



2019 Texas Topaz Nonfiction Reading List YOUTH by Primary Interest Level

The purpose of the Texas Topaz Reading List is to provide children and adults with recommended nonfiction titles that stimulate reading for pleasure and personal learning. It is intended for recreational reading and is not designed to support any particular curriculum. Due to the diversity in age range and topics, Texas librarians should consider titles on this list in accordance with their own local collection development policies.

(*) denotes a unanimous vote by the committee.
Primary and secondary interest levels noted after each annotation.

Grades K-2

All That Trash: The Story of the 1987 Garbage Barge and Our Problem with Stuff by Meghan McCarthy. Simon & Schuster / Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. 2018.

In the late 1980's a savvy businessman had the idea to transport 3,000 tons of garbage to be burned and turned into gas (sound crazy?), yet no state or country would have it. With humor and effective illustrations, this tale of the gar-*barge* that traveled the Atlantic for five months entertains and picques interest in younger readers: why do we have so much junk and what should we do with it? (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

Between the Lines: How Ernie Barnes Went From the Football Field to the Art Gallery by Sandra Neil Wallace and illustrated by Bryan Collier. Simon & Schuster / Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. 2018.

Growing up in the segregated south, there was little opportunity for young Ernie Barnes to explore the world of art, but a career as a professional football player opened doors that allowed Ernie to pursue his passion and become a celebrated American artist. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

****The Boo-boos that Changed the World: A True Story About an Accidental Invention (Really!)*** by Barry Wittenstein and illustrated by Chris Hsu. Charlesbridge. 2018.

An engaging and humorous story of how the Band-Aid was invented and the marketing coup that made it a staple in the homes across the United States. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

Book of Bones: 10 Record-Breaking Animals by Gabrielle Balkan and illustrated by Sam Brewster. Phaidon Press. 2017.

Information on the various aspects of bones is presented in a conversational tone and as a guessing game in this oversized offering. Readers will first encounter beautifully presented white skeletons on dark paper, and then be awed by drawing of the "secret" animal on the following page, with full color and even texture to enjoy. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs: The Story of Ken Nedimyer and the Coral Restoration Foundation by Kate Messner and illustrated by Matthew Forsythe. Chronicle Books. 2018.

A beautifully illustrated book on the work being done to restore coral reefs by the Ken Nedimyer and his Coral Restoration Foundation, one coral colony at a time. Hopeful and lush, this book proves how one small group of people can make a huge difference in the world. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

***Dazzle Ships: World War I and the Art of Confusion** by Chris Barton and illustrated by Victo Ngai. Lerner Publishing Group / Millbrook Press. 2017.

Have you ever wondered how you could hide a giant ship in plain sight? Chris Barton shares the fascinating history of the U.S. and British "Dazzle Ships" from World War I. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

Do Not Lick This Book (*it's Full of Germs) by Idan Ben-Barak and illustrated by Julian Frost. Macmillan / Roaring Brook Press. 2018.

Travel with Min the microbe while she meets other microbes doing their work on teeth, a belly button, a shirt and paper. Electron microscope scans show the natural surfaces greatly enlarged and endearing and funny drawings keep the microbes friendly for little readers. (grades K-2)

Earth! : My First 4.54 Billion Years by Stacy McAnulty and illustrated by David Litchfield. Macmillan / Henry Holt. 2017.

Earth narrates her first 4.54 billion years, those infant years were gassy! This cleverly anthropomorphic take on earth's "life" and the explanation for her family; what makes day and a year, etc... are simple and easily understood. (grades K-2)

Fairy Spell: How Two Girls Convinced the World that Fairies are Real by Marc Tyler Nobleman and illustrated by Eliza Wheeler. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt / Clarion Books. 2018.

Two young cousins create realistic photos of fairies and convince the world they are real. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

***Fossil by Fossil: Comparing Dinosaur Bones** by Sara Levine and illustrated by T. S. Spookytooth. Lerner Publishing Group / Millbrook Press. 2018.

