

2026 Texas Topaz Nonfiction Reading List



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

Bats Beneath the Bridge by Janet Nolan, illustrated by Emily Cox (Albert Whitman & Company, 2024)

**The Blue Jays That Grew a Forest* by Lynn Street, illustrated by Anne Hunter (Margaret Quinlin Books, an imprint of Peachtree Publishing Company Inc., 2025)

His Fairytale Life: A Book About Hans Christian Andersen by Jane Yolen, illustrated by Brooke Boynton-Hughes (Neal Porter Books, an imprint of Holiday House Publishing, Inc., 2025)

I'm Longer Than You: An Epic Contest of Measurement by Carolyn Fisher (Kids Can Press, a Corus Entertainment Inc. Company, 2025)

**Meet the Mini-Mammals: A Night at the Natural History Museum* by Melissa Stewart, illustrated by Brian Lies (Beach Lane Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, 2025)

Narwhal: Unicorn of the Arctic by Candace Fleming, illustrated by Deena So'oteh (Anne Schwartz Books, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, 2024)

Over and Under the Coral Reef by Kate Messner, illustrated Christopher Silas Neal

(Chronicle Books, 2025)

**Safe Crossing* by Kari Percival (Chronicle Books, 2025)

Tell Me About Juneteenth by Kortney Nash, illustrated by DeAndrea Hodge (Henry Holt and Company, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group, 2025)

This is my Brain! A Book on Neurodiversity by Elise Gravel (Chronicle Books, 2024)

Volcanoes by Nell Cross Beckerman, illustrated by Kalen Chock (Orchard Books, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., 2024)

We Are American, Too by Kristen Mei Chase, illustrated by Jieting Chen (Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group, 2025)

Whales in the City by Nancy F. Castaldo, illustrated by Chuck Groenink (Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group, 2025)

GRADES 3-5

Cactus Queen: Minerva Hoyt Establishes Joshua Tree National Park by Lori Alexander, illustrated by Jenn Ely (Calkins Creek, an imprint of Astra Books for Young Readers, 2024)

The Crane and the Keeper by Meeg Pincus, illustrated by Gillian Eilidh O'Mara (Candlewick Entertainment, an imprint of Candlewick Press, 2025)

Dancing Through Space: Dr. Mae Jemison Soars to New Heights by Lydia Lukidis, illustrated by Sawyer Cloud (Albert Whitman & Co., 2024)

The Danger Files: Real-Life Disasters by Anna Crowley Redding (Candlewick Press, 2025)

**Dragonflies of Glass: The Story of Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Girls* by Susan Goldman Ruben, illustrated by Susanna Chapman (Abrams Books for Young Readers, an imprint of ABRAMS, 2025)

The Five Sides of Marjorie Rice: How to Discover a Shape by Amy Alznauer, illustrated by Anna Bron (Candlewick Press, 2025)

The Friendship Train: A True Story of Helping and Healing After World War II by Debbie Levy, illustrated by Boris Kulikov (Bloomsbury Children's Books, an imprint of Bloomsbury

Publishing Inc., 2025)

Gold Rush: The Untold Story of the First Nations Woman Who Started the Klondike Gold Rush by Flora Delargy (Wide Eyed Editions, an imprint of The Quarto Group, 2024)

The House on the Canal: The Story of the House that Hid Anne Frank by Thomas Harding, illustrated by Britta Teckentrup (Candlewick Studio, an imprint of Candlewick Press, 2023)

Hurricane by Jason Chin (Neal Porter Books, an imprint of Holiday House Publishing, Inc., 2025)

Lighthouse Ladies: Shining a Spotlight on Hardy Heroines by Kris Coronado, illustrated by Islenia Mil (Clarion Books, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 2025)

Making Light Bloom: Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Lamps by Sandra Nickel, illustrated by Julie Paschkis (Peachtree Publishing Company Inc., 2025)

Mariam's Dream: The Story of Mariam Al-Shaar and Her Food Truck of Hope by Leila Boukarim, illustrated by Sona Avedikian (Chronicle Books, 2025)

Mighty: The Story of an Oak Tree Ecosystem by Henry Cole (Peachtree Publishing Company Inc., 2025)

**The Secret World of Spiderwebs* by Jan Beccaloni, illustrated by Namasri Niumim (Thames & Hudson, 2025)

Tomatoes on Trial: The Fruit v. Vegetable Showdown by Lindsay H. Metcalf, illustrated by Edwin Fotheringham (Calkins Creek, an imprint of Astra Books for Young Readers, 2025)

