The purpose of the Texas Topaz Reading List is to provide children, teens, 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 recommendation by the Texas Topaz Committee.

Titles Recommended for Kids & Teens

GRADES K-2

13 Ways to Eat a Fly by Sue Heavenrich, illustrated by David Clark (Charlesbridge, 2021)


*Above the Rim: How Elgin Baylor Changed Basketball by Jen Bryant, illustrated by Frank Morrison (Abrams Books for Young Readers, an imprint of ABRAMS, 2020)

An Equal Shot: How the Law Title IX Changed America by Helaine Becker, illustrated by Dow Phumiruk (Christy Ottaviano Books, an imprint of Henry Holt & Company, 2021)

*Areli is a Dreamer: A True Story by Areli Morales, a DACA Recipient by Areli Morales, illustrated by Luisa Uribe (Random House Studio, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2021)

*Crossings: Extraordinary Structures for Extraordinary Animals by Katy S. Duffield, illustrated by Mike Orodán (Beach Lane Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2020)

Dark Was the Night: Blind Willie Johnson's Journey to the Stars by Gary Golio, illustrated by E.B. Lewis (Nancy Paulsen Books, 2020)


Drawing on Walls: A Story of Keith Haring by Matthew Burgess, illustrated by Josh Cochran (Enchanted Lion Books, 2020)

Flying High: The Story of Gymnastics Champion Simone Biles by Michelle Meadows, illustrated by Ebony Glenn (Henry Holt & Company, 2020)

Grace Banker and Her Hello Girls Answer the Call: The Heroic Story of WWI Telephone Operators by Claudia Friddell, illustrated by Elizabeth Baddeley (Calkins Creek, an imprint of Boyds Mills & Kane, 2021)


Just You and Me: Remarkable Relationships in the Wild by Jennifer Ward, illustrated by Alexander Vidal (Beach Lane Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2021)

Keeping the City Going, written and illustrated by Brian Floca (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2021)

Lady Bird Johnson, That's Who!: The Story of a Cleaner and Greener America by Tracy Nelson Maurer, illustrated by Ginnie Hsu (Henry Holt & Company, 2021)

Masters of Disguise: Camouflaging Creatures & Magnificent Mimics, written and illustrated by Marc Martin (Candlewick Studio, an imprint of Candlewick Press, 2021)


Nicky & Vera: A Quiet Hero of the Holocaust and the Children He Rescued by Peter Sís (Norton Young Readers, an imprint of W.W. Norton & Company, 2021)

*Ocean! Waves for All by Stacy McAnulty, illustrated by David Litchfield (Henry Holt & Company, 2020)

*Saving American Beach: The Biography of African American Environmentalist MaVynee Betsch by Heidi Tyline King, illustrated by Ekua Holmes (G.P. Putnam’s Sons, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2021)

*Shirley Chisholm is a Verb by Veronica Chambers, illustrated by Rachelle Baker (Dial Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2020)

*Slow Down: 50 Mindful Moments in Nature by Rachel Williams, illustrated by Freya Hartas (Magic Cat Publishing, an imprint of ABRAMS, 2020)


The Bug Girl: A True Story by Sophia Spencer with Margaret McNamara, illustrated by Kerascoët (Schwartz & Wade Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2020)

The Cat Man of Aleppo by Irene Latham & Karim Shamsi-Basha, illustrated by Yuko Shimizu (G.P. Putnam’s Sons, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2020)

The People’s Painter: How Ben Shahn Fought for Justice with Art by Cynthia Levinson, illustrated by Evan Turk (Abrams Books for Young Readers, an imprint of ABRAMS, 2021)

There Goes Patti McGee!: The Story of the First Woman’s National Skateboard Champion by Tootie Nienow, illustrated by Erika Medina (Farrar, Straus & Giroux Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers, 2021)

GRADES 3-5

A Day in the Life of a Poo, a Gnu, and You by Mike Barfield, illustrated by Jess Bradley (Aladdin, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2021)

A Shot in the Arm! (Big Ideas that Changed the World) by Don Brown (Amulet Books, an imprint of ABRAMS, 2021)

*Bartali’s Bicycle: The True Story of Gino Bartali, Italy’s Secret Hero by Megan Hoyt, illustrated by Iacopo Bruno (Quill Tree Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2021)

*Black Heroes of the Wild West by James Otis Smith (TOON Books, an imprint of RAW Junior LLC, 2020)