This book for the young dinosaur lovers compares human and dinosaur bones. This engaging volume highlights the special characteristics of each dinosaur. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

Fur, Feather, Fin: All of Us are Kin by Diane Lang and illustrated by Stephanie Laberis. Simon & Schuster / Beach Lane Books. 2018.

Elegant and appealing illustrations pair perfectly with a gentle tone to illuminate how closely related many living beings are, and how they (and us) depend on each other. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

Girl Running: Bobbi Gibb & the Boston Marathon by Annette Bay Pimentel and illustrated by Micha Archer. Penguin Random House / Nancy Paulsen Books. 2018.

The story of the first female to run the Boston Marathon. Although not allowed to run with her school's track team and turned away from entering the Boston Marathon, Bobbi finds a way to overcome her obstacles. (grades K-2)

***Her Right Foot** by Dave Eggers and illustrated by Shawn Harris. Chronicle Books. 2017.

Engaging, conversational and informational text and illustrations detail the creation of and existence of The Statue of Liberty and how it ties to immigration today. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

How Does My Home Work? by Chris Butterworth and illustrated by Lucia Gaggiotti. Candlewick Press. 2018.

With illustrations providing a great retro feel, this delightful book will draw even readers who don't believe they are interested in how things work. Friendly and colorful illustrations complement easy-to-digest information about various types of energy and how they go from their sources to uses in a home. (grades K-2)

How the Cookie Crumbled: The True (and Not-So-True) Stories of the Invention of the Chocolate Chip Cookie by Gilbert Ford. Simon & Schuster / Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 2017.

The perfect balance of buttery cookie goodness and dark gooey chocolate... how exactly did this come about? Explore the myths and truths behind the creation of the chocolate chip cookie. (grades K-2)

If You Were the Moon by Laura Purdie Salas and illustrated by Jaime Kim. Lerner Publishing Group / Millbrook Press. 2017.

In this inventive and spirited exploration, poetry and science come together to introduce young readers to the role of the moon in our lives here on Earth. (grades K-2)

In the Past: From Tribolites to Dinosaurs to Mammoths in More Than 500 Million Years by David Elliott. Candlewick Press. 2018.

Elliott's poems and illustrations (helping young readers make the connections between dinosaurs and some of their modern "cousins") introduce dinosaurs and their time periods, conveying information in a fun and concise way. (grades K-2)

Lights! Camera! Alice! : The Thrilling True Adventures of the First Woman Filmmaker by Mara Rockliff and illustrated by Simona Ciraolo. Chronicle Books. 2018.

An adventurous look at the life and work of the first woman filmmaker, Alice Guy-Blache. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

Not So Different: What You REALLY Want to Ask About Having a Disability by Shane Burcaw and photographed by Matt Carr. Macmillan / Roaring Brook Press. 2017.

Shane Burcaw utilizes a Q&A format to address questions about his disease, spinal muscular atrophy, and living with a disability. Burcaw uses humor and straightforward responses to demonstrate to young readers that, in spite of his appearance and wheelchair use, he's not so different. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

Once Upon a Jungle by Laura Knowles and illustrated by James Boast. Firefly Books. 2017.

The circle of life is beautifully presented in this vividly illustrated book. From the floor of the jungle to the tops of the trees, we follow the food chain with animals hiding in and among the branches and leaves. (grades K-2)

Ruth Bader Ginsburg: The Case of R.B.G. vs. Inequality by Jonah Winter and illustrated by Stacy Innerst. Abrams Books for Young Readers. 2017.

A biography, presenting in the form of a court case, that focuses on the challenges that Ruth Bader Ginsburg has personally faced throughout her life as an intellectual female, Jew and mother, and on her support for challenges faced by others, including African Americans and gay couples. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

****Thirty Minutes Over Oregon: A Japanese Pilot's World War II Story*** by Marc Tyler Nobleman and illustrated by Melissa Iwai. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt / Clarion Books. 2018.