Woody's Words: Woodrow Wilson Rawls and Where the Red Fern Grows by Lisa Rogers, illustrated by Susan Reagan (Calkins Creek, an imprint of Astra Books for Young Readers, 2025)

**The World Entire: A True Story of an Extraordinary World War II Rescue* by Elizabeth Brown, illustrated by Melissa Castrillón (Chronicle Books, 2025)

World of Mushrooms: Discover the Freaky, Fantastic Fungi that Lurk in the Woods, Pop up in Lawns, and Sneak Around Underground by Pauline Payen, illustrated by Zelda Pressigout (Storey Publishing, an imprint of Workman Publishing, a division of Hachette

Book Group, 2025)

GRADES 6-8

**The Bard and the Book: How the First Folio Saved the Plays of William Shakespeare from Oblivion* by Ann Bausum, illustrated by Marta Sevilla (Peachtree Publishing Company Inc., 2024)

Ellis Island: Immigration and the American Dream by Felipe Galindo Feggo, illustrated by Tait Howard (First Second, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group, 2025)

Fantastic Flora: The World's Biggest, Baddest, and Smelliest Plants by Ann McCallum Staats, illustrated by Zoe Ingram (MIT Kids Press, an imprint of Candlewick Press, 2025)

**Fighter in the Woods: The True Story of a Jewish Girl Who Joined the Partisans in World War II* by Joshua M. Greene (Scholastic Focus, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., 2025)

**Manga Biographies: Charles M. Schulz, The Creator Snoopy and Peanuts* by Yuzuri Kuki, translated by Muri Morimoto (Udon, 2024)

SCAT: The Incredible Science of Wildlife Poop by Anita Sanchez (Holiday House, 2025)

Seeds of Discovery: How Barbara McClintock Used Corn and Curiosity to Solve a Science Mystery and Win a Nobel Prize by Lori Alexander, illustrated by Rebecca Santo (Clarion Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2025)

**Spying on Spies: How Elizabeth Smith Friedman Broke the Nazis' Secret Codes* by Marissa Moss (Abrams Books for Young Readers, an imprint of ABRAMS, 2024)

The True Story of Vanilla: How Edmund Albuiz Made History by Anne Richards, illustrated by Arden Taylor (Orca Book Publishers, 2025)

The Vanishing of Lake Peigneur: A Graphic Novel Based on a True Story by Allan Wolf, Illustrated by Jose Pimienta (Candlewick Press, 2025)

Waist Deep in Dung: A Stomach Churning Look at the Grossest Jobs Throughout History by Christine Virnig, illustrated by Korwin Briggs (Godwin Books, an imprint of Macmillan

Publishing Group, 2024)

**Wish I Was a Baller* By Amar Shah, illustrated by Rashad Doucet (Graphix, an imprint of Scholastic, 2025)

GRADES 9-12

At Last She Stood: How Joey Guerrero Spied, Survived, and Fought for Freedom by Erin Entrada Kelly (Greenwillow Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2025)

Death in the Jungle: Murder, Betrayal and the Lost Dream of Jonestown by Candace Fleming (Anne Schwartz Books, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, 2025)

Earthrise: The Story of the Photograph that Changed the Way We See Our Planet by Leonard S. Marcus (Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group, 2025)

One in a Million by Claire Lordon (Candlewick Press, 2023)

Putin vs. Zelensky: The Russo-Ukrainian War: Why It's Happening and How it All Got Started by Ben Thompson (Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group, 2025)

Shackled: A Tale of Wronged Kids, Rogue Judges, and a Town that Looked Away by Candy J. Cooper (Calkins Creek, an imprint of Astra Books for Young Readers, 2024)

**White House Secrets: Medical Lies and Cover-Ups* by Gail Jarrow (Calkins Creek, an imprint of Astra Books for Young Readers, 2025)

Titles Recommended for Adults

(^) Denotes an enthusiastic recommendation for the audiobook format by the Texas Topaz Adult Sub-Committee.