*Free Lunch by Rex Ogle (Norton Young Readers, an imprint of W.W. Norton & Company, 2019)

Fungarium (Welcome to the Museum) by Esther Gaya, illustrated by Katie Scott (Big Picture Press, an imprint of Candlewick Press, 2021)

Galloping Gertie: The True Story of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge Collapse by Amanda Abler, illustrated by Levi Hastings (Little Bigfoot, an imprint of Sasquatch Books, 2021)

Girl on a Motorcycle by Amy Novesky, illustrated by Julie Morstad (Viking, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2020)


Horse Power: How Horses Changed the World by Jennifer Thermes (Abrams Books for Young Readers, an imprint of ABRAMS, 2021)
Immigrant Architect: Rafael Guastavino and the American Dream by Berta de Miguel & Kent Diebolt, illustrated by Virginia Lorente (Tilbury House Publishers, 2019)


Latinitas: Celebrating 40 Big Dreamers by Juliet Menéndez (Henry Holt & Company, 2021)

Molly and the Mathematical Mysteries: Ten Interactive Adventures in Mathematical Wonderland by Eugenia Cheng, illustrated by Aleksandra Artymowska (Big Picture Press, an imprint of Candlewick Press, 2021)

Orchestra by Avalon Nuovo, illustrated by David Doran (Flying Eye Books, an imprint of Nobrow, 2019)

*The Floating Field: How a Group of Thai Boys Built Their Own Soccer Field* by Scott Riley, illustrated by Nguyen Quang & Kim Lien (Millbrook Press, an imprint of Lerner Publishing Group, 2021)


*Twenty-One Steps: Guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier* by Jeff Gottesfeld, illustrated by Matt Tavares (Candlewick Press, 2021)

Escape at 10,000 Feet: D.B. Cooper and the Missing Money (Unsolved Case Files), written and illustrated by Tom Sullivan (Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2021)

We Are Still Here!: Native American Truths Everyone Should Know by Traci Sorell, illustrated by Frané Lessac (Charlesbridge, 2021)
GRADES 6-8

*All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys’ Soccer Team* by Christina Soontornvat (Candlewick Press, 2020)

*Bad Boys of Fashion: Style Rebels and Renegades Through the Ages* by Jennifer Croll, illustrated by Aneta Pacholska (Annick Press, 2019)

*BLOOD AND GERMS: THE CIVIL WAR BATTLE AGAINST WOUNDS AND DISEASE* by Gail Jarrow (Calkins Creek, an imprint of Boyds Mills & Kane, 2020)

*Channel Kindness: Stories of Kindness and Community* by the Born This Way Foundation Reporters with Lady Gaga (Feiwel & Friends, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers, 2020)

*Drawn Across Borders: True Stories of Human Migration*, written and illustrated by George Butler (Candlewick Studio, an imprint of Candlewick Press, 2021)

*Dude Perfect: 101 Tricks, Tips, and Cool Stuff* by Dude Perfect (Thomas Nelson, 2021)

*Gone to the Woods: Surviving a Lost Childhood* by Gary Paulsen (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers, 2021)

*In the Shadow of the Fallen Towers: The Seconds, Minutes, Hours, Days, Weeks, Months, and Years After the 9/11 Attacks*, written and illustrated by Don Brown (Etch, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2021)


*THE POWER OF STYLE: HOW FASHION AND BEAUTY ARE BEING USED TO RECLAIM CULTURES* by Christian Allaire (Annick Press, 2021)

GRADES 9-12

*Apple: Skin to the Core* by Eric Gansworth (Levine Querido, 2020)

*BANNED BOOK CLUB* by Kim Hyun Sook & Ryan Estrada, illustrated by Hyung-Ju Ko (Iron Circus Comics, 2020)

Can't Stop Won't Stop: A Hip-Hop History (Young Adult Edition) by Jeff Chang & Dave “Davey D” Cook (Wednesday Books, an imprint of St. Martin’s Publishing, 2021)

*Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask: Young Readers Edition by Anton Treuer (Levine Querido, 2021)

Girlhood: Teens Around the World in Their Own Voices by Masuma Ahuja (Algonquin Young Readers, an imprint of Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2021)

Into the Streets: A Young Person’s Visual History of Protest in the United States by Marke Bieschke (Zest Books, an imprint of Lerner Publishing Group, 2020)

Kent State: Four Dead in Ohio by Derf Backderf (Abrams ComicArts, an imprint of ABRAMS, 2020)

