competitions

Perhaps the best materials to promote to teenagers are the fabulous websites created by science laboratories. Many of these sites provide not only reports and science news that teens can use, but are wonderful resources for data and include lavish photographs that teens can use to enhance reports for research.

Many teens are involved in science fairs and require information far beyond what could be contained in a school or public library. In this case, teachers and librarians should develop links to sophisticated scientific databases accessible, for the most part, through colleges and universities or science labs. These organizations are usually quite willing to help budding science investigators. One is reminded of such help in the book, *Rocket Boys* by Homer Hickam and its companion movie *October Sky*, when a teenager corresponds with Werner Von Braum about the construction of rocket nozzles. Today, many scientists are willing to mentor young people via email.

It is quite possible to stimulate the interest of teens in space as they view *Apollo 13* and recognize both the challenge and the drama that has played out in many scientific discoveries and technological experiments. Teens are also easily interested in scientific controversies, such as cloning, stem cell research, or creationism vs. intelligent design. When teens become involved in actual experiments such as participatory data collection of the local environment these teens will be seeking information of all types as they discover careers and interests for themselves. Teachers and librarians who know good search techniques and resources will find an audience of eager-seeking friends.

### Check out these favorites:

- Abbot, Edwin A. *The Annotated Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*. (2002)
- Boon, Kevin Alexander. *The Human Genome Project: What Does Decoding DNA Mean for Us?*. (2002)

- Brizendine, Louann. *The Female Brain*. (2006)
- Clancey, Gregory. *Earthquake Nation: The Cultural Politics of Japanese Seismicity, 1868-1950*. (2006)
- Hawking, Stephen. *On the Shoulders of Giants: The Great Works of Physics and Astronomy*. (2002)
- Mawer, Simon and the Field Museum of Chicago. *Gregor Mendel: Planting the Seeds of Genetics*. (2006)
- Novian, Claire. *The Deep: The Extraordinary Creatures of the Abyss*. (2007)
- Platt, Richard. *Crime Scene: The Ultimate Guide to Forensic Science*. (2003)
- Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. (2006)
- Reed, Jim. *Storm Chaser: A Photographer's Journey*. (2007)
- Roach, Mary. *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*. (2003)
- Schlosser, Eric. *Chew On This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food*. (2006)
- Shermer, Michael. *Why People Believe Weird Things: Pseudoscience, Superstition, and Other Confusions of Our Time*. (2002)
- Silverstein, Ken. *The Radioactive Boy Scout: The True Story of a Boy and His Backyard Nuclear Reactor*. (2004)
- Thimmesh, Catherine. *Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon*. (2006)
- Wade, Nicholas. *Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors*. (2006)
- Wolf, Maryanne. *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*. (2007)

## Keeping Up

- The periodical *Appraisal: Science Books for Young People* provides reviews from two perspectives: one from a librarian and the other from a scientist. An invaluable resource for collection development for children through adults.
- Great Resource Magazines:
  - *Scientific American* ([www.scientificamerican.com](http://www.scientificamerican.com))
  - *National Geographic* ([ngm.nationalgeographic.com](http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com))
  - *Smithsonian Air and Space Magazine* ([www.airspacemag.com](http://www.airspacemag.com)), and
  - *Popular Science* ([www.popsci.com](http://www.popsci.com))

## Thought Questions

- 1) Survey a few teens about their interest in science and technology. Then, on any topic, find 3 websites that would dazzle their curiosity. What is their reaction as you introduce them to such sources?
- 2) How can teachers and librarians work together to link teenagers to the best and most accurate science resources on the web? And to connect readers to science related books?

## Spotlight: Science Sites Online

We challenge you to go to NASA's website ([www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)) and not be interested or excited about what you find there. NASA has individual links for Students, Educators, Media, and more. NASA's Kids' Club section often includes simple introductions to topics YA readers might find of interest. NASA's has articles about hurricanes, roller coasters, explanations of why astronauts float in space, pictures from the Hubble Telescope, and the latest in astronomy discoveries. The site is easy to navigate and fun for many ages.

Other sites to examine include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- Smithsonian Institute (including the Air and Space Museum) — [www.smithsonian.org](http://www.smithsonian.org)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service — [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov)

## Science Fiction

Robert A. Heinlein defines science fiction as speculative fiction based on the real world with all its established facts and natural laws. To elaborate this definition, the author of science fiction creates a world governed by the laws of science insofar as science is known at the time of authoring. This fictional world may be placed in past, present, or future time containing all sorts of characters and amazing elements, but the order of that created world is governed by scientific law.

Science fiction has had an amazing history. Consider the following landmarks:

- Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in 1818.
- Jules Vern with *Journey to the Center of Time* (1864) and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870).
- H.G. Wells with *The Time Machine* (1895) and *War of the Worlds*, the book in 1898, the radio version in 1938, a movie in 1953, and a remake of the movie in 2005.

With the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, interest in science fiction began to develop with Hugo Gernsback's magazine *Niderr Ekelectronics*. Gernsback coined the term "science fiction" and the Hugo awards, awards for outstanding science fiction stories and novels, was named after him. C.S. Lewis tried his hand in the genre with *Out of the Silent Planet* in 1938. After World War II, science fiction exploded:

- Ray Bradbury with *The Martian Chronicles* (1950)
- Jack Finney with his film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956)
- Robert A. Heinlein with *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1960)
- Arthur C. Clarke with both *Rama* series (1970s–1990s) and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968)
- Isaac Asimov with his *Foundation* trilogy (1942–1950, published as one in 1950)

In the late 1970s, a movie by the name of *Star Wars* doubled the fans of science fiction overnight. Lucas's hit released two more movies in the 1980s and recently released the prequels in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The 1980s also saw hits in the science fiction genre with *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Recently, science fiction continues to be popular with such authors as Douglas Adams (*Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series, radio and TV series, and movie in 2005), Greg Bear, John Varley, Connie Witlis, and Mary Zimmer Bradley. Basic science fiction themes include alien invasion, overpopulation, technology run amok, revolt against conformity, religion, strong women characters, human and computer interaction, and shared universe.

Enthusiasts of either Science Fiction or Fantasy claim to know the difference between the two genres, and either love the one or disdain the other. For the purist, the difference between Science Fiction and Fantasy revolves around a strict definition. In reality, authors seem to dip in and out of scientific or created worlds with enough frequency that the two genres seem to blend at times.

Try these resources:

- *Classics of Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature*. Ed. Fiona Kelleghan. Salem Press, Inc., 2002. 2 volumes.
- *The Year's Best Science Fiction and Fantasy for Teens: First Annual Collection (Year's Best Science Fiction & Fantasy for Teens)*. Ed. Jane Yolen and Patrick Nielsen Hayden. Tor Books, 2005.
- Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America—[www.sfwaworld.org](http://www.sfwaworld.org)
- Science Fiction Resource Guide—[sf.emse.fr/SFRG/](http://sf.emse.fr/SFRG/)

- Sci Fi Wire—an online journal and entertainment site at [www.scifi.com/sfw/](http://www.scifi.com/sfw/)
- Tamora Pierce's site for science fiction recommendations for gifted readers at [www.tamora-pierce.com/recbooks/giftedsf.htm](http://www.tamora-pierce.com/recbooks/giftedsf.htm)
- Burns, Michael. *Digital Sci-Fi Art: A Step-by-Step to Creating Stunning, Futuristic Images*. Harper Design, 2004.

### Authors to Know

- Paul Anderson
- Piers Anthony
- Issac Asimov
- Clive Barker
- Ray Bradbury
- Marion Zimmer Bradley
- Terry Brooks
- Orson Scott Card
- Arthur C. Clark
- David Eddings
- Barbara Hambly
- Harry Turtledove
- Robert Jordan
- Anne McCaffrey
- George Orwell
- Frederik Pohl
- Terry Pratchett
- Jules Verne

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century YA Science Fiction

- *Feed* by MT Anderson
- *The House of the Scorpion* by Nancy Farmer
- *The Last Book in the Universe* by Rodman Philbrick
- *Spacer and Rat* by Margaret Bechard
- *Double Helix* by Nancy Werlin
- *Uglies* series by Scott Westerfeld

### Hugo Award Novels

- 2009—*The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaimon  
 2008—*The Yiddish Policemen's Union* by Michael Chabon  
 2007—*Rainbows End* by Vernor Vinge  
 2006—*Spin* by Robert Charles Wilson  
 2005—*Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell* by Susanna Clark

Hugo Awards (World Science Fiction Society): [worldcon.org](http://worldcon.org)

### Spotlight: William Sleator

William Sleator is a master at creating science fiction books. His first was *House of Stairs* (1974), and it set a new standard for writers. Sleator says, "Although I invented the plot and the setting, the characters in that book were all based on people I knew." Sleator grew up in St. Louis, Missouri but now splits his time between Boston and Thailand (near Bangkok).

His many books of science fiction include *The Beasties* (1999), *Singularity* (1985), and *The Green Futures of Tycbo* (1981). In regards to writing that science fiction, William Sleator has said, "The challenge is to try to make the parts you invent as believable as the scientific laws you are using. If you succeed, then you are giving the reader something that is magical and fantastic but at the same time might actually be possible." With that quote Sleator defines the very essence of science fiction—something magical and fantastic but still within the realm of scientific possibility.

### Golden Duck Awards: Hal Clement Award for Young Adults Subdivision

- 2009—Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. and Doctorow, Cory. *Little Brother*  
 2008—Brin, David. *Sky Horizon*.  
 2007—Hautman, Pete. *Rash*.  
 2006—Pulse, Simon. *Uglies*.  
 2005—Lee, Sharon and Steve Miller. *Balance of Trade*.  
 2004—Turtledove, Harry. *Gunpowder Empire*  
 2003—Anderson, M. T. *Feed*

Golden Duck awards website: [www.goldenduck.org](http://www.goldenduck.org)

### Thought Questions

- 1) Why does science fiction seem to capture the attention of many teen boys?
- 2) If parents express concern about teens reading too much science fiction, what would you recommend?

# Fantasy

If teachers and librarians can't hook teens onto science fiction, there is another option. Fantasy, or fantastic fiction, is often more popular than science fiction. Fantasy authors do not operate on the restrictive rules of science. However, as they create the worlds, civilizations, or characters, the authors are required to build the rules of their society/place and then consistently apply those rules throughout the story. For example, in *The Lord of the Rings* we meet various groups such as Orcs, Elves, Dwarves, and Hobbits, each with their own physical and social characteristics and interactions that last throughout the entire trilogy. Fantasy stories most often center around one of the following themes:

- The Quest—The hero is sent on a mission to conquer obstacles, to seek a destiny, or to capture a prize.
- Good vs. Evil—The classic clash between the force and its dark side.
- Time Travel—Forward or back, or perhaps both.
- Animal fantasy—The rabbits of *Watership Down* or Brian Jacques's *Redwall* characters.
- Utopias and Dystopias—Perfect societies or broken ones.
- King Arthur legend—There will never be an end, even though Sean Connery tried.

Consider the following landmarks in fantasy:

- Homer's *Odyssey*
- Old English poem *Beowulf*
- Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*
- Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift (1726)
- Brother's Grimm and other fairy tale authors
- Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)

Fantasy really began to find its footing with the following titles:

- *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien (1954)
- C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*
- Ursula K. LeGuin's *Earthsea* series

Fantasy short fiction was usually published in science fiction magazines. This all changed in 1949 when the first issue of *Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* was published. The latter half of the century saw a boost to the fantasy genre. Terry Brooks's *Sword of Shannara* in 1977 was hugely popular and made bestseller lists. Since then, fantasy has only grown and will continue to do so. With the rise of film, attention is brought to the classics of fantasy, and readership is booming.

Teen readers of fantasy seem to feel that the longer the books are, the better. They will judge a library's collection based on how many complete series there are on the shelves—and how much shelf space is devoted to fantasy and fantasy-related titles.

Here are some selected titles that teens will enjoy:

- Engle, Jason. *Infernum: The Art of Jason Engle*. Paper Tiger, 2004.
- Sibley, Brian. *The Lord of the Rings: The Making of the Movie Trilogy*. Houghton Mifflin, 2002.
- Black, Holly. *Valiant: A Modern Tale of Faerie*. Simon Pulse, 2005.
- Larbalestier, Justine. *Magic or Madness*. Penguin/Razorbill, 2005.
- Vaz, Mark Cotta. *Twilight: The Complete Illustrated Movie Companion*. Brown Young Readers, 2008.



## Classic High Fantasy Series

- J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (set in Middle-earth)
- Terry Brooks's *The Sword of Shannara* and its sequels
- Lord Dunsany's *The King of Elfland's Daughter*
- David Eddings's *Belgariad and The Malloreon*
- Robert Jordan's *The Wheel of Time* series
- Ursula K. Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea* and its sequels
- George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series
- Margaret Weis's and Tracy Hickman's *Dragonlance* series
- Roger Zelazny's *Amber* series

## A List of Recent Great New Fantasy to Consider

- Constable, Kate. *The Tenth Power*. (2007)
- Fisher, Catherine. *Day of the Scarab. The Oracle Prophecies: Book Three*. (2006)
- Pratchett, Terry. *Wintersmith*. (2006)
- Stewart, Paul and Chris Riddell. *Midnight Over Sanctaphrax: The Edge Chronicles #3*. (2004)
- Stroud, Jonathan. *Ptolemy's Gate: Bartimaeus Trilogy Book 3*. (2007)
- Hale, Shannon. *The Goose Girl*. (2005)
- Riordan, Rick. *The Last Olympian (Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Book 5)*. (2009)

### Thought Questions

- 1) What is the major reason that most teens find so captivating about fantasy?
- 2) What would a top ten list of fantasy titles be for teenagers you know?

## Spotlight: Christopher Paolini

A teenage writer rode the popularity of Rowling's epic fantasy tales by making a mark for himself in the world of young adult fantasy fiction. Christopher Paolini first self-published his book, *Eragon* (2003). It was soon picked up by Random House and was marketed as "Book One of the Inheritance Trilogy." He began the book when he was a fifteen-year-old home-schooled student in Montana. The book was widely published by the time he was nineteen. He was a guest on several national talk shows — partially because of his young age and partially because of the following his book garnered at the early stages of its release. *Eldest*, the second book in the Inheritance trilogy, was released in 2005. *Eragon* the movie premiered in London on December 11, 2006. The third book, *Briisingr*, arrived September 20, 2008. A fourth book is in the works. For more information, visit the official book site at [www.alagaesia.com](http://www.alagaesia.com).

## J.K. Rowling and the Harry Potter Frenzy

J.K. Rowling and her immensely popular Harry Potter series hardly need mentioning. However, we would be remiss in not acknowledging the tremendous influence her books have had on the genre of fantasy and reading in general. On July 21, 2007, the seventh, and last, book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* was released. It reportedly sold over 11 million copies in the first 24 hours with lines at many bookstores reaching around the block. Although the books grew increasingly darker and seemed aimed at an older audience, readers from second grade through adult embraced each book and enjoy the movies based on the books.

Learn all about J.K. Rowling and her writing by visiting her official website at [www.jkrowling.com](http://www.jkrowling.com)

## Top 10 Fantasy Books from Fantasy 100\*

1. *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien
2. *Harry Potter* Series by J.K. Rowling
3. *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien
4. *Wheel of Time* Series by Robert Jordan
5. *A Song of Ice & Fire* by George R.R. Martin
6. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis
7. *The Belgariad* Series by David Eddings
8. *Wizard's First Rule* by Terry Goodkind
9. *Magician* by Raymond E. Feist
10. *His Dark Materials* Trilogy by Phillip Pullman

\*Website: [home.austarnet.com.au/petersykes/fantasy100/lists\\_books.html](http://home.austarnet.com.au/petersykes/fantasy100/lists_books.html)

## Mysteries and Horror for Teens

When the Stratemeyer Syndicate began publishing series, they recognized the popularity of mystery with children and introduced The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. As the young adult market published for teens the genre was there too. Teens became fans of mysteries (and suspense). The literature teens experience as young readers lays the groundwork for the literature that teens know and read.

The main genre of mystery has many subgenres including suspense, horror, and thrillers. In the past few years, the subgenres of suspense and supernatural have topped the popularity charts. Mysteries primarily focus on the “whodunit” aspect of a crime. Clues are revealed, sometimes false clues (red herrings), and in the end all is revealed. In suspense titles readers know the culprit of the crime and the suspense builds around the interaction the unsuspecting characters have with the villain. Most spy novels are thrillers in which the hero must stop some major act and save the world. Spy novels are impacted by current politics as villains have changed from Nazis, to KGB, to Al-Queda style terrorists. Supernatural and horror novels often play on the psychological elements of human nature. Supernatural fiction accepts the presence of witches, vampires, werewolves, and other supernatural creatures, but it doesn't treat them as evil monsters at all times.