The story of Japanese WWII pilot, Nabuo Fujita, the first person to bomb the continental United States. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

****The United States v. Jackie Robinson*** by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen and illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. HarperCollins / Balzer + Bray. 2018.

Before Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball, he was a victim of discrimination in the Army. Facing a court martial, Robinson challenged segregation, winning in military court as he would later on the baseball field. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

What Do You Do With A Voice Like That? by Chris Barton and illustrated by Ekoa Holmes. Simon & Schuster / Beach Lane Books. 2018.

From an early age, Barbara Jordan had a powerful, distinctive manner of speaking. Author Chris Barton explores how native Texan Jordan used that voice to teach and inspire others, enact change, and advocate for those who lacked a voice of their own. (grades K-2, grades 3-5)

Grades 3-5

****Frenemies in the Family: Famous Brothers and Sisters Who Butted Heads and Had Each Other's Backs*** by Kathleen Krull and illustrated by Maple Lam. Penguin Random House / Crown Books for Young Readers. 2018.

Sometimes you can't make it on your own. Meet celebrity siblings whose relationships have changed the course of history, impacted entertainment, and often inspired to greatness. (grades 3-5, grades 6-9)

The Gross Cookbook by Susanna Tee. Sourcebooks / Sourcebooks Jabberwocky. 2017.

Have you ever met a 10 -year-old boy who doesn't love getting grossed out, or grossing out others? This entertaining cookbook will give kids just what they are begging for, with some interesting facts on eating habits around the world too. (grades 3-5, grades 6-9)

Lesser Spotted Animals by Martin Brown. Scholastic / David Fickling Books. 2017.

A look at some lesser known animals that deserve the spotlight in their own right. (grades 3-5)

Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History by Vashti Harrison. Hachette / Little, Brown and Company. 2017.

A collected biography of 40+ African American women who made history and inspired generations. (grades 3-5)

Marley Dias Gets it Done and So Can You! by Marley Dias. Scholastic. 2018.

Marley Dias, founder of the #1000blackgirlbooks campaign, shares her story, encouraging young people to share their voices and take action to enact social change. (grades 3-5, grades 6-9)

The Race to Space: Countdown to Liftoff by Erik Slader and Ben Thompson. Macmillan / Roaring Brook Press. 2018.

This book traces the failures of the U.S. and U.S.S.R space missions that eventually lead to successful space programs. (grades 3-5, grades 6-9)

****Schomburg : The Man Who Built a Library*** by Carole Boston Weatherford and illustrated by Eric Velasquez. Candlewick Press. 2017.

Arturo Schomburg collected the works of and about notable and not-so notable persons of African descent, amassing a priceless library of black lives and history that researchers, historians and readers can access at the New York Public Library to this day. (grades 3-5)

****Shaking Things Up: 14 Young Women Who Changed the World*** by Susan Hood. HarperCollins Publishers / Harper. 2018.

A wonderful book with a unique, eye-catching design. It hooks you with the vibrancy of the colorful illustrations, poetry and just enough facts to enlighten you about the life of each woman highlighted. (grades 3-5, grades K-2)

Step Right Up by Donna Janell Bowman and illustrated by Daniel Minter. Lee & Low Books. 2016.

The story shows how with patience and gentle training, even the impossible can happen. Meet Jim Key, the horse that can read, spell, write, and do sums. (grades 3-5, grades K-2)

****Wicked Bugs: The Meanest, Deadliest, Grossest Bugs on Earth*** (Young Reader's Edition) by Amy Stewart and illustrated by Briony Morrow-Cribbs. Workman Publishing / Algonquin Young Readers. 2017.

A book about the insects that humans fear and hate the most. This book contains anecdotal stories that are not for the faint of heart. (grades 3-5, grades 6-9)

Grades 6-9

The Borden Murders: Lizzie Borden and the Trial of the Century by Sarah Elizabeth Miller. Penguin Random House / Schwartz & Wade. 2016.