The 10: A Memoir of Family and the Open Road by E.A. Hanks (Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, LLC, 2025)

^99% Perspiration: A New Working History of the American Way of Life by Adam Chandler (Pantheon Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, 2025)

Algospeak: How Social Media is Transforming the Future of Language by Adam Aleksic (Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Penguin Random House, 2025)

The Art Spy: The Extraordinary Untold Tale of WWII Resistance Hero Rose Valland by Michelle Young (HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2025)

^Awake: A Memoir by Jen Hatmaker (Avid Reader Press, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2025)

The Beast in the Clouds: The Roosevelt Brothers' Deadly Quest to Find the Mythical Giant Panda by Nathalia Holt (Atria, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, LLC, 2025)

^Cabin: Off the Grid Adventures with a Clueless Craftsman by Patrick Hutchison (St. Martin's Press, an imprint of St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2024)

Code Dependent: Living in the Shadow of AI by Madhumita Murgia (Henry Holt and Company, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group, 2024)

Daughter of Daring: The Trick-Riding, Train-Leaping, Road Racing Life of Helen Gibson, Hollywood's First Stuntwoman by Mallory O'Meara (Hanover Square Press, 2025)

**^Dinner for Vampires: Life on a Cult TV Show (While Also in an Actual Cult!)* by Bethany Joy Lenz (Simon & Schuster, 2024)

**Disney High: The Untold Story of the Rise and Fall of Disney Channel's Tween Empire* by Ashley Spencer (St. Martin's Press, an imprint of St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2024)

**Drawn Testimony: My Four Decades as a Courtroom Sketch Artist* by Jane Rosenberg (Hanover Square Press, 2024)

Framed: Astonishing True Stories of Wrongful Convictions by John Grisham and Jim

McCloskey (Vintage, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2025)

Girl on Girl: How Pop Culture Turned a Generation of Women Against Themselves by Sophie Gilbert (Penguin Press, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2025)

The Great Chinese Art Heist: Imperialism, Organized Crime, and the Hidden Story of China's Stolen Artistic Treasures by Ralph Pezzullo (Pegasus Crime, an imprint of Pegasus Books, Ltd., 2025)

**Grief is for People* by Sloane Crosley (MCD, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2024)

Hey Hun: Sales, Sisterhood, Supremacy, and the Other Lies Behind Multilevel Marketing by Emily Lynn Paulson (Row House Publishing, 2023)

If You Can't Take the Heat: Tales of Food, Feminism, and Fury by Geraldine DeRuiter (Crown, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, 2024)

**Mailman: My Wild Ride Delivering the Mail in Appalachia and Finally Finding Home* by Stephen Starring Grant (Stardust73, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2025)

A Marriage at Sea: A True Story of Love, Obsession, and Shipwreck by Sophie Elmhirst (Riverhead Books, and imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2025)

McMillions: The Absolutely True Story of How an Unlikely Pair of FBI Agents Brought Down the Most Supersized Fraud in Fast Food History by James Lee Hernandez and Brian Lazarte (Grand Central Publishing, a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc., 2024)

**No More Tears: The Dark Secrets of Johnson & Johnson* by Gardiner Harris (Random House, an imprint and division of Penguin Random House LLC, 2025)

**Raising Hare: A Memoir* by Chloe Dalton (Pantheon Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, 2025)

^*Raw Dog: The Naked Truth About Hotdogs* by Jamie Loftus (Forge, an imprint of Tor, 2023)

The Scientist and the Serial Killer by Lise Olsen (Random House, an imprint and division of Penguin Random House LLC, 2025)

^SNAFU: The Definitive Guide to History's Greatest Screwups by Ed Helms (Grand Central Publishing, an imprint of Hachette Book Group, 2025)

Sociopath: A Memoir by Patric Gagne (Simon & Schuster, LLC, 2024)

A Survivor's Education: Women, Violence, and the Stories We Don't Tell by Joy Neumeyer (Public Affairs, 2024)

**Taking Care: The Story of Nursing and Its Power to Change Our World* by Sarah DiGregorio (Harper Perennial, an imprint of HarperCollins, 2023)

Vanishing Treasures: A Bestiary of Extraordinary Endangered Creatures by Katherine Rundell (Doubleday, a division of Penguin Random House, LLC, 2024)

**We Were Once a Family: A Story of Love, Death, and Child Removal in America* by Roxanna Asgarian (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group, 2023)

A Well-Trained Wife: My Escape from Christian Patriarchy by Tia Levings (St. Martin's Press, an imprint of St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2024)

Whack Job: A History of Axe Murder by Rachel MacCarthy James (St. Martin's Press, an imprint of St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2025)