Over time authors have individually published mystery or suspense stories, but there have been several authors who have published multiple titles. In earlier decades, Jay Bennett published more than fourteen traditional mysteries in which the characters struggled to decipher clues and solve the riddle. During the same time Lois Duncan was also writing mysteries, including *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (1973) and *Killing Mr. Griffin* (1978). Joan Lowery Nixon also published prolifically, mostly in the '80s and '90s. Nixon's titles included *The Kidnapping of Christina Lattimore* (1979) and *The Other Side of Dark* (1986). Nixon's novels moved mystery toward the suspense genre. In the mid-eighties Christopher Pike entered into the suspense arena with *Getting Even* (1985). Pike published over sixty novels for young adults before the end of the millennium. Not too long after Pike entered the scene, R.L. Stine joined the market with his *Fear Street* series and his *Goosebumps* series for younger readers. For a time his books were immensely popular and he launched *Dangerous Girls* (a vampire series). While he is still widely read and publishes several titles a year, his popularity seems to have passed.

At the turn of the century, vampires, witches, and werewolves were popular characters in a new breed of horror. Often the witches were the good guys, and Angel, the television and print series, gave us a vampire with a soul. Annette Curtis Klause's werewolf love story *Blood and Chocolate* (1997) was a romance and an examination of the politics of a werewolf clan. “Daughters of the Night” a series (2000–2004) by Lynn Ewing continued the romantic element that came into great popularity in 2008 with Stephanie Meyer's four books in the *Twilight Saga*. The mystery surrounds Edward (a vampire) and Jacob (a werewolf) and what Bella's sacrifice will bring. Is this mystery/horror or plain fantasy—the line is thin and only the reader can decide. The very popular movies based on the *Twilight* books helped the popularity of the books to peak.

In the early 2000s, spies found their way into teen fiction. Alex Rider titles by Anthony Horowitz have found an audience with all readers. Alex, a teenage boy, works for a British spy agency and battles evil terrorist types. He even has fabulous spy toys, which are detailed in *Alex Rider: The Gadgets* (2006) (a related title that could be a model in teaching technical writing). Horowitz's most recent spy title is *Snakehead* (2008). In 2006, *Stormbreaker*, a movie based on the first book in the Alex Rider series, premiered in theaters.

Frank Peretti, an extremely successful adult Christian fiction novelist, has become a popular author of teen literature as well. His series, The Veritas Project, has become one of the biggest selling fiction series ever written for teens. One of the titles in the series, *Hangman's Curse*, was made into a movie. Peretti has also authored several titles in the Cooper Kids Adventure series.

#### Touchstone Titles

- Atwater-Rhodes, Amelia. *Persistence of Memory*. (2008) — Supernatural
- Bennet, Holly. *The Bonemender*. (2005)
- Brooks, Kevin. *Road of the Dead*. (2006) — Mystery
- Butcher, A.J. The Spy High series. (Note : There are several titles in this series. Some of the British titles differ from the American titles.) — Mystery
- Clark, Mary Higgins. *Daddy's Little Girl*. (2002), *No Place Like Home*. (2005), *Two Little Girls In Blue*. (2006) — Suspense
- Cooney, Caroline. *If the Witness Lied*. (2009) — Mystery
- Duncan, Lois. *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. (1973) — Mystery; *Killing Mr. Griffin* (1978) — Psychological Thriller; *Down A Dark Hall*. (1974) — Mystery/Supernatural
- Ferguson, Alane. *The Christopher Killer*. (2006) — Mystery
- Fredricks, Mariah. *Crunch Time*. (2006) — Mystery
- Giles, Gail. *Shattering Glass*. (2002), *Dead Girls Don't Write Letters*. (2003), *What Happened to Cass McBride?* (2006) — Psychological Thriller
- Horowitz, Anthony. *Stormbreaker*. (2001), *Point Blank*. (2002), *Skeleton Key*. (2003), *Eagle Strike*. (2004), *Scorpio* (2005), *Snakehead* (2008) — Spy/Thriller
- Huang, Jim and Austin Lugar. *Mystery Muses: 100 Classics That Inspire Today's Mystery Writers*. (2006) — Mystery Non-Fiction
- Klass, David. *Dark Angel*. (2005) — Psychological Thriller
- MacCready, Robin Merrow. *Buried*. (2006) — Mystery
- McNamee, Graham. *Acceleration*. (2003) — Psychological Thriller
- Pascal, Francine. *Fearless* series — Mystery/Supernatural
- Peck, Richard. *Dreamland Lake*. (1973) — Mystery
- Peretti, Frank. *Hangman's Curse*. (2001), *Nightmare Academy* (2003) — Mystery
- Plum-Ucci, Carol. *The Body of Christopher Creed*. (2000) — Psychological Thriller; *The Night My Sister Went Missing*. (2006) — Mystery
- Pullman, Philip. *The Ruby in the Smoke*. (1985), *Shadow in the North* (1988) — Mystery
- Qualey, Marsha. *Close to a Killer*. (1999) — Mystery
- Reiss, Kathryn. *Dreadful Sorry*. (1993) — Mystery/Supernatural
- Shan, Darren. *Cirque du Freak* series — Supernatural/Horror
- Springer, Nancy. *Blood Trail*. (2003); *The Case of the Left-Handed Lady: An Enola Holmes Mystery*. (2007) — Psychological Thriller
- Stine, R.L. *Fear Street* series, *Dangerous Girls*. (2003) — Mystery/Supernatural
- Wynne-Jones, Tim. *The Boy in the Burning House*. (2000) — Mystery
- Werlin, Nancy. *The Rules of Survival*. (2006) — Psychological Thriller
- Doctorow, Cory. *Little Brother*. (2008) — Techno Thriller

## Adult Mystery Writers for Teens

### Mystery

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle  
Sue Grafton  
Agatha Christie  
Tony Hillerman  
Lillian Jackson Braun  
Ridley Pearson

### Horror/Supernatural

Edgar Allen Poe  
Stephen King  
Dean Koontz  
Kay Hooper

### Spy/Thriller

Tom Clancy  
Ian Fleming  
Stephen Hunter

### Suspense

Harlan Coben  
John Grisham  
John Sandford

### Edgar Awards for Best Young Adult Mystery

[www.mysterywriters.org](http://www.mysterywriters.org)  
2008 Winner: *Down River* by  
John Hargt  
2009 Winner: *Paper Towns* by  
John Green

## Spotlight: Nancy Werlin

In 1998 Nancy Werlin published *The Killer's Cousin*. It was Nancy's second book and her first psychological thriller. The protagonist of the novel has moved in with his aunt and uncle after the death of his girlfriend, Emily. David feels responsible for Emily's death. It is, however, his cousin Lily who uses her hostility to guard her own deep secret and guilt. *The Killer's Cousin* won the Edgar Award for Best Young Adult Mystery.

After *The Killer's Cousin*, Werlin published *Locked Inside* (2000), another psychological mystery. In this novel Marnie has isolated herself from the world around her by playing an online video game. When Marnie is kidnapped, there is no one to come to her rescue, and she must rely on her wits to survive and escape.

Werlin followed *Locked Inside* with *Black Mirror* (2001) and in 2004, Werlin's fourth book was published. *Double Helix* was a combination of intrigue, scientific research, and much mystery as two unsuspecting teenagers seek to uncover the secrets in Dr. Wyatt's research lab and the connection he has to their families.

In 2006, Werlin's *The Rules of Survival* introduced one of the most horrific mother characters in the history of Young Adult literature.

Suspense, fantasy, and romance combine in her 2008 novel, *Impossible*. Seventeen-year-old Lucy discovers the curse that has plagued the women in her family for three generations. There tasks she can complete to ward off the curse—but they are near impossible. Is she strong enough?

Nancy Werlin's mysteries are complex and well developed. Werlin's titles are page-turners that keep the reader's interest as the mystery unfolds before them and the mysteries deepen and become more interesting—and possibly more dangerous. Check out the latest information about the author at [www.nancywerlin.com](http://www.nancywerlin.com).

## Thought Questions

- 1) Why are formula plots popular in books by authors such as R.L. Stine, Mary Higgins Clark, or Stephen King?
- 2) Has the trend toward graphic depiction of violence affected the quality of the plots currently being produced as compared to the all-time classics of Agatha Christie?
- 3) Which do you prefer mystery or suspense novels (regardless of the sub-genre)? Explain why.

## A History of Hollywood in Brief

An important entertainment piece of teen's lives are movies, an audience that Hollywood has come to recognize and to which they actively market. Motion pictures have a rich history and there are films that are classics, much like print materials.

In 1877 a photographer developed a system for taking motion pictures and the race was on to create a way to both take and view moving pictures. In the mid-1890s in both Paris (Dec. 1895) and New York (Apr. 1896), the first motion pictures were screened in public. It wasn't until 1903 that the first blockbuster was released to the public. The eleven-minute film, *The Great Train Robbery*, became a big hit. The success of *The Great Train Robbery* led to the opening of movie theaters called nickelodeons (admission was five cents) across the United States by the end of the decade.

In the beginning movies were silent and often accompanied in the theater by musicians. It was during this era that D. W. Griffith made *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), a film both highly praised and severely criticized. Europe and Russia were also contributing to the film industry with films such as *Nosferatu* (1922) and *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925). However, while silent films proved popular, inventors still searched for a way to add sound. In 1927 *The Jazz Singer* surprised audiences with the few scenes in which Al Jolson sang and spoke. In 1928 Walt Disney entered onto the scene with *Steamboat Willie*, the first animated short with sound.

"Talkies" changed the movie industry. Some stars of the silent screen were unable to make the jump to films with sound, while others transitioned well. The focus on sound reduced the emphasis on some other artistic elements, but "talkies" were popular with the public. Also occurring during the thirties was the introduction of Technicolor, first used by Disney in animated films and in *Becky Sharp* (1935) for the first time in a full-length feature. Color didn't really take off until the 1950s, however, as a way to distinguish film from television.

Despite the "threat" of television, the demise of the studio system, and the attack of McCarthyism films, the Hollywood industry continued to grow. In the 1970s changes in the distribution system introduced the concept of a blockbuster. The first film to benefit by the new distribution system was Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972). In 1975 Stephen Spielberg had his first summer blockbuster with *Jaws*, and George Lucas brought us the first in the *Star Wars* franchise in 1977. For the next several years, big budget films dominated Hollywood's production. Film festivals began and introduced audiences and distributors to independent films, some of which "blew up" and became box office hits. The tension between big budget and independent films has dominated the last twenty years of American film, although a balance is being discovered.

### Film Festivals

There are thousands of festivals around the world, in different cities and countries, although a few have garnered international attention and respect.

Cannes Film Festival  
Sundance Film Festival  
Toronto International Film Festival  
San Francisco International Film Festival  
Locarno Film Festival  
Venice Film Festival

## The Canon of Films Films Teens Should See

- *Duck Soup* (1933)
- *It Happened One Night* (1934)
- *Modern Times* (1936)
- *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* (1937)
- *Citizen Kane* (1941)
- *Casablanca* (1942)
- *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948)
- *Rear Window* (1954)
- *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955)
- *Some Like It Hot* (1959)
- *Dr. Strangelove* (1964)
- *Hard Days Night* (1964)
- *The Graduate* (1967)
- *Chinatown* (1974)
- *Annie Hall* (1977)
- *Ordinary People* (1980)
- *Amadeus* (1984)
- *Platoon* (1986)
- *Do The Right Thing* (1989)
- *Pulp Fiction*\* (1995)
- *Matrix* (1999)

\* Violence, Sex, Drugs, Rated R

## First 10 of AFI's Top 100 Movies of All Time (10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition)

1. *Citizen Kane* (1941)
2. *The Godfather* (1972)
3. *Casablanca* (1942)
4. *Raging Bull* (1980)
5. *Singin' in the Rain* (1952)
6. *Gone with the Wind* (1939)
7. *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962)
8. *Schindler's List* (1993)
9. *Vertigo* (1958)
10. *The Wizard of OZ* (1939)

[www.afi.com/tvevents/100years/movies.aspx](http://www.afi.com/tvevents/100years/movies.aspx)

## Spotlight: The Oscars

Every year the red carpet is rolled out and the industry recognizes achievements from the previous year. Established in 1927 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences holds a ceremony each year to award the best films and performances of the previous year. The ceremony has affectionately been known as The Oscars because of the gold plated statue awarded to winners.

When the first ceremony was held in May of 1929, it is unlikely those attending could imagine the extravaganza the now-televised ceremony would become. As the popularity of the ceremony has increased throughout history, the Oscars find themselves on different nights in different venues, but always attended in glamour and style.

The Academy recognizes the best director, film, actor, and actress. In 1936 supporting actors/actresses began to be recognized. Other categories that have been added include documentary, makeup, and a division of the special effects category.

While the Academy's highly guarded votes may eventually be criticized, the evening continues to draw a large worldwide audience and lend credibility to the nominees as the best of the previous year.

## Keeping Up

- Entertainment Weekly—quarterly issues on upcoming movies for Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter.
- [www.apple.com/trailers/](http://www.apple.com/trailers/)
- [www.mtv.com/movies/](http://www.mtv.com/movies/)
- [www.afi.com](http://www.afi.com)

## Thought Question

- 1) With a group of teens, create a top 15 list of the greatest movies they have seen. Compare their list with your own and with the AFI list or any other comparable list.

## Theater/Drama

By the teenage years young people should have experienced puppet plays, Readers Theater, and live skits or plays about such things as the first Thanksgiving. They have also experienced drama translated into hundreds of television and motion picture plays. During the teenage years students in high schools have the opportunity to experience theater as an elective but also as a part of their language arts curriculum. In addition, teens may find dramatic opportunities in community theater and in the current rage of writing their own scripts for home videos. It is useful for both teachers and librarians to have knowledge of a wide range of dramatic experience from classical theater to operetta to modern Broadway and to the many one-act plays that are published and useable by teens. Connections to drama in the Asian culture can also provide richness to the teen dramatic experience.

The oldest recorded Western theater comes from the Greeks. Most of the classical Greek dramas were written in three parts, three individual plays telling one great story. The performances consisted of only a few men who wore masks for different characters. Onstage at all times was the chorus who sang songs throughout the performance. Some of the greatest playwrights in this era were Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus.

After the Greeks, the Romans took on the same type of theater, but it didn't last long. Theater didn't emerge in the Western world until the Middle Ages. This is where theater as we know it began. The Catholic Church would have its monks act out certain stories from the Bible in Latin. Somehow, and we don't know how or why, these plays moved out onto the church steps. Three types of plays emerged: Mystery (stories based on the Bible), Miracle (stories of the saints), and Morality (allegorical, like *Everyman*, that taught of human vice and virtue). These plays began to be played by traveling groups that would perform on wagons or platform stages in the town center.

During the Renaissance, the traveling performers gathered and became more settled into their own theaters. Playwrights like Shakespeare and Marlowe began writing more secular material. But there were problems with the theater: Protestants and the Plague. When the Plague would break out in an area, theaters would immediately be closed because the close quarters would help it spread faster. Protestants felt that theaters were centers of evil, and many times theaters were forced to close from Protestant leaders.

Theater continued into the 1700s, but it wasn't nearly as popular. The 1800s brought back the lavishness of the theater. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a blooming of theater and playwrights; this blossoming never died out. It continued to grow well into the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Theater has become a staple to the arts.

The biggest tradition outside the Western tradition of theater lies in Japan. The Japanese have three types of theater that have lasted for centuries: Noh, Bunraku, and Kabuki. Noh uses intricate masks to portray the lead character, the only set decoration is a painting of a tree in the background, the costumes are lavish, and the movement is slow and controlled. Bunraku involves puppets, but these are no ordinary puppets. They are at least half the size of a normal human, and it takes a master puppeteer to control the head and right arm and two other puppeteers to operate the rest. There is hardly any dialogue; there is just monotonal chanting. The last form of Japanese theater, Kabuki, also uses chanting. The actors wear elaborate makeup, but the action is similar to action in any play you would see.

Teens may experience professional theater by reading or performing in three-act plays like *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *10 Little Indians*, *Harvey*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, or read other plays written by Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams. More contemporary pieces may include

*Zap!* by Paul Fleischman, *You're Dead* by William Mastrosimone, *The Nerd* and *The Foreigner* by Larry Shue, and *Chemical Imbalance: A Jekyll and Hyde Play* by Lauren Wilson. Teens may also participate in operettas such as *Oklahoma*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *High School Musical* or *Anything Goes*. Generally teens are involved in these musicals because the royalties are affordable. Teens may also be able to experience Broadway theater, either in New York or Broadway plays on tour like *Phantom of the Opera*, *Cats*, *Wicked*, or *Les Misérables*. Librarians and teachers should encourage teens to take advantage of the many opportunities there are to perform in and attend these wonderful plays, from Broadway to community theater.

### Major Playwrights: Greek, American, and British

#### Greek

Aristophanes  
Sophocles  
Euripides

#### Renaissance

William Shakespeare  
Christopher Marlowe

#### 1700s

John Dryden  
William Congreve  
Aphra Behn  
Oliver Goldsmith

#### 1800s

Oscar Wilde  
George Bernard Shaw  
J.M. Barrie

#### 1900s

Henry James  
Tom Stoppard  
Tennessee Williams  
Arthur Miller  
Eugene O'Neill  
Thornton Wilder  
Neil Simon  
Lorraine Hansberry  
Tony Kushner  
Edward Albee

#### Resource:

*The Complete Audition Book for Young Actor: A Comprehensive Guide to Winning by Enhancing Acting Skills* by Roger Ellis. Meriwether Press, 2004.