Why did Lizzie Borden take an ax, and what happened to her after she (presumably) committed murder? This work of literary nonfiction reads like a crime novel and will keep readers engaged with its generous use of sworn testimony and other primary documents and photos - even of the murder scene. (grades 6-9, High School)

Chasing Space (Young Reader's Edition) by Leland Melvin. HarperCollins / Amistad. 2017.

Revised for young readers, Melvin's memoir takes him from being [this close] to an NFL career to astronaut. He stresses the importance of second chances and perseverance - a very inspirational tale. (grades 6-9)

***Crash: the Great Depression and the Fall and Rise of America** by Marc Favreau.
Hachette / Little, Brown and Company. 2018.

Full of primary sources, photographs, and personal accounts, Crash chronicles the 1929 derailment of the US economy, the effects of the Great Depression, and economic resurgence with the advent of World War II. Meet men and women who played pivotal roles in the FDR administrations and witness the impact of the Great Depression on Americans of all colors, ethnicities, and circumstances. (grades 6-9, High School)

Dream Big Dreams: Photographs from Barack Obama's Inspiring and Historic Presidency by Pete Souza. Hachette / Little, Brown and Company. 2017.

This fascinating and reassuring photo diary of Barack Obama's eight years as President will entrance children and adults alike. Photos focus on Obama's interaction with children and families, including his own. (grades 6-9, grades 3-5)

The Faithful Spy: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Plot to Kill Hitler by John Hendrix. Abrams Books for Young Readers / Amulet. 2018.

This captivating, thoroughly researched and illustrated narrative of mild-mannered, WWII German spy Dietrich Bonhoeffer also traces Hitler's ascendance to power and Germany's submission. (grades 6-9, High School)

Fault Lines in the Constitution: The Framers, Their Fights, and the Flaws That Affect Us Today by Cynthia Levinson and Sanford Levinson. Peachtree Publishers. 2017.

An accessible look at the U.S. Constitution and the hard fought debates and compromises of our founding fathers as they created the document that is the foundation of our national government. (grades 6-9, High School)

Fly Girls: The Daring American Women Pilots Who Helped Win WWII by P. O'Connell Pearson. Simon & Schuster / Simon & Schuster books for young readers. 2018.

The little known history of these women pilots is an important glimpse into the history of women's rights and the spirit of women who believed in themselves and their country. (grades 6-9, grades 3-5)

The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How Maria Merian's Art Changed Science by Joyce Sidman. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 2018.

The biography of Maria Merian, German artist and ecologist, whose meticulous paintings of insects and their natural habitats were groundbreaking in a time when females were expected to take care of the home and family. This book beautifully presents the life and work of this determined and talented woman. (grades 6-9, grades 3-5)

Girls Who Code: Learn to Code and Change the World by Reshma Saujani and Sarah Hutt and illustrated by Andrea Tsurumi. Penguin Random House / Viking. 2017.

Saujani takes readers on a step-by-step guide through the crucial coding planning process. Saujani makes this an enjoyable trip while motivating young readers to change the world through code. (grades 6-9, grades 3-5)

Know Your Rights! A Modern Kid's Guide to the American Constitution by Laura Barcella. Sterling Children's Books. 2018.

A great introduction to the constitution in language and examples that will make sense to children (& adults too!). Content is made relatable with "how does this affect me?" sections. (grades 6-9, grades 3-5)

The Magician and the Spirits: Harry Houdini and the Curious Pastime of Communicating with the Dead by Deborah Noyes. Penguin Random House / Viking. 2017.

Although Harry Houdini is best known for his daring, death-defying escapes, he spent several decades debunking the practices of many psychic mediums and Spiritualists. With the eye of a magician, Houdini was able to explain how the Spiritualists "contacted" the dead and hoodwinked believers using the same tricks as illusionists. (grades 6-9, High School)

A Soldier's Sketchbook : The Illustrated First World War Diary of R.H. Rabjohn by John Wilson. Penguin Random House / Tundra Books. 2017.

