2021 Texas Topaz Nonfiction Reading List

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.

The Address Book: What Street Addresses Reveal About Identity, Race, Wealth, and Power
by Deirdre Mask

*All Boys Aren’t Blue
by George M. Johnson

All the Way to the Top
by Annette Bay Pimentel, illustrated by Nabi Ali

Almost American Girl
by Robin Ha

American Sherlock: Murder, Forensics, and the Birth of American CSI
by Kate Winkler Dawson

*Atomic Women: The Untold Stories of the Scientists Who Helped Create the Nuclear Bomb
by Roseanne Mintillo

The Best Cook in the World: Tales from My Momma’s Table
by Rick Bragg

Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do
by Jennifer L. Eberhardt, PhD

The Big Book of Soccer
by Mundial, illustrated by Damien Weighill

*Big Wonderful Thing: A History of Texas
by Stephen Harrigan

Brave Ballerina: The Story of Janet Collins
by Michelle Meadows, illustrated by Ebony Glenn

Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art
by James Nestor

Texas Topaz Nonfiction Gems – 2021 List
Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents
by Isabel Wilkerson

Caught! Nabbing History’s Most Wanted
by Georgia Bragg, illustrated by Kevin O’Malley

The Collected Schizophrenias
by Esmé Weijun Wang

*Dancing at the Pity Party: A Dead Mom Graphic Memoir
by Tyler Feder

*Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreno Played the Piano for President Lincoln
by Margarita Engle, illustrated by Rafael Lopez

Dear Girls: Intimate Tales, Untold Secrets, and Advice for Living Your Best Life
by Ali Wong

*Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century
Edited by Alice Wong

El baile de Octavo y Otros Recuerdos / The Eighth-grade Dance and Other Memories
by Ada de Jesus, translated by Nicolas Kanellos

Even More Lesser Spotted Animals
by Martin Brown

*Fauja Singh Keeps Going: The True Story of the Oldest Person Ever to Run a Marathon
by Simran Jeet Singh, illustrated by Baljinder Kaur

Fearless Felines: 30 True Tales of Courageous Cats
by Kimberlie Hamilton

*Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief
by David Kessler

Fire in Paradise: An American Tragedy
by Alastair Gee and Dani Anguiano

*A Garden in Your Belly: Meet the Microbes in Your Gut
by Masha D’Yans

The Golden Thread: How Fabric Changed History
by Kassia St. Clair

*Grace Will Lead Us Home: The Charleston Church Massacre and the Hard, Inspiring Journey to Forgiveness
by Jennifer Berry Hawes

Hidden Valley Road: Inside the Mind of an American Family
by Robert Kolker

How to Solve a Problem: The Rise (and Falls) of a Rock-Climbing Champion
by Ashima Shiraishi, illustrated by Yao Xiao

How We Fight For Our Lives
by Saeed Jones

How We Got to the Moon
by John Rocco

*How Women Won the Vote: Alice Paul, Lucy Burns, and Their Big Idea
by Susan Campbell Bartoletti, illustrated by Ziyue Chen

*I Was Their American Dream
by Malaka Gharib
In the Dream House by Carmen Maria Machado

It Began with a Page: How Gyo Fujikawa Drew the Way by Kyo Maclear, illustrated by Julie Morstad

Itch! Everything You Didn't Want to Know about What Makes You Scratch by Anita Sanchez, illustrated by Gilbert Ford

*Jane Against the World by Karen Blumenthal

Just Like Beverly by Vicki Conrad, illustrated by David Hohn

Know My Name: A Memoir by Chanel Miller


*A Last Goodbye by Elin Kelsey, illustrated by Soyeon Kim

The Last Stargazers: The Enduring Story of Astronomy's Vanishing Explorers by Emily Levesque

The Less People Know About Us: A Mystery of Betrayal, Family Secrets, and Stolen Identity by Axton Betz-Hamilton

The Lincoln Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill America's 16th President--And Why It Failed by Brad Meltzer

The Lost Family: How DNA Testing is Unpending Who We Are by Libby Copeland

*Love Your Body by Jessica Sanders, illustrated by Carol Rossetti

*Maid: Hard work, low pay, and a mother's will to survive by Stephanie Land

Making Their Voices Heard: The Inspiring Friendship of Ella Fitzgerald and Marilyn Monroe by Vivian Kirkfield, illustrated by Alleanna Harris

Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir by Natasha Trethewey

Mindfulness and Meditation by Whitney Stewart

Mobituaries: Great Lives Worth Reliving by Mo Rocca

*Monstrous: The Lore, the Gore, and Science Behind Your Favorite Monsters by Carlyn Beccia

*Moth: An Evolution Story by Isabel Thomas, illustrated by Daniel Egnéus

Mother Jones and Her Army of Mill Children by Jonah Winter, illustrated by Nancy Carpenter

*My Bed: Enchanting Ways to Fall Asleep Around the World by Rebecca Bond, illustrated by Sally Mavor

My Survival: A Girl on Schindler's List by Rena Finder with Joshua M. Greene
*Nazi Saboteurs: Hitler's Secret Attack on America
by Samantha Seiple

*The Next President: The Unexpected Beginnings and Unwritten Future of America's Presidents
by Kate Messner, illustrated by Adam Rex

*Nonsense! The Curious Story of Edward Gorey
by Lori Mortensen, illustrated by Chloe Bristol

*Not a Bean
by Claudia Guadalupe Martinez, illustrated by Laura Gonzalez

Obviously
by Akilah Hughes

Ocean Speaks: How Marie Tharp Revealed the Ocean's Biggest Secret
by Jess Keating, illustrated by Katie Hickey

*The Oldest Student: How Mary Walker Learned to Read
Once a Girl, Always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey
Overground Railroad: The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America
by Rita Lorraine Hubbard, illustrated by Oge Mora
by Jo Ivestor
by Candacy Taylor

Packs: Strength in Numbers
by Hannah Salyer

*The Pandemic Century: One Hundred Years of Panic, Hysteria, and Hubris
by Mark Honigsbaum

Paper Son: The Inspiring Story of Tyrus Wong, Immigrant and Artist
by Julie Leung, illustrated by Chris Saaki

*PLASTICUS MARITIMUS: An Invasive Species
by Ana Pêgo and Isabel Minhós Martins, illustrated by Bernardo P. Carvalho

Play Like An Animal! Why Critters Splash, Race, Twirl, and Chase
by Maria Gianferrari, illustrated by Mia Powell

*Playlist: The Rebels and Revolutionaries of Sound
The Poison Eaters: Fighting Danger and Fraud in Our Food and Drugs
Queen of Physics: How Wu Chien Shiung Helped Unlock the Secrets of the Atom
Rainbow Revolutionaries: 50 LGBTQ+ People Who Made History
by James Rhodes, illustrated by Martin O'Neill
by Gail Jarrow
by Teresa Robeson, illustrated by Sarah Papworth
by Sarah Prager, illustrated by Sarah Papworth
by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Frank Morrison
by Bethany Hegedus, illustrated by Tonya Engel

*R-E-S-P-E-C-T, Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul
by Gail Jarrow

*Rise! From Caged Bird to Poet of the People, Maya Angelou
by Bethany Hegedus, illustrated by Tonya Engel

Rough Magic: Riding the World's Loneliest Horse Race
by Lara Prior-Palmer

*Selena: Queen of Tejano Music
by Sylvia López, illustrated by Paola Escobar

She Leads: The Elephant Matriarch
by June Smalls, illustrated by Yumi Shimokawara

Texas Topaz Nonfiction Gems – 2021 List
The Splendid and The Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz

by Erik Larson

A Sporting Chance: How Paralympics Founder Ludwig Guttmann Saved Lives With Sports

by Lori Alexander, illustrated by Allan Drummond

*Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You

by Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi

The Talk: Conversations About Race, Love & Truth

Edited by Wade Hudson, Cheryl Willis Hudson

Torpedoed: The True Story of the World War II Sinking of "The Children's Ship"

by Deborah Heiligman, illustrated by Lawrence Lee

by Kira Vermond, illustrated by Clayton Hanmer

Trending: How and Why Stuff Gets Popular

The Ungrateful Refugee

by Dina Nayeri

Unseen Worlds: Real-Life Microscopic Creatures Hiding All Around Us

by Hélène Rajak and Damien Laverdunt

The Very, Very, Very Dreadful: The Influenza Panic of 1918

by Albert Marrin

Viral: the fight against AIDS in America

by Ann Bausum

Wait, Rest, Pause: Dormancy in Nature

by Marcie Flinchum Atkins

What Do Scientists Do All Day?

by Jane Wilsher, illustrated by Maggie Li

*Winged Wonders: Solving the Monarch Migration Mystery

by Meeg Pincus, illustrated by Yasmin Imamura

*The Women with Silver Wings: The Inspiring True Story of the Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II

by Katherine Sharp Landdeck