### Spotlight: Arthur Miller

Arthur Miller was born in 1915 in Manhattan to Jewish immigrant parents. His father's garment business failed during the Depression, and Miller saw his first dose of tragedy. After graduating from high school, Miller worked various odd jobs to earn money to go to college. He began college in 1934 at the University of Michigan, where he began writing plays. After college, Miller returned to New York and produced his first play, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, a complete flop. His next play, *All My Sons*, produced in 1947, was an instant hit. Only two years later, *Death of a Salesman*, Miller's biggest and most respected play, appeared. It was a phenomenal success, winning a Pulitzer Prize, winning the Drama Critics Circle Award, and being translated into over a dozen languages. In the 1950s, Miller wrote *The Crucible*, a play about the Salem witch trials, yet a blatant attack on McCarthyism. Three years later, Miller was called in front of the House Committee for un-American activities. His playwright activities died down until the 1990s. Miller continued to stay in spotlight until his death on February 10, 2005.

### Keeping Up

- Broadway -- [www.broadway.com](http://www.broadway.com)
- Tony Awards -- [www.tonyawards.com](http://www.tonyawards.com)
- *Best Plays Theater Yearbook 2007-2008* Limelight Editions. Published annually.
- *The Norton Anthology* -- both British and American drama
- *The Oxford Companion to the Theatre*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (also check other titles in the Oxford Companion series.)
- Botto, Robert. *At This Theatre: 100 Years of Broadway Shows, Stories, and Stars*. Applause Books, 2002.

### Thought Questions

- 1) Interview middle and high school English teachers to see what kinds of drama experiences they promote in their classes. How can you as a librarian or teacher help contribute to their agenda?
- 2) What local opportunities are there for viewing or acting in various drama productions? How can you get teens involved in them?



## Dance

Virtually every culture in every time period has used movement for recreation, cultural expression, or to connect to the spiritual. For the teens of today, we might divide dance into three categories: performance dance including ballet and theater dance; cultural dance including folk dancing and dancing within contemporary cultures; and social dancing including ballroom, western dancing, and street/club dancing.

Teens interested in performance dancing usually begin their training early in childhood with ballet, tap, jazz, or ice dancing lessons. These teens will appreciate literature connected with the techniques of their work, great performances in their field, and biographies of their favorite heroes and heroines. They will be interested in knowing where performances and competitions are located and will be anxious to see great performances nearby.

Cultural dancing is often a part of school curriculums where young people, including teenagers, are becoming acquainted with many cultures and civilizations throughout the world. They may be researching costuming and actual performance of folk dances to give a flavor of a culture at a particular time period. Their interest will not only be in books but in video segments showing authentic dances ranging from a Navaho rain dance to a Russian country dance.

As a part of the popular culture experience, most teens participate in street dancing to very loud music with a strong beat. Their steps at this point in time seem to the average adult as random gyrations rather than carefully learned sequences. Still other teens formulize their social dancing reminiscent of formal ballroom dancing to the western line dancing and swing dancing from the 1950s. For this type of dancing, teens will be most interested in finding the "perfect" music in which to express their movement.

ABC made ballroom dance popular again with its show *Dancing With the Stars*. The show has 10 celebrities partnered with professionals and they have to learn ballroom dance routines in a very short amount of time. Originally aired as a summer program in 2005, the ratings skyrocketed, prompting ABC to continue doing the show. With ABC's success, other networks joined in. Fox has *So You Think You Can Dance*, where contestants dance in partners and individually and America votes. These shows have influenced teens, and everyone else, showing that ballroom and professional dancing aren't just for old-timers.

Here are selected titles for dance:

- Garfunkel, Trudy. *On Wings of Joy: The Story of Ballet from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to Today*. E-Reads Ltd., 2002.
- Livingstone, Lili Cockerville. *American Indian Ballerinas*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1999.
- *Dancing with the Stars: Jive, Samba, and Tango Your Way into the Best Shape of Your Life*. 2007
- Jones, Bill T., and Susan Kuklin. *Dance! with Bill T. Jones*. Hyperion, 1998.
- Tambini, Michael. *Eyewitness: Dance*. DK Children, 2000.
- The New York City Ballet Workout. DVD or VHS.
- Brennan, Helen. *The Story of Irish Dance*. Robert Reinhart Publishers, 2001.
- *Invitation to Dance*—This is a VHS that has many versions including Latin Dancing and Ballroom Dancing.
- Lane, Christy. *Christy Lane's Complete Book of Line Dancing*. Human Kinetics, 2000.
- *International Encyclopedia of Dance: A Project of Dance Perspectives*. Ed. Selma Jeanne Cohen, Dance Perspectives Foundation. Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Clarke, Steve. *Seeing While Being Seen: Dance Photography...* AAHPERD, 2005.
- Levy, Fran J. *Dance Movement Therapy: A Healing Art*. AAHPERD, 2005.
- Glass, Barbara S. *African American Dance: an Illustrated History*. McFarland, 2007.

## Different Classifications of Dance\*

### Folk Dancing

- Clogging
- Mazurka
- Polka
- Quadrille
- Maypole dance
- Irish step dancing
- Belly dancing

### Country/Western

- Square dancing
- Line dancing
- Two-step
- Shuffle

### Ballroom Dance

- Waltz
- Tango
- Foxtrot
- Quickstep

### Latin

- Cha-Cha
- Samba
- Rumba
- Jive
- Salsa
- Bolero

### Swing Dance

- Lindy Hop
- East Coast
- West Coast

### Street

- Hip Hop
- Break dancing

### Ballet

- Romantic
- Classical
- Modern

### Theater

- Tap
- Jazz

\*From Wikipedia

## Spotlight: Bill T. Jones

Bill T. Jones has earned quite the reputation in the dance community. He was trained at the State University of New York at Binghamton. He studied classical ballet and modern dance. After graduation, he formed a partnership with Arnie Zane and they began to perform all over the country. Jones's dance moves turn the human body into a form of expressing art, creating many wonderful and artful poses and moves. He and his partner formed their dance company in 1982, and the company has been a main staple for over twenty years. Jones has performed and choreographed many theater productions, television shows, and other events. Jones has received many awards including the MacArthur Fellowship, three New York Dance and Performance ("Bessie") Awards, Dance Magazine Award, and was named "An Irreplaceable Dance Treasure" by The Dance Heritage Coalition. Bill Jones has received 5 honorary doctorates, including one from Julliard, and has written many books. Explore his website at [www.billtjones.org](http://www.billtjones.org) to see some pictures and performances of his art.

## Keeping Up

- American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) at [www.aahperd.org](http://www.aahperd.org)
- National Dance Association (NDA) — [www.aahperd.org/nda/template.cfm?template=main.html](http://www.aahperd.org/nda/template.cfm?template=main.html)

### Movies

- *Footloose*
- *Saturday Night Fever*
- *Save the Last Dance*
- *Dirty Dancing*
- *Strictly Ballroom*
- *Chicago*
- *Shall We Dance*
- *Mad Hot Ballroom*
- *Take the Lead*
- *Step It Up*

### Thought Question

- 1) Who are the teenagers in your classrooms or organizations who are interested in dance outside the regular pop scene? What interests of theirs could you support?

## Fine Music

While popular music commands a huge following in the teen world, there is a certain percentage of teens that not only enjoy serious or classical music, but are preparing themselves to be performers and composers in this genre. Local music teachers are a good source of identifying this segment of the local teen population and can help identify their needs that teachers and librarians can feed.

In the general teen population, however, school curriculums contain introductions and expectations that all children and teens be exposed to serious music. These introductions generally center on the western classical traditions but are branching out into the serious music of many other cultures.

For many years, kids cartoons introduced children to the great melodies of the classics – to the three B's (Beethoven, Bach, and Brahms) as well as Mozart and Tchaikovsky. Even though kids did not have recognition of individual composers, they knew and recognized the composer's work. It is also fascinating to hear the great melodies and classical forms reworked into popular fare by rock, jazz, and even ethnic musicians.

We often think of serious music being orchestral music, but vocal, choral, operatic, and single instrument or small ensembles of instruments constitute a huge part of the "fine music" tradition. Thanks to the recording industry and modern technology, we can hear the original performances of Marie Anderson on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, Leonard Bernstein conducting the New York Philharmonic, Pavarotti singing a great aria, or Liszt playing one of his own piano concertos.

Communicating with teens that are serious musicians requires a basic knowledge of instruments, musical terminology, and the various musical periods. A children's reference book on music is often a great way to learn the rudiments, particularly if there is an accompanying CD with musical examples. Many introductory websites can help not only adults but also teens that are trying to become familiar with the genre.

Serious teen performers, including individuals, small groups, and large groups, crave opportunities to perform and to attend performances. Teachers and librarians can invite young musicians to perform in classrooms and libraries and help make them aware of opportunities to perform or compete. Good contacts with music teachers or community groups can often lead to invitations for teens to attend wonderful performances either free or at greatly reduced prices. One might begin with seats to the *Phantom of the Opera*, to a pops concert of a touring orchestra, or asking a string quartet to play in the main reading room of the library or in front of a school assembly. High school choirs and orchestras love to perform for major events such as Black History Month, holidays, or any excuse you can dream up. Make opportunities for these performers to do recording sessions and upload their performances to the web as they begin their own portfolios.

### Know Your Musical Periods

Baroque (1600–1750)  
Classical (1750–1820)  
Romantic (1820–1910)  
Contemporary (1910–present)

### Great Groups and Performers

Boston Symphony Orchestra  
Chicago Symphony Orchestra  
The San Francisco Opera  
The Mormon Tabernacle Choir  
St. Martin's-in-the-Field (orchestra)  
Kronos Quartet  
The 5 Browns (five siblings-teens/20s)

## List of Classical Western Composers

### 18<sup>th</sup> Century

J.S. Bach  
Haydn  
Mozart  
Handel  
Vivaldi

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Schubert  
Chopin  
List  
Beethoven  
Wagner  
Berloiz  
Dvorak  
Brahms  
Verdi  
Tchaikovsky

### 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Bartok  
Vaughan Williams  
Poulenc  
Debussy  
Ravel  
Holst  
Copeland  
Bernstein  
Joplin  
Chavez

#### Don't Forget

The availability of Web 2.0 technologies and services like YouTube.com make it possible to preserve the recordings of our teens. Are you archiving these performances for the Web? One of our teens might go viral.

## Spotlight: YoYo Ma

Yo Yo Ma was born in 1955 to Chinese parents in Paris. His cello training began at age 4, and his family moved to New York soon after that. He attended Julliard, and because he wanted liberal arts training in connection with his conservatory training, he attended Harvard University. Since then, Yo Yo Ma has become one of the most popular classical music performers of our time. He has won 15 Grammy awards and released over 50 albums. Along with his traditional classical music, Ma plays a wide variety of music, including Brazilian, African, Appalachian, and many other genres. His repertoire has expanded the definition of what classical music really is. His most recent undertaking has been to be a great supporter to the Silk Road Project: a blanket group to researching and supporting cultural events of countries that lined the ancient silk road. More information can be found at [www.silkroadproject.org](http://www.silkroadproject.org). Yo Yo Ma is married and has two children.

Artist website: [www.yo-yoma.com](http://www.yo-yoma.com)

## Keeping Up

- Community concerts (find your own reliable listings and link teens into them)
- [www.classical.net](http://www.classical.net)
- [ipl.org](http://ipl.org)—The Internet Public Library (find the music section)

## Musical Terminology Quiz

From easy to hard—how many of these musical terms can you define?

Opera	Prelude and fugue
Symphony	Contralto
Concerto	Legato
Aria	Octave
Bassoon	Diapason

## Fine Art<sup>1</sup>

The art experience is perhaps the most common form of culture across all time periods and across all civilizations. In the age of the Internet, access to the world treasury of artistic expression knows no limits. Teens exhibiting any aptitude for or curiosity about the arts have electronic access to nearly every major art museum in the world, enabling them to visit vast collections without ever leaving the computer screen. Ironically, this is true at a time when arts programs in most North American school districts have been seriously curtailed in favor of the tested subjects of language arts, science, and math.

In communities where art programs are limited, the local art community has sometimes filled the gap with artists in residence, arts workshops, and even galleries or exhibit programs. For those schools lucky enough to have an art professional on staff, other teachers, school and public librarians, and community art groups can build wonderful relationships in virtually any community. For example, the science teacher can introduce the world of space photography using books like *Earth: Our Planet in Space* by Seymour Simon, or the wonderful world of photomicrography. A math teacher might develop lessons around geometric patterns in nature, on fractals, or even on tessellations, in addition to showing lavish artworks resulting from such experimentation along the way, like those works created by M.C. Escher.

Even teens will enjoy those fantastic virtual tours of internationally based museums, such as le Musée du Louvre in Paris ([www.louvre.fr/louvrea.htm](http://www.louvre.fr/louvrea.htm)) where galleries and individual masterpieces may be examined up close, from many angles, or in three dimensions, front and back. Many art museums have terrific sites making their own collections and changing exhibitions available online. Some even host interactive artworks created exclusively for cyberspace.

Today the traditional disciplines encompassed by the Fine or Visual Arts—drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, and other related crafts—have been joined by photography and media or filmmaking, all popular fields with demonstrated career links. “Art ignorance” should simply not be tolerated. Even the most uncultured urbanite or unsophisticated country mouse can certainly, through the marvels of technology, find something to pique their interest. It just takes enough creativity or motivational activity to start them clicking.

In the world of books, library collections should contain general histories of art, biographies of artists, reproductions of artistic works of all kinds, and books giving instruction on how to create artistic works, including pottery, painting, drawing, computer art, photography, architecture, or even cartooning. In addition to the library print collection, libraries should also provide links to art collections, museums, galleries, and other collections including those that are local, state, regional, national, and international.

There is, however, the emerging world of Web 2.0 technology where anyone can broadcast to the world, to their group, or to their own family art works, photography, video, music, or audio. YouTube.com, Worldvuer.com, various segments of Google software, and a host of other creative sites makes fine art open not just to the experienced and famous, but to everyone. What a wonderful age: Art is for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> Nancy Olexo, a student at San José State University, helped write this page.

## Influential 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Artists

Georgia O'Keefe — Realistic  
Abstraction  
Grant Wood — Social  
Regionalism  
Grandma Moses — Folk  
Norman Rockwell — Realism  
Jackson Pollock — Action  
Painting  
Jacob Lawrence — Social  
Realism  
Alexander Calder — Abstract  
Sculpture  
Dorothea Lange —  
Documentary Photography  
Ansel Adams — Nature  
Photography  
Andy Warhol — Pop Art  
Man Ray — Cubism, Dadaism  
and surrealism

### Art Magazines

- *B&W* — fine  
photography
- *Art Review*
- *International Artist*
- *Juxtapoz: Art and  
Culture Magazine*
- *Smithsonian*
- *Art in America*
- *Graphis*
- *Drawn & Quarterly*
- *Communication Arts*

### Keeping Up

- Gardiner, *History of Art  
through the Ages*
- Art Museum Network —  
[www.amn.org](http://www.amn.org)
- Art Resource — [wwar.com](http://wwar.com)
- [www.artlex.com](http://www.artlex.com) —  
Dictionary of 3600 terms

### Spotlight: Louvre Website

The Louvre's website is excellent: ([www.louvre.fr/llv/commun/home](http://www.louvre.fr/llv/commun/home)) add it to any "Best Art Links" list. The museum has done a wonderful job in making their collection accessible to everyone around the world. On their website you can take tours of individual rooms, view pieces in their collection, search label text (how's your French?), and read a history of the museum. An interactive lets you explore individual pieces of art. You can magnify parts of the piece, change the size of the piece, look at the back of the piece, reposition the piece on the wall, and so much more. This is certainly one of the best museum websites around.

### Art Books (Fiction and Non-fiction)

- Janson, H.S. and Anthony F. *History of Art for Young People*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Prentice Hall, 2003.
- Venezia, Mike. *Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artists* (series). Children's Press.
- Chevalier, Tracy. *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. Plume, 2001.
- Park, Linda Sue. *A Single Shard*. Yearling Books, 2002.
- Watts, Leander. *Stonecutter*. Graphia, 2002.
- Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan. *Andy Warhol: Prince of Pop*. Delacorte, 2004.
- *The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art Book*. Phadion, 1996 (reprinted 2007).
- *1001 Paintings You Must See Before You Die*. Universe, 2006.
- Danzinger, Danny. *Museum: Behind the Scenes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. Penguin, 2008.

### Thought Questions

- 1) What art experiences, groups, places, or events in your local community are worth linking teens to?
- 2) What educational experiences in the arts are available in your community both at school and other community organizations that are of value to teens?