Created from the journals and sketches of a young 18 year old soldier in World War I, this sketchbook gives personal insights into the drudgery and horrors of war. (grades 6-9, High School)

****They Lost Their Heads! What Happened to Washington's Teeth, Einstein's Brain, and Other Famous Body Parts*** by Carlyn Beccia. Bloomsbury. 2018.

Anecdotal histories of famous people's deaths and what happened to their body parts. (grades 6-9)

****Twelve Days in May: Freedom Ride 1961*** by Larry Dane Brimner. Boyds Mills Press. 2017.

Visually arresting and with a journalist's unflinching tone, this examination of the first thirteen Freedom Riders and their experiences, collectively and individually, is as relevant today as when the Freedom Rides took place. Absolutely captivating. (grades 6-9, High School)

High School

#NeverAgain by David Hogg and Lauren Hogg. Random House. 2018.

David and Lauren Hogg (brother/sister), survivors of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooting, recount the events of that day and the creation of the #NeverAgain movement. Succinct, inspiring, introspective and heartbreaking in its honesty. (High School)

****The 57 Bus*** by Dashka Slater. Macmillan / Farrar Straus Giroux. 2017.

Richard and Sasha, from disparate circumstances, ride the 57 bus daily, on which Richard callously sets agender Sasha's skirt on fire. The author investigates and reveals in heartbreaking and enlightening detail the motivations and lives of both teens. (High School, grades 6-9)

59 Hours by Johnny Kovatch. Simon & Schuster / Simon Pulse. 2018.

Fifteen-year-old Nick Marcowitz is taken hostage by a drug dealer to whom Nick's brother owes money and this spontaneous action leads to a kidnapping ending in murder. All participants had several opportunities to save Nick, but no one did; this chilling tale gives every player a voice. (High School)

***Americanized: Rebel Without a Green Card: A Memoir** by Sara Saedi. Penguin Random House / Knopf Doubleday / Alfred A. Knopf. 2018.

At two, Saedi's family fled Iran for the US; although the fear of deportation looms over Saedi's teen years, she grapples with insecurities, unrequited love and fitting in, as do all teens. This memoir written with humor, candor and simplicity offers a personal look at undocumented teens. (High School)

Because I Was a Girl: True Stories for Girls of All Ages by Melissa De La Cruz (editor). Macmillan / Henry Holt. 2017.

Women of varying ages recount stories unique to being female - some good, some not so good - but all ultimately empowering. The diversity of voices and range of experiences combine to create a unifying and liberating collection. (High School, grades 6-9)

***Becoming Kareem: Growing Up On and Off the Court** by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Raymond Obstfeld. Hachette / Little, Brown and Company. 2017.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, among the all-time greatest college and professional basketball players, relates the people and events that shaped his growth as a young man, basketball player, and activist. (High School, grades 6-9)

Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend by Karen Blumenthal. Penguin Random House / Viking. 2018.

Blumenthal tells the oft romanticized legend of Bonnie and Clyde, minus the glamour. This retelling imparts a real humanity to the pair by contextualizing them within the desperate circumstances of the Great Depression and pays due attention to their victims. (High School, grades 6-9)

***Boots on the Ground: America's War in Vietnam** by Elizabeth Partridge. Penguin Random House / Viking. 2018.

Partridge intersperses the chronology of America's involvement in the Vietnam War with personal accounts of those who lived it. Touching and enthralling. (High School, grades 6-9)

Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World by Pénélope Bagieu. Macmillan / First Second. 2018.

Stunningly illustrated anthology of women who changed the world - some in more quiet ways than others, but all brilliant, strong and courageous. (High School)

***Chasing King's Killer: The Hunt for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Assassin** by James Swanson. Scholastic Press. 2018.

From the unsuccessful attempt on Dr. King's life which foreshadows events to come to the real-life manhunt for James Earl Ray after he shoots King, this title explores many aspects of the death of the civil rights leader. (High School, grades 6-9)

Gunpowder Girls: The True Stories of Three Civil War Tragedies by Tanya Anderson. Quindaro Press. 2016.