Ms. Gloria Steinem: A Life by Winifred Conkling (Feiwel & Friends, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers, 2020)

Notes From a Young Black Chef: A Memoir (Adapted for Young Adults) by Kwame Onwuachi with Joshua David Stein (Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books, 2021)

What Linnaeus Saw: A Scientist’s Quest to Name Every Living Thing by Karen Magnuson Beil (Norton Young Readers, an imprint of W.W. Norton & Company, 2019)

*Year of the Rabbit by Tian Veasna, translation by Helge Dascher (Drawn & Quarterly, 2019)

ADULT FOR YOUNG ADULT

Crying in H Mart: A Memoir by Michelle Zauner (Alfred A. Knopf, 2021)

*She Came to Slay: The Life and Times of Harriet Tubman by Erica Armstrong Dunbar (37 Ink, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2019)

*The Book of Rosy: A Mother’s Story of Separation at the Border* by Rosayra Pablo Cruz & Julie Schwietert Collazo (HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2020)

*You Will Get Through This Night: A Practical Mental Health Guide* by Daniel Howell (Dey Street Books, an imprint of William Morrow, 2021)

**Titles Recommended for Adults**


*A Human Algorithm: How Artificial Intelligence is Redefining Who We Are* by Flynn Coleman (Counterpoint Press, 2019)


*Bee People and The Bugs They Love* by Frank Mortimer (Citadel Press, 2020)


*Broken (In the Best Possible Way)* by Jenny Lawson (Henry Holt & Company, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers, 2021)

*Chasing the Thrill: Obsession, Death, and Glory in America’s Most Extraordinary Treasure Hunt* by Daniel Barbarisi (Alred A. Knopf, 2021)
*Crying in H Mart: A Memoir by Michelle Zauner (Alfred A. Knopf, 2021)


Empire of Pain: The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty by Patrick Radden Keefe (Doubleday, 2021)


Giannis: The Improbable Rise of an NBA MVP by Mirin Fader (Hachette Books, 2021)

¡Hola Papi!: How to Come Out in a Walmart Parking Lot and Other Life Lessons by John Paul Brammer (Simon & Schuster, 2021)


Oak Flat: A Fight for Sacred Land in the American West by Lauren Redniss (Random House, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2020)

*Of Bears and Ballots: An Alaskan Adventure in Small-Town Politics by Heather Lende (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2020)

*On Juneteenth by Annette Gordon-Reed (Liveright Publishing, 2021)


The Book Collectors: A Band of Syrian Rebels and the Stories That Carried Them Through a War by Delphine Minoui, translated by Lara Vergnaud (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2020)

The Book of Rosy: A Mother’s Story of Separation at the Border by Rosayra Pablo Cruz & Julie Schwietert Collazo (HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2020)

*The Burning Blue: The Untold Story of Christa McAuliffe and NASA’s Challenger Disaster by Kevin Cook (Henry Holt & Company, 2021)

The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper by Hallie Rubenhold (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019)


The Queens of Animation: The Untold Story of the Women Who Transformed the World of Disney and Made Cinematic History by Nathalia Holt (Little, Brown & Company, 2019)


The Ugly Cry: A Memoir by Danielle Henderson (Viking, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2021)

The Way I Heard It by Mike Rowe (Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2019)

The Woman They Could Not Silence: One Woman, Her Incredible Fight for Freedom, and the Men Who Tried to Make Her Disappear by Kate Moore (Sourcebooks, 2021)

The Yellow House: A Memoir by Sarah M. Broom (Grove Press, an imprint of Grove Atlantic, 2019)

This is Your Mind on Plants by Michael Pollan (Penguin Press, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2021)

This Land is Their Land: The Wampanoag Indians, Plymouth Colony, and the Troubled History of Thanksgiving by David J. Silverman (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019)

Uncomfortable Conversations with A Black Man by Emmanuel Acho (Flatiron Books, 2020)

Wake: The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts written by Rebecca Hall, illustrated by Hugo Martínez (Simon & Schuster, 2021)

What Happened to You?: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing by Dr. Bruce D. Perry & Oprah Winfrey (Flatiron Books, 2021)

Wow, No Thank You: Essays by Samantha Irby (Vintage Books, 2020)

You Will Get Through This Night: A Practical Mental Health Guide by Daniel Howell (Dey Street Books, an imprint of William Morrow, 2021)