## The Western Canon

From the beginning, humans have found a way to tell and share stories with one another. Throughout the last 600 years some stories have stood out and have become classics. In Western literature there are poems, dramas, and novels that have become a part of our cultural literacy. They are works that we have some knowledge of even if we haven't read them. They are works that we can expect to experience at some point in our academic lives. They are works that are referenced in other works and re-worked into our popular culture. This body of works can be considered the Western canon of literature. There are ever-evolving definitions of the academic canon in terms of modern literature and favored classical titles, although certain titles and authors will forever remain a part of the canon.

There are a number of titles that form the foundation of this Western canon that were created by the Greeks including Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, plays by Sophocles and Euripides, Plato's *Republic*, and Aristotle's *Poetics*. The Roman era continued to add to the "great works" with poetry from Virgil and the scientific treatise from Ptolemy. Plutarch also added to the canon, and perhaps served as the greatest influence to Renaissance authors, including William Shakespeare.

With the fall of the Roman Empire, the Western world entered a dark age in which little emerged, but what did emerge was significant. It was during the medieval age that Sir Thomas Aquinas produced his works and Dante produced *The Divine Comedy*, which was credited with the emergence of the modern Italian language. Petrarch introduced the love sonnet in which he pined for Laura. On the British Isles Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales*, doing for the English language what Dante did for Italian. The end of the medieval era led into the Renaissance, a time in which arts and literature flourished.

The European Renaissance introduced Michelangelo, William Shakespeare, Thomas Hobbes, Machiavelli, Leonardo Da Vinci, and Galileo, among others. The works of the Renaissance was the beginning of the modern Western canon. The political thought of Machiavelli, Locke, and Hobbes, the scientific and mathematical theories of Galileo, Copernicus, DaVinci, Pascal, and Descartes, and the literature of Shakespeare, Cervantes, Milton, and Spenser all influenced later works.

The Age of Reason followed the Renaissance with works contributed by Jonathon Swift, Rousseau, Daniel Defoe, and Adam Smith. Poetry written by William Blake, Robert Burns, and Alexander Pope emerged. In the American Colonies, religious writing like that by Jonathon Edwards gave way to political treatise as the colonies rebelled and fought for independence. Slave narratives began to appear, and Phyllis Wheatley was the first slave woman to publish with a book of poetry in 1773.

The Romantic Age followed the Age of Reason in the nineteenth century. It was during this time that Melville wrote *Moby Dick*, and Wordsworth and Coleridge wrote poetry such as "The Prelude" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Other poets included Shelley, Lord Byron, and Keats. Jane Austen's novels were published beginning in 1811 with *Sense and Sensibility*. The Victorian Age followed introducing the Brownings (both Robert and Elizabeth Barrett), Tennyson, and Matthew Arnold. Darwin had his radical theories of evolution. The Brontë sisters published their works: *Jane Eyre* (Charlotte) and *Wuthering Heights* (Emily). In the latter half of the century, Oscar Wilde, Rudyard Kipling, Gustave Flaubert, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Emily Dickinson, and Mark Twain introduced themselves to the world. Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) has been hailed as the quintessential American novel, despite the controversy that surrounds it.

Henry James marks the transition into modernism with his novels that relied on cultural tensions. Edith Wharton and Theodore Dreiser joined James as influences on the development of an independent American literature. They were joined by authors across the Atlantic including Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka, Thomas Hardy, and Joseph Conrad. After World War I, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Thornton Wilder, and Dorothy Parker found voices for themselves in the United States. Virginia Woolf and James Joyce from England joined these American writers. The Great Depression had a profound influence on the arts, and emerging from that time is John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men*. It is also the decade in which William Faulkner emerged with *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *As I Lay Dying* (1930).

Since then, many works have been added to the canon. Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* gave us a whole new view of the South and racism. Ray Bradbury, George Orwell and Aldous Huxley gave us bleak outlooks of the future. Kurt Vonnegut Jr. brought us cruel irony in the '60s with his *Cat's Cradle* and *Slaughterhouse Five*. Poets like Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton made poetry confessional.

Probably the most powerful force changing the canon is the widespread use of the Norton Anthology in literature classes. Recent editions have included many minority writers, changing the face of the Western canon.

### The Great Debate

Since academia has begun trying to categorize the "great works," there has been debate about both the feasibility and the lists that emerge. There are jokes about the "dead white men" that populate the lists that emerge, protests regarding the lack of women and people of color, and arguments of what is included and what is omitted. Harold Bloom has written extensively on the subject of a Western canon and its role in both cultural literacy and academia. His title *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (1994) identifies his canon and argues for an accepted identified canon. It may be that it is impossible to characterize the greatest books of all time, although many have tried.

As the debate continues, the Western canon actually continues to expand. Many other literatures are starting to be taught and added to the Western canon. The African American and Latin writers of America have found a new voice in the canon. African and Chinese works are finding their way into classical literature classes. As the Western canon expands to include other parts of the world, teachers of literature are faced with a dilemma: what works have to be left out? One class cannot cover all the works that would be contained in a world canon, so what works should be taught and what should be left out? This tension is not likely to be resolved any time soon. Fortunately, most of the Canon is freely available on the Internet.

### The Lists

- *Great Books of the Western World*. Ed. Mortimer J. Adler. Encyclopedia Britannica, 1994.
- *Harvard Classics*. Ed. Charles W. Elliot.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Western Canon: The Books and the School of the Ages*. Riverhead Trade, 1995.
- Time magazine's list of the 100 best novels of all time:  
[www.time.com/time/2005/100books/the\\_complete\\_list.html](http://www.time.com/time/2005/100books/the_complete_list.html)

### Thought Questions

- 1) Go to the list of Harvard Classics ([www.bartleby.com/hc/](http://www.bartleby.com/hc/)) and get a sense of how much of the Western canon you have read.
- 2) How might teens be introduced to the canon supplemented by works from Asian, African, Islamic, and Latin texts?



## Emerging Canon

The debate over inclusion into the literary canon that was most prevalent in the eighties and nineties, but that still echoes in today's high schools and colleges, as well as the media, has opened up the door to voices from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. There is an emerging literary canon of "great works" that are taught, or that have become a prevalent aspect of our culture that teens should be aware of and to which they should be introduced. As often the case is when trying to derive a list of great works there are disagreements and a variety of lists. However, there is common ground to be found in the debate over inclusion.

When the movement for a more inclusive canon that represented the diversity of our world took center stage in the eighties, there were some agreed upon classics. N. Scott Momaday's work *House Made of Dawn* had won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969 and introduced to critical acclaim the Native American voice into the literary canon. Authors that have followed include Louise Erdrich, James Welch, and Leslie Marmon Silko. African Americans have a rich literary tradition as well, and while Phyllis Wheatley's poetry and Fredrick Douglass had a place in the old curriculum, the emerging canon re-introduced Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, and Countee Cullen, as well as new voices in Alice Walker and Toni Morrison. From Latin America Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Pablo Neruda, and Octavio Paz were among those who were finding a place in the contemporary canon. Gabriel Garcia Marquez successfully introduced magical realism, and not only received critical respect but popularized the form. Even Harold Bloom included Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* in his definition of the literary canon. Maxine Hong Kingston, and later Amy Tan, explored Chinese-American issues in universal stories of family relationships.

The emerging canon is still just that—emerging. It continues to develop and change. Voices are rediscovered or new voices emerge. It is difficult to predict which voice will sustain throughout the years, but students should be aware of contemporary authors such as Jhumpa Lahiri who was raised in the United States and often deals with the themes of cultural displacement. The poet Agha Shahid Ali from Kashmir gained attention with a National Book Award nomination for his poetry in 2001. Students and their advocates should look for fresh voices that receive critical attention to broaden their horizons and explore the emerging canon.

## Titles to Explore

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston

*Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison

*Nectar in the Sieve* by Kamala Markandaya

*House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday

*Almanac of the Dead* by Leslie Marmon Silko

*The Beet Queen* by Louise Erdrich

*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

*A Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

*Age of Iron* by J.M. Coetzee

*Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston

*The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan

*Bastard Out of Carolina* by Dorothy Allison

*Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini

## Spotlight: *Beloved*

In 2006 the New York Times asked authors and critics what was the best book of the last 25 years. *Beloved* by Toni Morrison received more votes than any other title. While this was a highly subjective poll, it was yet another significant honor for Morrison's best-known work. It received the Pulitzer prize in 1988, a choice that was not without controversy. *Beloved* has become firmly entrenched in the canon. One can argue that it is a token addition, but Morrison's magical realistic look at the cost of slavery has a place in both high schools and college curricula. It would be a mistake to overlook the critical importance of *Beloved* and its role in the canon because its acclaim is high. It's a wonderful new voice in the canon.

## Keeping Up

One of the best sources to consult that responds to literatures from around the world is the North Anthologies series that are popular collections for college literature classes. If an author is gaining prominence in literary circles, their work will be represented in the anthologies.

Examine the *Norton Anthology of World Literature* published in several size collections and their website of supplementary materials at:  
[www2.wwnorton.com/college/english/nawol/](http://www2.wwnorton.com/college/english/nawol/)

## Thought Questions

- 1) What role does class play in the emerging canon?
- 2) What classics can be replaced with titles from the emerging canon?

## Moving On: Books for the College Bound

Upon graduating from high school the majority of American students will have experienced many of the same titles. Those going on to college will be expected to have read more broadly and experienced a canon beyond the core high school curriculum. The titles college-bound teens should experience vary widely from the classics to contemporary fiction, narrative non-fiction, poetry, and biography. While it is conceivable that there is no college-bound senior that has experienced every title, a wide sampling of reading is helpful. A wide variety of reading provides background knowledge for teens as they enter college and informs them and teaches them new information they may not have experienced in high school.

The wide variety of titles students can experience allows teens to develop personal taste in reading, and they should be encouraged to read outside their comfort zones. Teens who read only contemporary fiction should be introduced to classics; science fiction readers can be lead to narrative non-fiction; and popular culture-obsessed teens can be encouraged to read biographies of figures that were part of historical popular culture. Teens experience classics that enter into popular culture on a regular basis, from Shakespeare (both more traditional renditions to modern interpretations) to Jane Austen, Henry James to Homer. Use popular culture's renditions to lead teens to the classics.

Teens should also experience contemporary literary fiction. While movies can encourage teen interest in this area as well, so can modeling and bestseller lists. Oprah's book club has focused on more contemporary classics, such as *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck and *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides. Several titles from Oprah's previous book club incarnation, such as books by Toni Morrison and Barbara Kingsolver, are also titles teens should consider.

Narrative non-fiction and informational books can open new worlds to teens, introducing new passions and illuminating old ones. This can be particularly true in the field of science, which has a thriving market of quality titles written for the layman that include everything (*A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson and *The Universe in a Nutshell* by Stephen Hawking) to more specific titles on the different branches of science. Sports have produced some memorable and quality titles that challenge teens, like *Friday Night Lights*. So has Social Science with the classic *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote or Ruben Martinez's *Crossing Over*. And while every student experiences history, college-bound students can receive a richer depth of understanding by reading outside the classroom, including classics such as *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair and newer titles by Stephen Ambrose, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Ray Rapheal, and Joseph Ellis.

Despite honest effort on the part of English curriculum, it is not possible to introduce students to the wide range of poetry that exists in a core humanities canon. Students should explore poetry on their own—both classic and contemporary. Poetry Daily's website (<http://www.poetry.com/>) is another way to introduce poetry to teens.

Being prepared to help college-bound teens find quality titles is essential to youth services. Teachers and librarians should be aware that many colleges and universities have reading lists that they expect their entering freshman to have read before entering college. Librarians should research the colleges most attended in their area, find the reading lists, and create Internet links to them. One helpful title is *More Outstanding Books for the College Bound* by Linda Waddle (ALA, 2009) includes a plethora of wonderful titles to build breadth and depth.

## Titles for the College Bound

### Novels:

*Bless Me Ultima* by Rudoph Anaya  
*The Awakening* by Kate Chopin  
*Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison  
*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald  
*The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood  
*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston  
*The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien  
*Animal Farm* by George Orwell  
*The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger  
*Slaughter-House Five* by Kurt Vonnegut  
*The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan  
*The Color Purple* by Alice Walker  
*My Antonia* by Willa Cather  
*A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway

### Drama:

*A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen  
*Rain in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry  
*Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller  
*Hamlet* by Shakespeare  
*Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Becket  
*Our Town* by Thornton Wilder  
*The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams

### Poetry and Poets:

*Beowulf*  
*Canterbury Tales*  
*Paradise Lost*  
Emily Dickenson  
Pablo Naruda  
Anne Sexton

### Miscellaneous:

Aristotle's *Poetics*  
*Bible*  
Marx's *Communist Manifesto*

## 10 Most Recommended Authors\*

1. William Shakespeare
2. William Falkner
3. Charles Dickens
4. Ernest Hemingway
5. Jane Austin
6. Homer
7. Mark Twain
8. Sophocles
9. Nathaniel Hawthorne
10. F. Scott Fitzgerald

\*From *Arco's Reading Lists for College-Bound Students (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)*. Ed. Doug Estell, Michele L. Satchwell, and Patricia S. Wright. Arco, 2000

## Keeping Up

Outstanding Science Tradebooks for Students K-12:  
[www.nsta.org/ostbc](http://www.nsta.org/ostbc)

Notable Trade Books for Young People [Social Science]:  
[www.socialstudies.org/resources/notable/](http://www.socialstudies.org/resources/notable/)

Outstanding Books for the College Bound and Life-Long Learners: [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/outstandingbooks/outstandingbooks.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/outstandingbooks/outstandingbooks.htm)

## Thought Questions

- 1) How could High School teachers encourage reading with an eye upon the needs of college freshman?
- 2) How could school and public librarians encourage appropriate reading for the college-bound?

## Cultural Literacy? The High School Canon

There are certain books that the vast majority of high school students will have read by the time they graduate. Years later they will reminisce and commiserate about the experience and find that whether they went to school in New York, California, or Texas, they have read the same titles. The high school canon includes Shakespeare, Fitzgerald, Dickens, and Steinbeck, and is supplemented by different authors in different classrooms in different states. However, there are a few titles that are expected.

It is not unusual for students across the United States to read *Romeo and Juliet* at some point in their high school career, occasionally earlier. Other Shakespeare plays common to the English classroom experience include *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, and *Hamlet*. Students also experience *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Macbeth*.

While there is no federal adoption of curricular material and class titles vary from state to state, district-to-district, school-to-school, and even classroom-to-classroom, certain novels appear again and again. Popular titles in the English curriculum include *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, *Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. Adults at most cocktail parties can discuss the meaning of the green light on Daisy's dock in *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

In recent years high schools have attempted to address a more multicultural audience and include more contemporary works. Currently many high schools use *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston, *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolph Anaya, and *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan. Parents who are concerned about inappropriate language often challenge these novels. Of course some classic novels written by "dead white guys" face similar challenges.

As schools scramble to address standards, districts and states have instituted summer reading lists for students to ensure that the students are exposed to classic literature and that students continue to read over the summer. Occasionally summer reading includes popular titles and young adult titles, but the fare on the lists is often similar to what students encounter in their classrooms despite ongoing debate within the English teacher's community about encouraging pleasure reading and using young adult novels. Furthermore, there is a lack of non-fiction on required reading lists. This is true of books in the classroom curriculum as well as summer reading lists.

As youth service librarians, advocating with English teachers to include you in the creation of summer reading lists and supplemental classroom reading lists is essential. It will help you be more prepared for requests. Beyond that, as an expert in young adult literature, you are a voice for teens. Encourage list makers to include non-fiction, young adult literature, multicultural titles, and contemporary authors. Encourage teachers to expand offerings in their classrooms through literature circles and independent reading. Immerse yourself in the debate so you can speak in their terms and passionately advocate for the quality literature that teens enjoy.

## Titles in the High School Canon

- *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
- *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
- *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway
- *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
- *Hamlet* by Shakespeare
- *Julius Caesar* by Shakespeare
- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- *Night* by Elie Weisel
- *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury
- *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- *The Stranger* by Albert Camus
- *Oedipus* by Sophocles
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

### Thought Questions

- 1) How important is a literary canon in high school?
- 2) What titles do you think all high school students should read?
- 3) What role does summer reading play in developing a familiarity with the canon?
- 4) Should non-fiction be included in the high school canon?
- 5) What books should be added to create a more culturally diverse list?