The gunpowder girls, women and girls as young as 10, worked in cramped and dangerous conditions in the arsenals making ammunition for the boys in blue and gray during the Civil War. This book chronicles three deadly tragedies that took the lives of civilian workers during the war between the states. (High School, grades 6-9)

****Hey, Kiddo*** by Jarrett Krosoczka. Scholastic / Graphix. 2018.

Krosoczka recounts his childhood with his grandparents (due to his mother's heroin addiction). Although flawed and cantankerous, Krosoczka's grandparents demonstrated great love and support as he immersed himself in art and all those "empty sketchbooks" that saved his life. (High School)

Hope Nation: YA Authors Share Personal Moments of Inspiration by Rose Brock (editor). Penguin Random House / Philomel Books. 2018.

Numerous YA writers pen essays regarding hope - what it means to them and how it has played out in their lives - whether it is Alex London dancing with his (male) best friend at prom and later at his wedding after coming out, or Atia Abawi overcoming her racist and cruel teacher's words of discouragement. I dare readers to finish this book without an understanding of the many faces of hope. (High School)

I Am Gandhi by Brad Meltzer and illustrated by 25 illustrators. Penguin Random House / Dial Books. 2018.

This biographical graphic novel features Gandhi with a focus on satyagraha, civil disobedience through peaceful protests. Follow key events in his life as portrayed by 25 different artists/illustrators. (High School, grades 6-9)

I Have the Right To: A High School Survivor's Story of Sexual Assault, Justice, and Hope by Chessy Prout with Jenn Abelson. Simon & Schuster / Margaret K. McElderry Books. 2018.

Prout recounts her sexual assault at the elite boarding school St. Paul's, the ensuing trial and how she successfully turned her pain and rage into the #ihavetherightto movement. (High School)

A Moonless, Starless Sky: Ordinary Women and Men Fighting Extremism in Africa by Alexis Okeowo. Hachette / Little, Brown and Company. 2017.

Okeowo travels to four African countries and reports on atrocities, often in the name of extremist Islam, and how several devout Muslims who interpret Islam as a liberating force risk their lives daily to save their fellow man and country. Topics such as Boko Haram, the Lord's Resistance Army and slavery in Mauritania are discussed. (High School)

Underneath it All: A History of Women's Underwear by Amber J. Keyser. Lerner Publishing Group / Twenty First Century Books. 2018.

The origins of lady's undergarments fascinates us all. This book focuses on both the male and female viewpoints on underclothing and keeps readers engaged with fun facts, photos and other supporting artwork. (High School, grades 6-9)

The Unwanted: Stories of the Syrian Refugees by Don Brown. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 2018.

Don Brown spotlights the plight of millions of Syrians seeking asylum in Europe and the US to escape ongoing civil war in their homeland. He addresses roots of the exodus, hardships faced by those fleeing war-torn Syria for a better life, and political and humanitarian responses from around the world. (High School, grades 6-9)

Adult for Young Adult

****Ali: A Life*** by Jonathan Eig. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 2017.

Muhammad Ali's personal life, interviews, FBI and boxing records plus photos are explained in more than 600 jammed-packed pages on the life of the greatest fighter of all time. The author travels the history of Cassius Clay to Ali spanning national and international settings in this thrilling story of a man who became one of the iconic boxers of the Twentieth Century. (Adult, adult for young adults)

American Like Me: Reflections on Life Between Cultures by America Ferrera. Simon & Schuster / Gallery Books. 2018.

Torn between two cultures and two countries, the author gives a firsthand account of her journey to talk about what it's like to be an immigrant, a child or grandchild of immigrants, an indigenous person and how America values and views on race relations. From artists to actors and comedians to writers and politicians, award-winning actress, America Ferrera, and her friends share their vignettes on American identity. (Adult, adult for young adults)

Black Girls Rock! Owning Our Magic, Rocking Our Truth by Beverly Bond (editor). Simon & Schuster / Atria / 37 INK. 2018.

