



Glenfield's Top 10 Books

TOP TEN AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

A Bi-weekly Recommended List for Middle School Readers
Curated by Mrs. Virginia Weaver, Glenfield School Librarian
Week of February 19, 2018

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Elijah of Buxton*. New York: Scholastic, 2007.

Eleven-year-old Elijah lives in Buxton, Canada, a settlement of runaway slaves near the American border. Elijah's the first child in town to be born free, and he ought to be famous just for that - not to mention for being the best at chunking rocks and catching fish. Unfortunately, all that most people see is a "fra-gile" boy who's scared of snakes and tends to talk too much. But everything changes when a former slave steals money from Elijah's friend, who has been saving to buy his family out of captivity in the South. Now it's up to Elijah to track down the thief - and his dangerous journey just might make a hero out of him, if only he can find the courage to get back home.

Draper, Sharon M. *Fire from the Rock*. New York: Penguin, 2007.

To comply with federal law, the school board has to integrate Central High School, whether anyone likes it or not. Sylvia is shocked when her teacher asks her to consider being one of the first black students to attend Central. It is an honor reserve for very few, but it is also a heavy burden that Sylvia may not be able to carry. She would be separated from her friends, excluded from social activities, and worse, subjected to threats and, possibly, violence. Sylvia is torn between wanting to bring about change and wanting to remain safe and happy.

Hansen, Joyce. *Which Way Freedom*. New York: Avon Camelot, 1992

Obi had never forgotten the sounds of his mother's screams on the day he was sold away from her. Making plans to run away to find her was a secret game he played with his friend Buka, an old African who lived at the edge of the farm.

When the civil War began, Obi knew it was time to run or be sold again. If he was caught, he'd be killed .. or worse. But if he stayed, he might never know freedom.

Katz, William Loren. *Breaking the Chains: African-American Slave Resistance*. NY, Aladdin, 1999.

Describes slavery in the United States, the harsh conditions under which slaves lived, the active and passive resistance with which they fought for their rights, the revolts, and the involvement of slaves in the Civil War.

Meltzer, Milton. *There Comes a Time: the struggle for Civil Rights*. New York: Random House, 2001.

Historian, scholar, and award-winning author Milton Meltzer outlines the struggle of African Americans for "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," starting with the landing of the first slave ships on colonial shores. How did over 300 years of slavery, segregation, and Jim Crow laws come to an end in the civil rights movement of the 1960s? What was achieved; what are the problems still facing us today?

McKissack, Patricia C. *Cyborg: The Second Books of the Clone Codes*. New York: Scholastic 2011.

A sci-fi adventures set in a strange universe governed by laws that oppressed its citizens. Once again the chase is on to find anyone who's in violation of these regulations. This time it's the Cyborg Act of 2130 that's driving Houston Ye and his friend Leanna to remain fugitives, to hide from the authorities, and to keep their identities secret. Getting caught could cost them their lives... and change the course of history forever.

Robinson, Sharon. *Jackie's Nine: Jackie's Robinson's Value to Live By*. New York: Scholastic, 2001.

This inspiring collection pays tribute to baseball legend and civil rights hero Jackie Robinson. Jackie's daughter, Sharon Robinson, acts as a personal tour guide through the nine heartfelt, hard-won values that helped her father achieve his goals. Jackie's own powerful words, as well as the writings of many other heroes and pioneers, bring these nine value to life.

Sheinkin, Steve. *Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the Fight for Civil Rights*. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2014.

On July 17, 1944, a massive explosion rocked the segregated Navy base at Port Chicago, California, killing more than 300 sailors who were at the docks, critically injuring off-duty men in their bunks, and shattering windows up to a mile away. On August 9th, 244 men refused to go back to work until unsafe and unfair conditions at the docks were addressed. When the dust settled, fifty were charged with mutiny, facing decades in jail and even execution.

Ward, Jerry, W. Jr., Ed. *Trouble the Water: 250 Years of African-American Poetry*. NY: Mentor Book, 1997.

The first collection to cover close to 300 years of poetic achievement in 400 important works by African-American writers, features women as half the contributors and includes nearly 50 poems from the 1980's and 1990's. It bears witness to the beautiful and compelling contribution of African-American poetry to American Literature. The familiar verses of Paul Laurence Dunbar, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Robert Hayden, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Nikki Giovanni are part of a national treasure.

Wolff, Virginia Euwer. *Make Lemonade*. New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1993.

In order to earn money for college, fourteen-year-old LaVaughn babysits for a teenage mother. Jolly is seventeen. She can't really spell. She does not have much of a job. And she has two little kids from two different, absent fathers. Jolly knows she can't cope with Jilly and Jeremy all by herself. So she posts a notice on the school bulletin board: Babysitter Needed Bad. No one replies but Verna LaVaughn, who is only fourteen. How much help can she be?

*Descriptions taken from publishers