## Spotlight: Textbook Provider's Bestsellers\*

### Top Ten Required Novels

1. *Romeo and Juliet*: Shakespeare
2. *Macbeth*: Shakespeare
3. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: Mark Twain
4. *Julius Caesar*: Shakespeare
5. *To Kill a Mockingbird*: Harper Lee
6. *The Scarlet Letter*: Nathaniel Hawthorn
7. *Of Mice and Men*: John Steinbeck
8. *Hamlet*: Shakespeare
9. *The Great Gatsby*: F. Scott Fitzgerald
10. *Lord of the Flies*: William Golding

### Top 5 Required Authors

1. William Shakespeare
2. John Steinbeck
3. Mark Twain
4. Charles Dickens
5. Arthur Miller

\*From ERIC ([www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov))

### Further Readings

- Antal, James. "Just for the fun of it: a high school is determined to make summer reading a pleasure. (What Works)." *School Library Journal*, April 2003 v. 49 i. 4 47-48.
- Gallo, Donald R. "How Classics Create an Aliterate Society" *English Journal*: Jan. 2001. 33-39.
- Hipple, Ted. "It's the THAT, Teacher." *English Journal*. March, 1997 15-17.
- Sullivan, Ed. "Some Teens Prefer the Real Thing: The Case for Young Adult Nonfiction" *English Journal*: Jan. 2001. 43-47.
- Williams, Linda. "How I Spent my Summer Vacation . . . with School Reading Lists." *VOYA* Feb 2002, v. 24 n. 6. 416-421.
- Webb, Allen. "Digital Texts and the New Literacies," *English Journal*, January 2009v. 97 n. 1. 83-88.
- Whelan, Debra Lau. "Yo Hamlet." *School Library Journal* June, 2007 v.56 n.3 48-50

## Poetry and Full-Length Works in Verse

Poetry is a form of literature that intensifies experiences. A poem communicates emotions, ideas, and images through words that mean more than the words actually say. There are many definitions of poetry—most involve meter, rhyme, and structure. Poetry comes in many forms, and those who restrict poetry to a basic structure they are comfortable with do not understand the flexibility of the genre. One of the beauties of poetry is that it can be blended, molded, and formed to express feelings, emotions, and thoughts that other genres cannot communicate so eloquently. Poets carefully eliminate extraneous terms and select just the right word to convey the message (economy of text). The intensity and passion in poetry comes at a good time for young adults who live a life where everything surrounding them is intense and important.

Young adult readers might be inclined to avoid poetry and stories in verse for fear that they will be asked to analyze the piece. If readers can be convinced that they will not be asked to dissect every poetic element and word choice of the poet, they are more likely to turn to poetry as pleasure reading. Book talks and attractive displays created by librarians and teachers can help greatly in promoting both poetry and full-length works told in verse. Reading aloud poetry spontaneously provides appreciation and familiarity with the genre.

### Verse Novels in the Classroom

Ever since Karen Hesse's verse novel, *Out of the Dust*, earned the Newbery Award in 1998, a number of verse novels have made their way into the lexicon of young adult literature. The verse novel is a contemporary genre that evokes the power of a rich narrative with the power of verse. Verse novels range from ordinary with little plot to beautifully crafted novels with a strong sense of voice and plot. Verse "novels" range from historical pieces such as Paul B. Janzko's *Worlds Afire* (2007); to biographies such as Marilyn Nelson's *Carver: A Life in Poems* (2001); or to *A Bad Boy Can Be Good for a Girl* (2006), a book by Tanya Lee Stone focusing on contemporary teen problems.

Successful verse novels have a narrative structure similar to a prose novel: changing perspectives, a series of short sections are common elements. Verse novels often employ multiple narrators that provide a wide view of the inner workings of a character's mind. Verse novels are an effective way to introduce poetry into the lives of readers. They work well in a small group and provide an opportunity for performance work. Verse novels can also be used effectively to stimulate the writing of poetry.

### Prose & Poetry Connections

Using poetry as the lure to bring readers to longer books of poetry, to traditional fiction, or to suggest research topics is often a successful venture. After reading Dudley Randall's "The Ballad of Birmingham," a poem about the church bombing in that city during the civil rights movement, Christopher Paul Curtis changed the destination in *The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963* from Florida to Birmingham. The book earned a Newbery honor and a Coretta Scott King honor award. Randall's poem might be just the piece to introduce Curtis's book.

One target audience for novels in verse appeal is the rapper, one of those young people who love rap music. Already comfortable with verse, a rapper is often searching for alternative formats of poetry. Capitalize on this connection by suggesting poems as a source for performance works. Institute an afternoon of poetry readings/raps.

### Poetry Blasts, Jams, and Slams

A Poetry Blast could become a popular forum for sharing poetry, providing a forum for performance, and encouraging reading of all types. Read ideas for starting a poetry blast online at: [www.marilynsinger.net/fullblast.htm](http://www.marilynsinger.net/fullblast.htm). On May 12, 2009, First Lady Michelle Obama and the President hosted the first "Poetry Jam" at the White House. Poets and playwrights, actors and musicians gathered to share the spoken word. Investigate who participated and what poetry and music was shared. Hold a poetry blast/jam in your school/library—consider sharing similar selections/poets. A poetry slam has an element of competition, much like the reality competition shows such as *American Idol* or *America's Got Talent*. Young adults may enjoy that type of event as well.

## Poetry—A Selected List

- Carlson, Lori Marie. *Red Hot Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Being Young and Latino in the United States*. (2005)
- Collins, Billy. *The Trouble with Poetry: And Other Poems*. (2005); *180 More: Extraordinary Poems for Every Day*. (2005)
- Franco, Betsy. *You Hear Me?* (2000); *Things I have to tell you*. (2001); *Night Is Gone, Day Is Still Coming: Stories & Poems by American Indian Teens & Young Adults*. (2003)
- George, Kristine O'Connell. *Swimming Upstream: Middle School Poems*. (2002)
- Grandits, John. *Blue Lipstick: Concrete Poems*. (2007); *Technically, It's Not My Fault: Concrete Poems*. (2004)
- Grimes, Nikki, ed. *Bronx Masquerade*. (2002)
- Hollander, John. *Poetry for Young People: American Poetry*. (2004)
- Janeczko, Paul B. *Blushing: Expressions of Love in Poems and Letters*. (2004)
- Koertge, Ronald, ed. *Brimstone Journals*. (2004)
- Mora, Pat. *My Own True Name: New and Selected Poems for Young Adults, 1984-1999*. (2000)
- Nye, Naomi Shihab. *You and Yours*. (2008)
- Szyborska, Wislawa. *Monologue of a Dog*. (2005)
- Tom, Karen, ed. *Angst! Teen Verses from the Edge!* Illustrated by Kiki. (2001)
- Waters, Fiona. *Poems From Many Cultures: Poetry Collection 4*. (2002)

## A Selected List of Full-Verse Narratives

- Adoff, Jamie. *Jimi & Me*. (2005)
- Brown, Susan Taylor. *Hugging the Rock*. (2006).
- Creech, Sharon. *Love That Dog*. (2001); *Hate That Cat*. (2008)
- Engle, Margarita. *Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano*. Illustrated by Sean Qualls. (2006)
- Frost, Helen. *Keesha's House*. (2003; 2007); *The Braid*. (2006); *Diamond Willow*. (2008)
- Fullerton, Alma. *Walking on Glass*. (2007); *Libertad*. (2008)
- Herrick, Steven. *A Place Like This*. (1998); *Do-Wrong Ron*. (2005)
- High, Linda Oatman. *Sister Slam and the Poetic Motormouth Road Trip*. (2004); *Planet Pregnancy*. (2008)
- Lee Wong, Joyce. *Seeing Emily*. (2005)
- Nelson, Marilyn. *Carver: A Life in Poems*. (2001); *A Wreath for Emmett Till*. (2005); *Miss Crandall's School for Young Ladies & Little Misses of Color*. (with Elisabeth Alexander, 2007)
- Sones, Sonya. *What My Girlfriend Doesn't Know*. (2007)
- Stone, Tanya Lee. *A Bad Boy Can Be Good for a Girl*. (2006)
- Wayland, April Halprin. *Girl Coming in for a Landing*. (2002);
- Wild, Margaret. *Jinx*. (2002); *One Night*. (2004)

For bibliographies of verse novels, check out these sites:

- Schaumburg Township District Library—[www.stdl.org/extlink/ysread/novels.htm](http://www.stdl.org/extlink/ysread/novels.htm)
- Dover (NH) Public Library—[www.dover.lib.nh.us/teenpage/novelsverse.htm](http://www.dover.lib.nh.us/teenpage/novelsverse.htm)
- Hawthorne (NJ) School—[www.haworth.org/yaversenovels.html](http://www.haworth.org/yaversenovels.html)
- Austin (TX) Public Library "Wired for Youth"—[www.wiredforyouth.com/books/index.cfm?booklist=verse](http://www.wiredforyouth.com/books/index.cfm?booklist=verse)
- TeensPoint.org—[www.teenspoint.org/reading\\_matters/book\\_list.asp?sort=101&list=1468](http://www.teenspoint.org/reading_matters/book_list.asp?sort=101&list=1468)
- Adolescent literacy (adlit.org)—[www.adlit.org/books/c812/](http://www.adlit.org/books/c812/)
- Carnegie Library—[www.carnegielibrary.org/teens/books/showbooklist2.cfm?catid=6&list=novelsinverse](http://www.carnegielibrary.org/teens/books/showbooklist2.cfm?catid=6&list=novelsinverse)



### Focus Book

*A Kick in the Head: An Everyday Guide to Poetic Forms*, edited by Paul B. Janeczko with illustrations by Chris Raschka. (2004)

Although in picture-book format, this book will be a valuable aid in introducing 29 poetic forms to teen readers. Examples of elusive forms as the aubade (Eleanor Farjeon), elegy (X.J. Kennedy), couplet (Ogden Nash), pantoum (Liz Rosenberg), and sonnets (Shakespeare) are included, along with twenty-four other forms.

From the same collaborators: *A Poke in the I: A Collection of Concrete Poems*. (2001), and *A Foot in the Mouth: Poems to*

Novels in verse need special attention — not the same as a traditional book of fiction and not quite poetry. Where do they fit? Verse novels tend to get lost in either section.

### Novel or Poem?

Make an attractive three-part display of favorite prose novels, poetry collections/anthologies, and verse novels. Put the traditional novels on one side and label them as such. Put the poetry on the other end and label. In the middle display some popular verse novels and ask: Novel or Poem? Include a “voting” sheet to allow readers to decide which category best fits the verse novel.

### Poets to Investigate

Jaime Adoff	Betsy Franco
Mary Jo Bang	Robin Hirsch
Billy Collins	Paul B. Janeczko
Cornelius Eady	Sonya Sones

### Spotlight: Paul Janeczko

Paul Janeczko learned to love poetry as a college student, and when he became an English teacher he shared his love of poetry with his students. After twenty-two years as a teacher, he resigned to become a full-time writer. He is an anthologist and a poet. He has collected favorite books, written poetry, created a full-length poetic narrative, and interviewed other poets. Watch for Janeczko’s new novel length book of poems — check his website at [www.paulbjanecko.com](http://www.paulbjanecko.com).

- *Blushing: Expressions of Love in Poems and Letters*. (2004)
- *Dirty Laundry Pile: Poems in Different Voices*. Illustrated by Melissa Sweet (2001)
- *Looking for Your Name: A Collection of Contemporary Poems*. (1993)
- *Seeing the Blue Between: Advice and Inspiration for Young Poets*. (2002)
- *Worlds Afire: The Hartford Circus Fire of 1944*. (2004)
- *Birds on a Wire: A Renga 'round Town* with J. Patrick Lewis and illustrated by Gary Lippincott (2008)

### Poet Laureate

The United States has had a poet laureate since 1937 (called a “poetry consultant “ prior to 1985), which is appointed by the Librarian of Congress in October for a one-year term. Research the poets who have served in this capacity and identify some that have a connection to young adult readers. We have had a children’s poet laureate since 2007 (Jack Prelutsky 2007–2008; Mary Ann Hoberman 2009–2010). If a young adult’s poet laureate were to be named in the United States, who would be five poets that should be among the top poets considered for this position? Should we have a YA poet laureate?

### Thought Questions

- 1) Develop an idea for introducing a poet and his/her poetry into a curricular unit.
- 2) What is the best way to interest young adult readers in poetry?
- 3) What strategies will make young adults more receptive to poetry?

## Adult Books and the Teenage Reader

Teachers and librarians should not be surprised at the number of adult titles teens consume. Their interaction with the popular culture and movies often leads them to adult titles such as *The Da Vinci Code* before titles marketed for teens. Personal interests such as computers, astronomy, automobiles, or sports lead teens to adult titles because these teens exhaust all the simpler materials written for children and teens very quickly. Interest in adult topics will require both teachers and librarians to connect teens with information sources from the web to adult collections in public and academic libraries and the selection of materials for adults that have been included in larger school library collections. A good place to start is knowledge of the bestseller lists, both fiction and non-fiction, by probing the best-known *New York Times* and the *USA Today* lists. While these lists are marketing tools, teens will encounter them and ask for selected titles by their favorite authors.

For personal interests, teachers and librarians can use library catalogues of larger adult collections and Internet or database collections to guide teens into advanced materials. The challenge may be the reading level of these materials, but teens with high interest and motivation will learn to read far above their normal reading level. A keen eye for readable and attractive adult editions will often attract a teen reader. For example, there are many titles published by Dorling Kindersley with well-formatted texts and illustrations that can be the gateway into adult topics for teens with limited reading ability or language problems. Regular questioning of teens about their personal interest will provide insights into the types of materials in the adult world that teens would enjoy.

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) selects ten titles each year of adult books they consider of particular interest to teen readers. Their list is worth reviewing to see if any of the titles would be of interest to teens in your area. Titles on the 2009 ALEX list are:

1. *City of Thieves* by David Benioff
2. *The Dragons of Babel* by Michael Swanwick
3. *Finding Nouf* by Zoë Ferraris
4. *The Good Thief* by Hannah Tinti
5. *Just After Sunset: Stories* by Stephen King
6. *Mudbound* by Hillary Jordan
7. *Over and Under* by Todd Tucker
8. *The Oxford Project* by Stephen G. Bloom
9. *Sharp Teeth* by Toby Barlow
10. *Three Girls and Their Brother* by Theresa Rebeck

(Find the ALEX award lists at [www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/alexawards/alexawards.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/alexawards/alexawards.cfm))

### Popular Best Selling List

Looking at *USA Today's* list of bestselling books (July 2009) there are several adult titles that might appeal to young adult readers, including:

- *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult — A teen becomes the only hope her sister has of beating leukemia (also a movie).
- *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson — The disappearance of a wealthy heiress triggers a journalist's investigation.

- *Knock Out: An FBI Thriller* by Catherine Coulter—FBI agents attempt to save a young girl with psychic powers.
- *Devil Bones* by Kathy Reichs—A forensic anthropologist investigates the death of a young girl

## Genre Fiction

**Westerns**—The late Louis L'Amour was the king of western genre fiction. His short story collections, *The Collected Short Stories of Louis L'Amour* (Volumes One and Two), continue to be on the Western bestseller lists along with *Shavetail* by Thomas Cobb; *Another Man's Moccasins* by Craig Johnson; and *Trouble at the Redstone* by John D. Nesbitt. [www.westernwriters.org](http://www.westernwriters.org)

**Romance**—Each year the Romance Writers of America create a list of best romance books. Finalists for 2009 award books include: *Her One Desire* by Kimberly Killion; *No Good Girls* by Jean Marie Pierson; *Duchess by Night* by Eloisa James; and *Finding Stefanie* by Susan May Warren. Additional titles and authors can be found on the Romance Writers of America website at [www.rwanational.org](http://www.rwanational.org)

**Mysteries**—Mystery Writers of America ([www.mysterywriters.org](http://www.mysterywriters.org)) is a definitive source for award-winning mystery titles. Mary Higgins Clark is one of the notable authors in this genre—she writes both adult and young adult titles. New (2009) titles in the mystery genre include: *Lethal Vintage* by Nadia Gordon, *The Desert Hedge Murders* by Patricia Stoltey, *Brewed, Crude and Tattooed* by Sandra Balzo, and *Edge of Black* by J.T. Ellison.

**Espionage**—*But I Trusted You: Ann Rule's Crime Files #14* by Ann Rule (2009), *Triple Cross: How bin Laden's Master Spy Penetrated the CIA, the Green Berets, and the FBI* by Peter Lance (2006), and *Splinter Cell* by Tom Clancy (2004) are among classic and current bestsellers and represent bestselling authors in this genre.