Based on the inspirational Black Girls Rock movement, Bond compiles essays written by wildly successful and high profile black women for young black women. Contributors include: Michelle Obama, Erykah Badu, Beyonce and more. (Adult for young adult, High School)

Butterfly: From Refugee to Olympian, My Story of Rescue, Hope, and Triumph by Yusra Mardini. Macmillan / St. Martin's Press. 2018.

Syrian refugee Yusra Mardini recounts, often in harrowing detail, her escape from Syria at fourteen that started on boat - on which she and her sister had to swim alongside for hours or else it would have sunk - through four countries until she is granted asylum in Germany. Once there, she restarts her quest to swim in the Olympics, which she does at the 2016 games in Rio. (Adult for young adult, High School)

Call Me American: A Memoir by Abdi Nor Iftan. Penguin Random House / Alfred A. Knopf. 2018.

Iftan recalls his life in war torn Somalia and how American movies and music saved his life - by offering hope and via teaching himself English - a way out. Iftan's bravery and belief that life will get better, despite his nightmarish circumstances, is truly inspiring. (Adult for young adult, High School)

***Educated: a memoir** by Tara Westover. Penguin Random House / Random House. 2018.

This is an engaging memoir about a young woman who did not attend school until she was seventeen. This book follows the journey of Tara Westover from an isolated childhood into adulthood and the wider world provided by education. (Adult, adult for young adults)

The Far Away Brothers: Two Young Migrants and the Making of an American Life by Lauren Markham. Penguin Random House / Crown. 2017.

Markham pairs years of investigative research and travel with previously published journalism pieces investigating migration to the US from Central America to yield an eye-opening, thoughtful and literary account of two teens who gave up what little they had to flee the constant threat of death, only to trade it for years of struggle - and hope - in the US. (Adult for young adult, High School)

The Girl Who Smiled Beads: A Story of War and What Comes After by Clemantine Wamariya and Elizabeth Weil. Penguin Random House / Crown. 2018.

This memoir takes the reader from a child's idealic family life in Rwanda to the horrors of the Rwandan civil war. The interweaving timelines recount the epic survival of two young sisters traversing a content in crisis which connects the narrative to the sisters trying to find healing as refugees in the aftermath of war. (Adult, adult for young adults)

***The Incredible True Story of Blondy Baruti: My Unlikely Journey from the Congo to Hollywood** by Blondy Baruti with Joe Layden. Simon & Schuster. 2018.

Baruti chronicles his war-ridden, impoverished youth in the Congo and consequent journey to America that sees him playing basketball and featuring in a Hollywood film - a truly incredible story! (Adult for young adults, Adults)

Six Words Fresh Off the Boat: Stories of Immigration, Identity, and Coming to America by Larry Smith (editor). Disney / Kingswell. 2017.

Six Word Memoirs (sixwordmemoirs.com/fotb) teams up with the ABC show Fresh Off the Boat to cull immigrant stories of teens, children, famous and not--so-famous adults. Interspersed throughout the six word memoirs are longer, but still brief, first person narratives on the topic of immigration, or rather, where we come from. (Adult for young adult, High School)

Things That Make White People Uncomfortable by Michael Bennett and Dave Zirin. Haymarket Books. 2018.

An examination of the current state of social justice in the U.S. through the lens of Super Bowl champion, organizer, activist and feminist Michael Bennett, written with urgency and humor. (Adult for young adult, Adult)

when they call you a terrorist: a black lives matter memoir by Patrisse Khan-Cullers and Asha Bandele. Macmillan / St. Martin's Press. 2017.

Khan-Cullers' memoir traces her life as a Black girl and woman growing up in America; seeing her brother suffer from mental illness and treated as criminal ; living with a mother she hardly sees because she must work three jobs to feed the family; the prison industrial complex; and LGBTQIA issues. She clearly lays out how her life prepared her to be the social justice community organizer she is today. (Adult for young adult, High School)