## Authors of Note

**John Grisham**—As a child in Tennessee in the 1950s, Grisham dreamed of being a professional ball player. He became an attorney instead and later served as a state representative in his home state. He served as a representative until 1990. One of his first books came about when he overheard the compelling testimony of a young rape victim. For a number of years, Grisham arose early and wrote. His first book became *A Time to Kill* (1988). *The Firm* (1991) became a best-selling novel and the basis for a popular movie. Each year since 1988, Grisham has produced another book—all bestsellers—and seven have been turned into movies. *The Associate* (2009) and *The Appeal* (2008) are among Grisham's recent titles. Website: [www.randomhouse.com/features/grisham/](http://www.randomhouse.com/features/grisham/)

**Dean Koontz**—Koontz's books have been described as graphic and fast-paced with well-developed characters. His quest to become a full-time writer began when he was a senior in college and won an *Atlantic Monthly* fiction competition. His childhood was spent in Pennsylvania where he graduated from Shippensburg University. After graduation he became a writing tutor with the Appalachian Poverty Program and later became an English teacher in Harrisburg. Eventually, his wife offered to support him for five years with the idea that if he did not make it as a writer in that time period, he would never become a self-supporting writer. Koontz's bid to become a successful writer succeeded. Ten of his novels have been number one on the *New York Times* hardcover bestseller list. Twelve of his books have achieved that position on the paperback list. Koontz's recent books include: *Nevermore* by Dean Koontz, Keith Champagne, and Andy Smith (2009); *Relentless* (2009); and *Dead and Alive* (2009). [www.deankoontz.com](http://www.deankoontz.com)

**Michael Crichton**—During his lifetime, Michael Crichton, an author of the techno-thriller, sold over a million books in thirty-six languages, in a writing career spanning four decades. He studied medicine at Harvard, but after graduation he became a writer and filmmaker, and in the 1980s he developed computer programs for the film industry. He was the original creator of *E.R.*, basing it on his early days as a young doctor. He is the very popular author of: *Andromeda Strain* (1969) and *Jurassic Park* (1990). With recent publications, *Pirate Latitudes* (2009)—a novel discovered after his death along with a techno-thriller to be published in 2010—he gained immortality. [www.michaelcrichton.com](http://www.michaelcrichton.com)

**Jodi Picoult**—Picoult's books are excellent examples of cross-over novels. Despite being published for adults, they often feature teen characters. *The Pact* (1998) centers around two young teens that have a suicide pact, and the aftermath in their families. In *Plain Truth* (1999) a young Amish girl gives birth and murders her baby. In *The Tenth Circle* (2006) a young woman is raped, setting off a devastating chain of events. *Nineteen Minutes* (2007) explores the thoughts and emotions surrounding a school shooting. *Handle with Care* (2009) deals with a daughter's rare bone disease; and *House Rules* (2010) deals with a teenager with Asperger's syndrome. Picoult became a NY Times Bestseller with *My Sister's Keeper* (2004), which also was made into a movie by Warner (they also changed the ending). [www.jodipicoult.com](http://www.jodipicoult.com)

**Some ALEX Award winners remain popular with teens.** Some of the more popular past winners include:

*Plainsong* by Kent Haruf (2001)

*Peace Like a River* by Leif Enger (2002)

*10<sup>th</sup> Grade* by Joseph Weisberg (2003)

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* by Mark Hadden (2004)

*Stiff* by Mary Roach (2004)

*My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult (2005)

*Donorboy* by Mark Halpern (2005)

*As Simple as Snow* by Greg Galloway (2006)

*Eagle Blue: A Team, A Tribe, and a High School Basketball Season in Arctic Alaska* by Michael D'Orso (2007)

*The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game* by Michael Lewis (2007)

*A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Beah Ishmael (2008)

### Thought Question

- 1) Survey 20 young adult readers asking them to list the last five books they have read voluntarily (not class assignments). Then categorize the books into those considered as being written for young adults and those intended for an adult audience. What conclusions can you draw from your survey data?

## Picture Books for Young Adults

In many libraries, picture books were for decades and still are, designated as “E” (easy) reading titles. The truth is the text in many picture books is anything but “easy” reading and some deal with topics that are sophisticated and complicated. “Everybody” might be a more useful term. There are some books designated as picture books because of format, but would not be recommended for readers under the age of 8 or 9. *Pink and Say* by Patricia Polacco, a tale from the Civil War, or *Hiroshima No, Pika!* by Toshi Maruki, a powerful book about the bombing of Hiroshima, are examples of picture books for older readers.

Picture books with a strong curriculum narrative are, for many purposes, a short story with illustrations. There are many uses for these abbreviated stories or texts in the middle school and senior high curriculum. Musical directors planning a Madrigal dinner theater might find the exact depictions of costumes that are needed in Alikì's *Medieval Feast* (1986). Franklyn Branley's *Journey Into a Black Hole* (1988) will be the perfect introduction to a scholarly unit on black holes. Those readers examining Christopher Columbus's role as seen by contemporary historians will find using Jane Yolen's *Encounter* (1996) very useful. Similarly, a unit on World War II would not be complete without introducing some of the faces of the Japanese citizens who were interned during World War II in the USA— *A Place Where Sunflowers Grow* by Amy Lee-Tai and Felicia Hoshino (2006) puts a human face on the experience.

Picture books or short stories (illustrated or not) are successfully used to:

- promote literacy across the curriculum;
- convey ideas simply;
- introduce/encourage the reading of more difficult books on the same subject;
- encourage creative writing in prose and poetry;
- promote awareness of language;
- teach artistic styles in illustrations;
- encourage the development of creativity and imagination;
- introduce a person or topic for more in-depth study.
- provide a schema for students in special education or ESL classes;
- provide models for teen parents to read to their children;
- teach elements of literature—plotting, characterization, etc.;
- provide material for reader's theater, speech class, and so forth;
- teach literary devices: foreshadowing, flashbacks, and so forth.

Try any one of these:

### Art

- Morrison, Taylor. *Anotonio's Apprenticeship: Painting a Fresco in Renaissance Italy*. (1996)— Art history.

### History

- Adler, David A. *Enemies of Slavery*. Illustrated by Donald A. Smith. (2004)—Thirteen anti-slavery individuals profiled.
- Arnis, Nancy. *Orphans of Normandy: A True Story of World War II Told Through Drawings by Children*. (2003)—One hundred orphan girls walk from their orphanage amidst the chaos of the Allied invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944 to safety behind Allied lines.
- Aylesworth, Jim. *Our Abe Lincoln*. (2009)—Rendition of a song sung during Lincoln's presidential campaigns. Song sung to the tune of “Old Grey Mare.”
- Baretta, Gene. *Now e's Ben: The Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin*. (2008)

- Behnke, Alison. *Chinese in America*. (2004) — History of Chinese immigration to the United States.
- Borden, Louise. *Across the Blue Pacific: A World War II Story*. Illustrated by Robert Andrew Parker. (2006) — A school class corresponds with a soldier.
- Brown, Craig. *Mule Train Mail*. (2009) — A capsule of one aspect of the life on the Havasupai Indian Reservation at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.
- Curlee, Lynn. *Ballpark: The Story of America's Baseball Fields*. (2005) — From ball parks to hot dogs.
- Curlee, Lynn. *Capital*. (2003) — History of Washington, D.C. focusing on the National Mall, its monuments, & its buildings.
- Currier, Katrina Saltonstall. *Kai's Journey to Gold Mountain: An Angel Island Story*. (2005) — In 1934, twelve-year-old Kai leaves China to join his father in America.
- Freedman, Russell. *The Adventures of Marco Polo*. Illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline. (2006) — Biography of Marco Polo
- Giblin, James. *Secrets of the Sphinx*. (2004) — What, why and how of these famous Egyptian landmarks.
- Hesse, Karen. *The Cats in Krasinski Square*. Illustrated by Wendy Watson. (2004) — Two Jewish sisters, escapees of the infamous Warsaw ghetto, devise a plan to foil Gestapo plans to intercept food for starving people.
- Cheripko, Jan. *Caesar Rodney's Ride: The Story of an American Patriot*. Illustrated by Gary Lippincott. (2004) — Caesar Rodney may be responsible for our nation's birth; this book tells how.
- Krull, Kathleen. *Hillary Rodham Clinton: Dreams Taking Flight*. (2008) — A young girl set her sights high.
- Lewin, Ted. *Lost City: The Discovery of Machu Picchu*. (2003) — Hiram Bingham, a Yale professor, and a Peruvian boy discover a lost Incan city in 1911.
- Littlesugar, Amy. *Willy and Max: A Holocaust Story*. (2006) — Looting of treasures in Germany during World War II; restoration to the rightful owner.
- McGill, Alice. *Molly Bannaky*. Illustrated by Chris T. Soentpiet. (1999) — Story of Benjamin Banneker's (surveyor of Washington, D.C.) grandmother and her immigration.
- McKissack, Pat. *Days of Jubilee*. (2003) — Slavery from original sources.
- Polacco, Patricia. *Butterfly*. (2004) — During the Nazi occupation of France, Monique's mother hides a Jewish family in her basement.
- Polacco, Patricia. *Pink and Say*. (1994) — Tale of two boy soldiers who befriend one another during the war. A powerful story.

#### Literature

- Coville, Bruce. *William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night*. Illustrated by Dennis Nolan. (pb 2003) — An adaptation of Shakespeare's classic title with Coville's own prose integrated with pivotal lines from Shakespeare's origin.
- Kimmel, Eric A. *The Hero Beowulf*. Illustrated by Leonard Everett Fisher. (2005) — A simple, brief retelling of the Anglo-Saxon epic.
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. *Paul Revere's Ride: The Landlord's Tale*. Illustrated by Charles Santore. (2003) — Depicts the landlord of the Wayside Inn telling the story of Paul Revere's Ride.
- Rosen, Michael. *Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet*. Illustrated by Jane Ray. (2003) — Scene by scene account; act and scene references.
- Walker, Alice. *Why War Is Never a Good Idea*. (2008) — Poetry grieving the impact of war.

## Science

- Appelt, Kathi. *Miss Lady Bird's Wildflowers: America's Environmental First Lady*. Illustrated by Joy Fisher Hein. (2005) — A biography of Lady Bird Johnson.
- Arnold, Caroline. *The Skeletal System*. (2004) — Biology
- Nivola, Claire A. *Planting the Trees: The Story of Wangani Maathai*. (2008) — Making a difference.
- Pringle, Laurence. *Snakes! Strange and Wonderful*. Illustrated by Meryl Henderson. (2004) — Interesting new details; for fans of Animal Kingdom shows.

## General Topics

- Alberg, Alan. *Previously*. (2008)
- Bang, Molly. *Common Ground: The Water, Earth, And Air We Share*. (1997) — The natural resources we share.
- Barasch, Lynn. *Knockin' on Wood*. (2004) — An inspirational biography of Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates (1907–1998) who lost a leg at age 12 and went on to become a world-renowned tap dancer.
- Cutler, Jane. *Cello of Mr. O*. (2000) — Cost of war.
- Gold, Julie. *From a Distance*. (2000) — Anti-war song
- Love, D. Anne. *Of Numbers and Stars: The Story of Hypatia*. Illustrated by Pam Paparone. (2006) — Biography of Hypatia, a Greek scholar, philosopher, writer, and teacher. Math.
- Scieszka, Jon. *Math Curse*. Illustrated by Lane Smith. (1995) — Math, prime numbers.
- Shulevitz, Uri. *How I Learned Geography*. (2008) — An unforgettable person story.
- Stevenson, Harvy. *Looking at Liberty*. (2003) — A look at the grand lady in New York Harbor.

## Keeping Up

- Hall, Susan J. (2001) *Using Picture Storybooks to Teach Literary Devices: Recommended Books for Children and Young Adults* Volume 3 (Using Picture Books to Teach) Oryx. Volume 1: 1990; Volume 2: 1998.
- Children's Literature: Independent Information and Reviews. "Themed Reviews: Picture Books for Older Readers." (n.d.) Online: [www.childrenslit/th\\_picbkolder.html](http://www.childrenslit/th_picbkolder.html)
- McElmeel, Sharron L. (2009) *Picture That! From Mendel to Normandy: Picture Books and Ideas, Curriculum and Connections — for Tweens and Teens*. Includes connecting ideas for a multitude of titles — in classrooms and libraries — with older readers. Annotations, quick lists, and many strategies for use.
- Picture Books for Older Readers wiki (2009) Online: [picturebooksforolderreaders.pbworks.com](http://picturebooksforolderreaders.pbworks.com)

## Spotlight on Malian's Song

This Abenaki version of the brutal attack of the British on an Abenaki village (1759) is in direct contrast to the published journals of Major Robert Rogers. Few tales of North American history are told from a Native American viewpoint, and this tale from the Abenaki perspective is a valuable piece of American History. Bruchac, Marge. *Malian's Song*. (2006)  
[www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/childrens-books/malians-song/](http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/childrens-books/malians-song/)

## Thought Question

It takes experience to know what picture book and illustrated stories to use with teens. What tips can you gather from other teachers and librarians to match reader with text?

## Making Connections: Young Adult Literature in the Classroom

The majority of the titles that make up the high school canon are “classics” originally written for an adult audience. Teens can find these titles difficult to read, difficult to relate to, and “over-taught.” A common complaint about English class among teens is that the over-analysis of texts can often ruin the enjoyment of the book, compounded by the “right answer” for which they feel responsible. This environment can undermine the joy of reading, and teens will come to view reading as a chore rather than a pleasurable activity. One way to combat the difficulties of teaching literature to teens is to find ways to incorporate young adult literature into the English classroom to support and enhance current curriculum.

There are a number of ways to introduce YA literature to a classroom in a manner that supports the curriculum: individual reading of titles that are thematically consistent with the class novel, whole class reading of a YA novel that illuminates the themes either before or during the reading of a “classic,” or a teacher can opt to teach only the Young Adult novel to cover the topics, genres and themes the classic would have covered. These techniques are particularly helpful for struggling readers but can be successful with capable and avid readers as well.

There is, however, a basic debate question that surrounds the inclusion of young adult literature in the classroom that should be considered by those involved in reading instruction: the librarian, the English department, reading specialists, and resource teachers. What is the responsibility to impart cultural knowledge? Is there a canon that high school students should experience? What is the responsibility of English teachers to build avid life-long readers? Does teaching the “high school canon” interfere with teens developing an avid reading habit? There is theory and research that support the idea that young adult literature should be used in the classroom, and there is a call for cultural literacy. The debate is ongoing in *English Journal*, a journal published by National Council of Teachers of English and is worth in-depth exploration.

As an advocate of young adult literature in the classroom, you should be prepared to answer the question of quality, which may be the fallback position of those reluctant to use YA literature. There is, of course, quality YA material that covers all genres and has multiple narrators and fluid timelines. There are YA novels written in second person and with the omniscient third person narrator. It is a mistake to base one’s opinion of

YA literature on the series romances many teachers experienced in the ‘80s and early ‘90s. As an advocate for young adult literature, seek out and recommend quality YA materials that meet the curricular needs of teachers and the developmental needs of teens. Keep current with the professional issues of NCTE and local English organizations so that you can use experts from those organizations to support YA literature in the classroom.

### Debate: Young Adult Lit vs. the Classics

This is a topic that has been debated and discussed, and there seems to be no consensus in sight. Inform yourself and be ready to defend your position.

Read:

- Hardy, Lawrence. “The Loss of Literature.” *American School Board Journal*. Dec., 2004. Vol. 191 Issue 12, p13–17.
- Themed Issue: *English Journal*, Vol. 90, Number 3, January, 2001. Young Adult Literature: The Problem with YA Literature



Connections do not have to be thematic; they can be made based on archetypes in literature, such as the hero's journey, the fall from Eden, or good versus evil. They can also be based on time periods: stories that illuminate the Great Depression, such as *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse, can be used to supplement *The Grapes of Wrath*, or non-fiction titles, such as *Witchhunt: Mysteries of the Salem Witch Trials* by Marc Aronson, can help illuminate *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller. Connections can be further made across disciplines. History and Social Science have obvious connections, such as *Catherine, Called Birdy* (Cushman, 1994) for the Middle Ages and Ann Rinaldi's historical titles. However, titles for science, such as *California Blue* (Klass, 1994) and *Double Helix* (Werlin, 2004), can also be used. Math, health and physical education, and the Arts can all benefit from literary connections. There are a number of creative ways to incorporate YA literature in a classroom, so be on the lookout for new titles and methods to do so.

## Spotlight: The Canon and Connections

### Theme: Journey

#### Classics:

*The Odyssey*  
*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*  
*The Grapes of Wrath*

#### YA Connectors:

*Downriver*—Will Hobbs (1991)  
*Walk Two Moons*—Sharon Creech (1994)  
*Rules of the Road*—Joan Bauer (1998)  
*Trouble*—Gary D. Schmidt (2008)  
*In the Space Left Behind*—Joan Ackermann (2008)

### Theme: The Brotherhood of Man (Or Not)

#### Classics:

*Of Mice and Men*  
*Lord of the Flies*  
*To Kill a Mockingbird*

#### YA Connectors:

*Whale Talk*—Chris Crutcher (2001)  
*What Happened to Cass McBride*—Gail Giles (2006)

### Theme: The Lure of Wealth

#### Classics:

*Great Expectations*  
*The Great Gatsby*

#### YA Connectors:

*Love Among the Walnuts*—Jean Ferris (1998)  
*Big Slick*—Eric Luper (2007)

### Theme: Big Brother

#### Classics:

*Animal Farm*  
*Brave New World*

#### YA Connectors:

*The Gospel According to Larry*—Janet Tashjian (2001)  
*The Giver*—Lois Lowry (1993)  
*Feed*—M.T. Anderson (2002)  
*Little Brother*—Cory Doctorow (2008)

### For More In-depth Analysis and Suggestions

*From Hinton to Hamlet: Building Bridges Between Young Adult Literature and the Classics, Second Edition, Revised and Expanded* by Sarah K. Herz and Don Gallo. Greenwood Press, 2005.

### Thought Questions

- 1) What is the role of the library in creating avid, life-long readers?
- 2) How can teachers connect with both school and public librarians to explore new connections between the high school canon and young adult materials?

## **Section III**

### **Issues to Consider in Young Adult Literature and Multimedia**

This section contains just a few of the important issues connected with the world of teenage literature and multimedia. During the last twenty years, the publishing industry has become sensitive to the representation of the many voices represented in American culture. But there seems to be a long way to go as groups, such as Native Americans, Hispanics, Asian, and peoples from the Islamic worlds, seem to be underrepresented. Sadly, in our "pluralistic" society censorship is still alive and well as various groups try to impose their view of the world on everyone else. Finally, we end the section with a few recommendations on programming for young adults.

## Multicultural Concerns

There is probably not one educator who doesn't have some concern for how various ethnic and minority groups are portrayed in literature. With almost 50% of the school population being identified as being of one ethnic minority or another, this concern becomes even more important. But dealing with multiculturalism is another matter. In many people's minds, the term *multicultural* translates into African American. In the past few years, more attention has come to the Asian and Hispanic cultures, and increasingly amounts of attention is now being paid to Native Americans and cultural and religious minorities.

In an article Ashley Bryan, a noted African American author and illustrator, once wrote for the Children's Book Council, he discussed the emergence of literature that acknowledged minority cultures. In that article, Bryan said, "Children can now see their images in illustrated books and in stories of their people. They make a direct connection to these pictures and stories." ("Ashley Bryan: Discovering Ethnicity Through Children's Books." *CBC Magazine: The Children's Book Council*. 2006.) While images of many cultures are being shown in picture books and middle-grade books and young adult novels are including a diversity of characters in greater numbers, those images and portrayals are often unflattering or deemed stereotypic by the groups portrayed. For example, visit a site created by a Native American organization whose mission is to ensure that the lives of Native American Indians are portrayed accurately and respectfully in literature. Their site ([www.oyate.org](http://www.oyate.org)) includes sections that provide resources for selecting books and for books to avoid. Their commentaries are very direct and cause one to question and to think about selection policies and how books impact readers.

Interestingly, it seems that most young adult novelists assume that readers view all characters as white and tend to identify only those characters who have a different ethnic or cultural background. One author that does not do that is Christopher Paul Curtis; he assumes his characters are African American and identifies characters as white. In Cynthia Leitich Smith's *Rain is Not My Indian Name*, readers might assume that Rain's best friend, Galen, is Native American. If they do they will be surprised in the middle of the novel.

Both teachers and librarians should be aware of the growing number of multi-racial teens in our society that do not identify with a particular racial or ethnic background but consider themselves just plain American. The most famous example, of course, is Tiger Woods. Many cultures would like to claim him as their own, but he has generally refused to identify with one group or another. On the other hand Barack Obama is generally identified as African American, but his mother was white, a native of Kansas. Adults need not pressure teens into choosing a cultural or ethnic background either in conversation with them or in the books recommended for them to read.

In the field of children and young adult literature circles, there is a fierce debate about who should be able to write and illustrate about a particular culture. Is it acceptable, and more importantly is the story credible, for a non-African American to write a story where the chief protagonist is African American? Can a non-Native American write of growing up in an Indian boarding school? Can a Christian writer write of teenagers growing up in a Jewish household? In a *School Library Journal* article,<sup>1</sup> Laurie Halse Anderson said, "In some ways, writing historical fiction is like writing outside of one's culture. The author must be scrupulous about detail and motivation, sensitive to cultural (and time) differences, wary of interpretation, and conscious of the reader's background and ability." Anderson is correct

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, Laurie Halse. (2001 May) "The Writing of Fever 1793." *School Library Journal*. Volume 47, p 44.

about historical fiction and in regard to authors who write outside of their culture. Authors who do write outside of their culture must be absolutely scrupulous about details, show extreme sensitivity to the cultural nuances and interpretations, and always remain conscious of the perspective of those about whom they write.

A new term being used recently refers to “intercultural literacy.” Watch for this term and how it interplays with information about multicultural literacy.

### **Write About What You Care About**

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a large debate occurred in writing circles. The push for including a diversity of literature was in full force, but minority authors and illustrators were not being published in numbers sufficient enough to meet the demand. Writers “writing outside of their culture” were filling the void. Some decried the practice by saying that books written by someone who did not understand the culture intimately could not be authentic or valid, and, more importantly, non-minority authors were taking the place of minority writers. Critics suggested that editors (who belong to the majority culture) did not really understand the minority cultures themselves and thus did not view stories from minority writers as fitting into the mainstream market. The author of books for children and young adults involving many Black or Hispanic characters, Ann Cameron, a Caucasian from the Midwestern United States, countered this concept very well in an article written for *School Library Journal*<sup>2</sup>. In that article she says, “To think that a book lacks validity because someone of the ‘wrong’ ethnic group wrote it perpetuates racism.” She makes a compelling case for writing about what one cares about, suggesting that writing about only what one knows stifles the writer and would surely have prohibited some of our great classics. If writers were confined to writing only about what they already know, many great books—authentic and credible despite being written by authors who were not writing of situations in their own culture—would have been deprived to readers.

### **Resources for Understanding and Keeping Up with Multicultural Concerns**

- “Adolescent Literature” *Literacy Matters*.  
[www.literacymatters.org/adlit/selecting/multicultural.htm](http://www.literacymatters.org/adlit/selecting/multicultural.htm)
- Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC). “Multicultural Literature.” Online:  
[www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/multicultural.asp](http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/multicultural.asp)
- Margolis, Rick. “Whitewashed.” *School Library Journal*. April 2000, Vol. 46 Issue 4, p18.
- McElmeel, Sharron L. “Good Intentions Are Not Enough.” *Library Media Connection*, Nov/Dec 2004, Vol. 23 Issue 3, p28. Online:  
[www.mcelmeel.com/writing/goodintentions.html](http://www.mcelmeel.com/writing/goodintentions.html)
- Multicultural Children’s Literature: Authorship and Selection Criteria. Online:  
[www.indiana.edu/%7Ereading/ieo/bibs/multicu2.html](http://www.indiana.edu/%7Ereading/ieo/bibs/multicu2.html)
- *Across Cultures: A Guide to Multicultural Literature* by Kathy East and Rebecca Thomas (Libraries Unlimited, 2007)
- Welcome to Oyate— [www.oyate.org](http://www.oyate.org)— This site will kept you up to date on criteria and considerations in regard to Native American literature.
- Debbie Reese’s *American Indians in Children’s Literature Blog* at [americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/](http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/) —Debbie Reese (Nambe Pueblo) provides a critical thoughts on children’s and young adult literature

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<sup>2</sup> Cameron, Ann. “Write What You Care About.” *School Library Journal*. June 1989. Volume 35, issue 10, p 50, 2p.

- Pirofsky, Kira Isak. "Multicultural Literature and the Children's Literary Canon: Abstract." *Research Room: EdChange Multicultural Pavilion*.  
www.edchange.org/multicultural/papers/literature.html

### Spotlight

In the late 1980s the now inactive Council on Interracial Books for Children developed a list of 10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books (including young adult books) for Racism and Sexism. The list includes such things as:

- Consider the effect on a child's self-image
- Weigh the relationships between people
- Watch for loaded words
- Check the copyright date

The complete list is found a number of places online including:

The Birch Lane (California) Library Page  
www.birchlane.davis.ca.us/library/10quick.htm

A good summary of the criteria is included in an article "Beyond Good Intentions: Selecting Multicultural Literature" by Joy Shiohita, originally published in September–October 1997 Children's Advocate news magazine published by Action Alliance for Children. Available online at: leeandlow.com/p/administrators\_joyarticle.mhtml

### Thought Questions

- 1) Are only Native Americans qualified to write books with Native American characters and Native American themes?
- 2) What would the status of books for children be today if Ezra Jack Keats (a Caucasian) had not illustrated *A Snowy Day* (1963) with a Black child, Peter?
- 3) What was Virginia Hamilton's contribution to the world of young adult literature? Christopher Paul Curtis? Alexie Sherman? Joseph Bruchac? Lawrence Yep? Gary Soto?
- 4) Survey four biography shelves (or another section) in your school or public library. Tally how many books feature men or women; Caucasian, Black, Native American, Hispanic, and so forth; historical figures or present day subjects. Is one category over-represented? And if so, why?

### Thought Activity

Locate Ann Cameron's *School Library Journal* article (available from the EBSCO database). Read it and comment. Do you think writers who write outside of their culture are as credible as writers who write of events and people within their own culture and ethnic experience?

## Censorship Issues

The schools of America operate under a policy of *in loco parentis*, meaning that school teachers, administrators, and librarians are the “parents” of children and teens while under their direction. To keep children and teens safe, schools often have closed campuses, declare drug- and alcohol-free zones, require visitors to register at the office, ban guns and other weapons, and put filters on Internet connectivity to lessen exposure to pornography, predators, and blatant propaganda produced by both large corporations and terrorists. Such safety measures come into conflict at times with the principles of free speech or the supposed right of teenagers to consume any types of information they wish. Both teachers and librarians, according to the courts, must take into consideration the standards of their communities for such things as decency and teen rights to controversial or pornographic information. For the most part, objections to information in our society center on foul language, politics, or sexual messages, and schools tend to respond to the wishes of parents in their communities. To do so, schools generally set up policy statements approved by a board of education laying out a defensible position with respect to controversial materials.

Schools, in general, must operate within the scope of established policies and procedures. Specifically, policies and procedures should also guide the activities of the library media collection program and the selection and use of materials in the classroom. Selection policy and considerations for library collections will vary somewhat from the policy for identifying materials to “teach” in the classroom, but many of the same considerations are important.

In general, policies address the ideals and generalities, and the procedure statement explains how those policies should be implemented, i.e. the daily activities that are necessary to meet the ideals and generalities. In most cases the policy and procedure documents are separate publications—the policy statement for general distribution and publication while the procedure statements are internal documents meant to be the working guidelines for the organization or library/classroom. Having a board-approved selection policy (and procedures that support the implementation of policy) may help avert concerns with book censors, copyright infringement, and collection bias.

Libraries should have a clear selection policy, but should also have a de-selection/acquisition policy, a policy on gift acceptance, and a reconsideration policy. The procedure accompanying the reconsideration policy will be extremely important, as those citizens asking for the reconsideration of an item in your library/classroom should have a clear procedure to make that request. That will generally entail having a reconsideration form for citizens to make that formal request. Sample forms are available at: [eduscapes.com/seeds/management/censor.html](http://eduscapes.com/seeds/management/censor.html)

Public libraries will generally have different policies than school libraries in areas of controversy. Public libraries are more diverse and serve the entire community. Thus they have more diverse collections and defend them in the words of one public librarian: “We have something that will offend everyone.” Public libraries are freer to do this because they are free of the burden of *in loco parentis*. Teachers, school librarians, and public librarians should engage in a discussion of controversial materials, their defense or reconsideration, and what constitutes ways to protect young people while encouraging them to learn how to live and work in a free society.

Of increasing discussion is the prevention of access to Web 2.0 tools based on the fear that young people will use these tools as gateways to dangerous materials. Some have said that this constitutes a new frontier in intellectual freedom.

## ALA, Intellectual Freedom, and Banned Book Week

The American Library Association (ALA) and its members are fierce defenders of the right of citizens to choose their own reading material. Their site provides many resources for those librarians or educators facing challenges to materials that they have deemed as appropriate to their clientele. Visit their site at [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)

The ALA has an Office of Intellectual Freedom that is charged with implementing the goals embodied in the organization's *Library Bill of Rights* online at [www.ala.org/oif.html](http://www.ala.org/oif.html). Each year the ALA sponsors Banned Book Week to highlight the rights of readers. Resources and suggestions for celebrating the freedom to read are included on the Banned Books Week pages at [www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bannedbooksweek.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bannedbooksweek.htm)

Every school and every library should have an established procedure for responding to requests for the reconsideration of materials selected for the library or classroom use. Here are some sites that have valuable information regarding this issue.

- Pikes Peak Library District's Challenged Materials Policy: [library.ppld.org/AboutYourLibrary/admin/policies/ChallengedMaterials.asp](http://library.ppld.org/AboutYourLibrary/admin/policies/ChallengedMaterials.asp)
- Annette Lamb and Larry Johnson's website at: [eduscapes.com/seeds/management/censor.html](http://eduscapes.com/seeds/management/censor.html)
- The Right to Read—an ERIC Document at: [www.ericdigests.org/pre-9215/library.htm](http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-9215/library.htm)

### A Few Common Sense Suggestions for Controversial Materials

1. Get parent permission for reading or viewing materials that might be termed controversial.
2. Provide alternatives for teens that are not allowed to read, view, or listen to certain materials.
3. Erase circulation records immediately when materials are returned to library collections.
4. Alert teens that search histories of the Internet are easily recovered by snoopers of any stripe.
5. Teach teens to deal with uncomfortable situations in cyberspace, including behavior in chat rooms, giving out personal information, getting involved in scams, and avoiding predators.
6. All teens will encounter messages with which they are uncomfortable. Teach them to click out or notify adults of the problems they encounter.

## Top 10 Challenged Authors

### 2008:

1. Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson
2. Phillip Pullman
3. Lauren Myracle
4. Jim Pipe
5. Alvin Schwartz
6. Chris Crutcher
7. Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
8. Rudolfo Anaya
9. Stephen Chbosky
10. Cecily von Ziegesar

### 2007:

1. Robert Cormier
2. Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson
3. Mark Twain
4. Toni Morrison
5. Phillip Pullman
6. Kevin Henkes
7. Lois Lowry
8. Chris Crutcher
9. Lauren Myracle
10. Joann Sfar

### 2006:

1. Chris Crutcher
2. Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell
3. Toni Morrison
4. Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
5. Cecily von Ziegesar
6. Carolyn Mackler
7. Alvin Schwartz
8. Stephen Chbosky
9. Alex Sanchez
10. Judy Blume

From ALA's site at  
[www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/frequentlychallenged/challengedauthors/index.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/frequentlychallenged/challengedauthors/index.cfm) (check for updates)

## Spotlight: Chris Crutcher A Censored Author

For a perspective of censorship from an author's viewpoint, don't miss Chris Crutcher's comments on his site ([www.chriscrutcher.com](http://www.chriscrutcher.com)). Crutcher is an oft-censored author and says, "While I agree that 'selection' is a wonderfully convenient term for 'censorship' it doesn't change the intent."

## Top 10 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 2008\*

1. *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell
2. *His Dark Materials* trilogy by Phillip Pullman
3. *TTYL; TTFN; L&R; G&R* (series) by Lauren Myracle
4. *Scary Stories* (series) by Alvin Schwartz
5. *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya
6. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
7. *Gossip Girl* series by Cecily von Ziegesar
8. *Uncle Bobby's Wedding* by Sarah S. Brannen
9. *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
10. *Flashcards of My Life* by Charise Mericle Harper

\*Listed on ALA's website at:  
[www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/bannedbookweek/resourceguide/index.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/bannedbookweek/resourceguide/index.cfm)



## **Have You Read This Book?: Booktalking to the Teenager**

Have you seen a preview at a movie and said to yourself "I can't wait to see that"? Or heard a song on the radio that caused you to purchase an album? Or read a blurb on the back of a book and bought it? That is the power of booktalking. Booktalking is marketing books to teens, usually a captive audience. Despite recent changes in publishers' marketing strategies for young adult literature, there is still fabulous, interesting, quality, and entertaining titles being published for teens that need word of mouth for teens to find and know about. In fact, word of mouth is the best marketing tool available for teens. You can provide word of mouth not just by selecting and displaying titles, but also by booktalking those titles to teens. But what is a booktalk? A booktalk is an advertisement for a book. A good talk gives a sense of characters, plot, setting, and the tone of a book. As a formalized version of reader's advisory, it is a performance. Booktalks are short presentations (no longer than five minutes) to an audience about books designed to encourage teens to read. Booktalks are the product of the presenter, not only a preview of a book, but also an introduction of the presenter and the library. Keep in mind that booktalking is **not** a review or literary criticism. It is **not** a read-aloud. It is **not** a summary of the book.

### **For Librarians**

Booktalking has multiple benefits. For youth service workers in a public library setting, booktalking may be the ticket that gives the public librarians access to school classrooms where they can build relationships with their clientele. For school librarians, booktalking provides access to non-users as well as to independent users. Booktalking to teens puts a friendly face on the library. It makes the librarian more approachable and familiar. It allows the librarian to build relationships with teens and with the teachers (or in-charge adult). Beyond that, booktalking introduces the library collection to teens. You have spent money on a collection to serve teens, now let them know what is in that collection. Finally, booktalking allows you to model the pleasure of reading. While it might not be the best idea to gush over a title (teens don't respond to over the top enthusiasm) it is an opportunity for teens to see reading for pleasure in action. They have a physical manifestation of a reader as a model. So beyond promoting individual titles, you are promoting the act of reading.

So now you are convinced that booktalking is a good idea, and you can convince others (teachers, supervisors) that it is a good idea. Often booktalks are the outgrowth of a teacher's request. However, don't be shy and offer your services. If a teacher or adult (think after-school programs such as Boys' and Girls' Clubs) requests a presentation, spend time with the teacher or adult planning your performance, especially the first time. Know if the students like to read or if they are struggling readers. What is the language background of the students? Are there ESL students? What books have the students read and enjoyed? How much time will be allotted and how many students will you see? What are the school's community's values regarding sex, violence, and bad language? Ultimately the teacher will be responsible for the content of your presentation, but it is important the readers are comfortable with the content. Often teachers will have an expectation regarding the types of material you booktalk. If they don't, you might want a unifying element. Booktalks can be based on a theme, can fit a curricular need, can highlight a genre, or can be general and more all encompassing. Regardless, bring a variety of material: include non-fiction, fiction, and poetry if possible. You will face an audience with a wide variety of interests and needs.

## Teachers as Booktalkers

Librarians are not the only booktalking species on the planet. Any teacher who loves books can and should advertise their favorites to their students. Sometimes this advertisement takes the form of reading aloud either whole books or interesting chapters. At other times, the teacher can do formal booktalks as described below. Still at other times, the teacher might just suggest and hold up a book in class that the teacher enjoyed reading. Such practices let your class know that you are a model reader and expect them to be the same. Your advertisements need not carry with them the stigma of an assignment—rather model reading as enjoyment and reading for reading's sake.

## How to Booktalk

There are different ways to booktalk, and finding what works for you is key. Do not be afraid to make mistakes; that is how you learn. There are different schools of thought regarding written versus ad-libbed booktalks. If you prepare by writing your talk you have a fallback if you lose your place. On the other hand, ad-libbed booktalks may seem more natural. Either way, practice is important. When preparing your presentation, there are some key things to keep in mind. Keep your booktalk short and sweet. The opening is important—it is how you grab the attention of a classroom or group of teens. Look for a hook: a quote, a question, an exciting piece of action. The body of the talk should be a simple narrative that helps set the tone. It is acceptable to read from the book, but not too excessively. It should be enough to give the teens the idea of authorial voice. (*Hint:* Unless you are talking to AP students, and even then, don't use the term "authorial voice" with teens.) Just as you start your booktalk with a hook, you should end with something memorable, perhaps the title.

Whatever you do: ***Don't give away the ending!***

You want teens to read the book; if you tell them the ending they don't have to read it.

In considering the style of booktalk you wish to present, consider the strength of the title. Is it plot? Characters? Tone? A talk that focuses on the plot may be the easiest to prepare for, but it is important to remember to keep the talk short and sweet. When writing a booktalk that centers on the plot, do not give too much away: introduce the basics and the conflict but do not indicate any resolution. Or perhaps you wish to focus on the characters. This is particularly effective if you are comfortable performing; you can take on the first person voice of a character. Be careful to make it clear how you are presenting or you risk confusing your audience. You can write a talk that sets a mood, the most common method for scary or humorous titles. This is the style of performance that lends itself well to reading sections of the book. Perhaps there is one section that stands out that you want to share. This technique works well with informational titles and poetry collections.

### Rules of Booktalking

- ✓ Read the book.
- ✓ **Don't give away the ending**
- ✓ Like the book
- ✓ Be Yourself!!
- ✓ Be sure to identify title and author
- ✓ Don't review the book, oversell, gush etc.
- ✓ Practice, practice, practice
- ✓ Know your audience
- ✓ Bring variety
- ✓ Keep records: what you used, what worked, etc.
- ✓ Write it down the first time
- ✓ Engage your audience
- ✓ Prepare a "hook"
- ✓ Learn from mistakes, celebrate success

**Perhaps this goes without saying but  
it is so important:  
Like teens!**

Once you decide on the titles and content of your presentation, decide the type of performance you are comfortable with. Some booktalkers use props or costumes. While props and costumes add to the entertainment of the presentation, be careful that they are not distracting from the book and be sure you are comfortable using them. Some booktalkers use technology to enhance their presentation, using overheads of the book jackets or Power Point presentations. Once again, the technology should add value to the performance, not be distracting. And be prepared for the technology to fail or not be available. Consider different forms of media to enhance your talk. Is there music, movies or magazines you can bring in to support the performance and help make connections to the books? And don't forget — giveaways can always help with audience engagement.

On the day of your booktalk, there are some things to keep in mind. Bring multiple copies of titles you are booktalking, if at all possible. Arrange for the books to be checked out immediately, so if they are requested, you are prepared. Bring lists of the titles for the teens in case they want something later or cannot get the title they want (someone else may get to it first). Bring water. And finally, give yourself a break and remember it may not be perfect. Have a sense of humor. Be yourself. *This should be fun!*

After you present, take notes. Keep good records of what titles you talked about. This will keep you from using the same titles over and over. Make notes about what worked and what didn't. While it is fresh in your mind, revise your booktalk to be more successful. Ask for feedback from others who may have different insight and can help you evaluate your presentation. Notice which titles students seem to be enjoying or sharing with one another. Librarians and teachers can work well as a collaborative unit. Keep in touch with one another, ask for feedback, and share the booktalking responsibilities.

Can teachers booktalk from their classrooms or from the library to their students? Of course! Use the ideas above and develop techniques on your own to help each child become an avid and capable reader.

### Think Web 2.0

How about sharing your booktalks on Web 2.0 media so that teens can tune in anytime they want to listen? And, if you can booktalk, then why can't teens learn to share the books they like in the same manner on YouTube, podcasts, school or public websites, Flickr, Voki, and a host of other video and audio sharing systems. It is a whole new world.

### Further Resources for Booktalking

- Bodart, Joni Richards. *Booktalking the Award Winners* series. H. W. Wilson  
Bodart, Joni Richards. *Radical Reads: 101 YA Novels on the Edge*. Scarecrow Press, 2002.  
*Booktalking Colorado*—tips from DinoSam: [booktalkingcolorado.ppld.org/Scripts/Tips.asp](http://booktalkingcolorado.ppld.org/Scripts/Tips.asp)  
Bromann, Jennifer. *Booktalking That Works*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2001.  
Bromann, Jennifer. *More Booktalking That Works*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2005.  
Johnson, Denise. *Web Watch Book Talks*: [www.readingonline.org/electronic/webwatch/book\\_talks/](http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/webwatch/book_talks/)  
Jones Patrick and Shoemaker, Joel. *Do it Right! Best Practices for Serving Young Adults in School and Public Libraries*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2001.  
Keane, Nancy. *Booktalks: Quick and Simple*: [nancykeane.com/booktalks](http://nancykeane.com/booktalks)  
Langemack, Chapple. *The Booktalker's Bible: How to Talk About the Books You Love to Any Audience*. Libraries Unlimited, 2003.  
Littlejohn, Carol. *Talk That Book: Booktalks to Promote Reading*. Linworth Publishing, 1999.  
Schall, Lucy. *Teen Genre Connections: From Booktalking to Booklearning*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.  
Schall, Luch. *Booktalks and Beyond: Promoting Great Genre Reads to Teens*. Libraries Unlimited, 2007.  
Young Adult Library Services Association. *Professional Development Center: Booktalking*: [www.ala.org/ala/mgrtps/divs/yalsa/profdev/booktalking.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrtps/divs/yalsa/profdev/booktalking.cfm)

## Programming for Young Adults

Mark Twain once said, "The person who *does not* read good books has no advantage over the person who *cannot* read them." If we wish to encourage young adults to join our literacy community, we must build a component for sharing the joy of reading with readers. The following ideas are suggestions that have been successful in middle and high schools. Take the ideas that you think might work in your classroom or library or school and begin to surround the young adults in your school with a literacy environment.

1. Participate in the knowville.org reading, writing, and doing challenge.
2. Create a teen advisory board or "volunteer" group to help establish programs and activities that will include their peers in library or classroom literacy activities. Display the photograph of the advisory board and hold regular meetings with an agenda (all students invited to attend) to set a mission statement, establish a year-long theme or program, and implement the program.
3. Publish a newsletter/blog promoting good books to read.
4. Have teens write book reviews/do booktalks of new books and publish them on your own library blog/newsletter, on Amazon.com or any other Web 2.0 location.
5. Offer promotional giveaways or "weekly specials," just like the department stores. "This Week's Special—Check out a book and receive a 'Library Lollipop.'"
6. Create a display of books written by teens and include author bios.
7. Create a display of poems and stories written by local teens. Provide information about procedures and places where any teen might get their work published.
8. Identify a monthly reading/literacy theme and create a space where young readers are encouraged to submit artwork that supports the theme. Display the artwork in the library as part of the monthly theme.
9. Establish a book or author award from your school. Develop criteria for nominations, procedure for voting for the nominated books, award and honor specifications, and other details. Conduct the award discussions, send the author or publisher notice, and present the award. Send notices to local newspapers and national periodicals.
10. Distribute coupons for amnesty from fines owed.
11. Set up and promote a paperback book exchange.
12. Schedule a read-in during a specific period during the week. For example, hold a "Brown Bag Read-In" over the lunch period. Encourage students to bring their "brown bag" lunches to the library during their lunch period and read. Or provide passes to those students who want to eat lunch in the cafeteria but to then come to the library to read during the rest of the period.
13. Create "Read With Me" posters for distribution to elementary schools showing high school sports players, cheerleaders, drama members, or just plain students reading a favorite book from their childhood.
14. Have writing classes write a children's book for a specific child in a partner elementary school. Deliver and read the book during a specific day.
15. Individual students or groups of students such as the basketball team might visit elementary schools to read with students.
16. Make a booktalk video tape of great teen reads (or create a Power Point presentation). Share the presentation in classrooms throughout the high school; supply a copy to the hospitals for their teen wards. (Perhaps sponsor a coin drive to buy paperback copies of the books that go with the video tape.)
17. Engage in a drive to get all high school students to obtain a public library card.

18. Designate one afternoon a month to be a café and reading venue. Teens are invited to read their own work or a favorite poem, chapter, and so forth by recognized writers. Serve beverages, provide theater-style seating for the audience, and provide a microphone for the presenter.
19. Schedule "Friday Forums"—a time for special events in the library: art shows, reader's theater, Q&A sessions with the administration, politicians, or other people of interest, featured speakers and so forth.
20. Booktalk books regularly in the classroom, in the library, during lunchtimes in the cafeteria, anywhere there are potential readers.
21. Form a special interest storytelling club. Schedule performances for the storytellers in classrooms, elementary schools, civic organizations and clubs, or any special event.
22. Plan movie-book activities. Read the book; see the movie; talk. Is there anything more fun and engaging for teens? Everyone will have an opinion and will have a great time.
23. Do a read-around. Cut a copy of a fairly short and action-packed book up into separate chapters. Depending on how the book is printed, this may take two books to get complete copies of each chapter. Pass out the chapters randomly and give teens some time to read their chapters silently. You might want to give each reader a character list with brief descriptions so they can understand the chapter. When everyone has read their own chapter, have a tell-around. Ask each person to tell their chapter in about one minute. As later chapter readers hear previous tellers, they can figure out how their chapter fits into the whole. Picking the right kind of book and a few trials at this will teach the adult how to structure this activity so that it works well.

### Publishing Sources for Young Writers

- *About Teens: Humor, Fun, Fiction and More*: [www.aboutteens.org](http://www.aboutteens.org)
- *The Concord Review*: [www.tcr.org](http://www.tcr.org)
- *Crunch: An Online 'Zine*: [nces.ed.gov/nceskids/crunch/](http://nces.ed.gov/nceskids/crunch/)
- *Cyberteens Online Magazines*: [www.cyberteens.com](http://www.cyberteens.com)
- *KidPub Children's Publishing*: [www.kidpub.org](http://www.kidpub.org)
- *Kids Authors*: [www.kidauthors.com](http://www.kidauthors.com) (poems; in two age categories: 6–12; 13–18)
- *Kids Bookshelf*: [www.kidsbookshelf.com](http://www.kidsbookshelf.com) (for writers 17 years of age and under)
- *Merlyn's Pen—Fiction, Essays and Poems by Americas Teens*: [www.merlynspen.org](http://www.merlynspen.org)
- *Midlink Magazine*: [longwood.cs.ucf.edu/~MidLink/](http://longwood.cs.ucf.edu/~MidLink/)
- *Skipping Stones*: [www.skippingstones.org](http://www.skippingstones.org)
- *Stone Soup Magazine*: [www.stonesoup.com](http://www.stonesoup.com)
- *Teen Ink*: [teenink.com](http://teenink.com)
- *The Writing Conference, Inc.: The Writers' Slate*: [www.writingconference.com](http://www.writingconference.com)

## Keeping Up— Getting New Ideas for Teen Programming

One of the greatest resources for ideas for your library or classroom is your professional peers. Whether you are in the classroom or library, identify a group of like-minded peers and form an informal professional support group. Plan a regular time to get together to share ideas and brainstorm solutions to situations that present themselves. Ideas from professional colleagues can also come from professional journals and listservs that promote interaction among professionals.

### Professional Journals

- *School Library Journal*: [www.schoollibraryjournal.com](http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com)
- *Teacher Librarian*: [www.teacherlibrarian.com/](http://www.teacherlibrarian.com/)
- *Library Media Connection*: [www.linworth.com/lmc/](http://www.linworth.com/lmc/)
- *School Library Activities Monthly*: [www.schoollibrarymedia.com](http://www.schoollibrarymedia.com)

### Professional Organizations

- International Reading Association: [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)
- National Council of Teachers of English: [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)
- American Library Association: [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)

### Listservs

If you wish to search for a listserv (professional online community) go to the “Official catalog of Listserv® lists” at [www.lsoft.com/catalist.html](http://www.lsoft.com/catalist.html). This list is searchable and provides information about joining the specific lists selected.

## Book Blogs— Sharing Books Online

Promote your library and reading with a library or classroom book blog—a quick and easy-to-use website where you can quickly post thoughts, interact with people, and more. Anyone can create a free blog courtesy of Blogger Buzz at [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com). See an example at [www.mcbookwords.blogspot.com](http://www.mcbookwords.blogspot.com)

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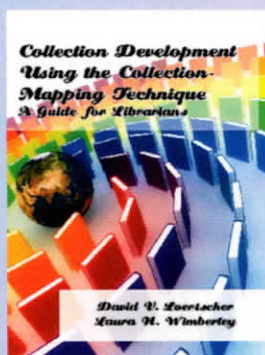


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**Sharron L. McElmeel** is a veteran classroom teacher and library media specialist. She is a graduate of the University of Iowa's School of Library Science and spent decades in the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) public schools. She has built a national reputation as a resource for those interested in children's and young adult literature. She has written more than two dozen books in the area of children's and young adult literature and writes and edits for a number of educational publications. She has been named as Iowa Reading Teacher of the Year by the Iowa Reading Association, honored with the organization's Celebrate Literacy Award, nominated as Iowa's Teacher of the Year, and, in 2004, she was named one of the Top Ten Online Educators of the Year. She is an often-requested speaker at conferences and professional development workshops. Currently, in addition to her writing, she is director of McBookwords, a literacy organization and teaches courses in children's and young adult literature at the University of Wisconsin – Stout.



## Collection Development Using the Collection Mapping Technique A Guide for Librarians

David V. Loertscher, Laura H. Wimberley; ISBN: 978-1-933170-43-5

More than a decade ago, David Loertscher introduced the concept of collection mapping in two different books mostly to the audience of school librarians of the time. It received some attention at that time because it contained a simple method of dividing the collection into various segments that became a part of a visual representation of collection strengths and weaknesses. Much has happened in the last decade that has put into major questions what it is libraries should own and what it should provide access to across a wide spectrum of information and for what types of devices. For this new revision of the collection mapping idea, Laura Wimberly has added her expertise and together the authors have designed a book that would be useful to all types of libraries. Its object is to take into consideration many of the traditional ideas of collection development that still make sense, but also to push the envelope in the idea of collection development. This book has been designed to use as a textbook for beginning practitioners, and also for experienced collection developers who want to challenge their traditional practices. We believe this is critical in an era where many patrons consider the Google search as their own definitive free access to the world of information. We hope that the issues we raise will stimulate discussion on the book's companion wiki:  
<http://collectionmapping.pbworks.com>



## The Best Teen Reads 2007

Sharron L. McElmeel; Hi Willow Research & Publishing; 2007; ISBN 1-933170-24-7; \$20.00

Completely updated for 2007, McElmeel has assembled the best books, old and new, for teen reads in a wide variety of genres and interest levels. These include a list of the last several years of teen publications that have received star reviews in the reviewing media or have been tapped as award-winning books in the past year. The main list includes these recommended materials, but other sections of the book provide a guide to the best graphic novels, audio books, poetry, and picture books. Along the way McElmeel spotlights authors and provides tips for both using the books in school and public libraries.

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