The complete 2020 Rainbow List, lists from previous years, and information about the Rainbow Project may be found at: http://glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks
Accessed February 28, 2020

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Hawaii State Public Library System
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Rainbow List

The 2020 Rainbow List is selected by the committee of the Rainbow Project, a joint task force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table and the Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, and Queer Round Table of the American Library Association. This booklist includes selected titles for teens available in HSPLS. Books with an “asterisk” are “Top Ten Titles.” For the complete 2020 Rainbow List, visit http://glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks. Some titles may be available in e-formats. Check the catalog or ask a librarian for assistance.

Fiction

Boteju, Tanya
Kings, Queens, and In-Betweens
YA Boteju, Gr. 9 and up
Realistic Fiction
Insecure, self-conscious Nima wants her life to be less boring. She starts with a drag show where she befriends Diedre, a trans drag queen, and Winnow, a young drag king. But can Nima pursue her new friendships without losing her old ones? And what’s going on with her mom, who’s suddenly gotten back in touch after walking out more than a year ago with no explanation?

Bowman, Akemi Dawn
Summer Bird Blue
YA Bowman, Gr. 7 and up
Realistic Fiction
Rumi’s world falls apart when her sister dies suddenly. To make things worse, her mother ships her off to live with an aunt in Hawaii. She struggles to navigate her grief and sense of abandonment with the help of her new neighbors, a teenage surfer and a taciturn 80-year-old.

Cameron, Sophie
Last Bus to Everland
YA Cameron, Gr. 9 and up
Fantasy
Brody feels alone in his small apartment he shares with his stressed mom, agoraphobic dad, genius older brother, and theatrical younger sister. So when his cat runs off and leads him to meet a handsome, costumed stranger, he’ll take whatever escape he can get. The door to Everland only opens at 11:21 on Thursdays, but will he choose to stay or go when the doors start closing for good?

Capetta, Amy Rose and Cori McCarthy
Once & Future
YA Capetta, or YA-SF Capetta, Gr. 9 and up
Science Fiction
In this sci-fi reimagining of Arthurian legend, Ari Helix draws together a band of fighters, including a now-teenaged Merlin, and her friends to fight a tyrannical, intergalactic corporation that has been exploiting the residents of some planets and destroying others. To make matters worse, Morgana, Merlin’s nemesis, is determined to free the soul of the original Arthur, locked inside of Ari.

Graphic Novels

Templer, Hannah
Cosmoknights
YA GN Templer or YA GN Cosmoknights
Gr. 10 and up, Science Fiction
Once & Future
A romantic space adventure that spans the halls of the boarding school where Mia and Grace fell in love, to the ancient structures on distant planets in the far reaches of the galaxy. Separated under mysterious circumstances, Mia is determined to reunite with Grace—and she will brave anything to find her again.

Walker, Suzanne and Xu, Wendy
*Mooncakes
YA GN Walker or YA GN Mooncakes
Gr. 8 and up, Fantasy
Nova is a young witch who wears a hearing aid and lives with her two grandmothers. Tam is a nonbinary werewolf on the run from their stepdad. The two, who were childhood friends, reconnect and soon romance is in the air.

Boteju, Tanya
YA GN Boteju or YA GN Avant-Guards
Gr. 9 and up, Sports Fiction
Charlie transfers to art school in the hopes of getting a new start. When the spirited Olivia tries to recruit her to the school’s (admittedly terrible) basketball team, Charlie is hesitant—she used to be a basketball star, but left it all behind. When she does finally decide to join the team, she and the other players find themselves learning to trust and support one another.

Walden, Tillie
*On a Sunbeam
YA GN Walden or YA GN On A Sunbeam
Gr. 9 and up, Science Fiction
A romantic space adventure that spans the halls of the boarding school where Mia and Grace fell in love, to the ancient structures on distant planets in the far reaches of the galaxy. Separated under mysterious circumstances, Mia is determined to reunite with Grace—and she will brave anything to find her again.

Tamaki, Mariko
Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me
YA GN Tamaki or YA GN Laura Dean
Gr. 8 and up, Realistic Fiction
Freddy is addicted to her popular, attractive girlfriend—the titular Laura Dean—even though Laura has broken up with her twice. Laura disrespects Freddy’s time, friends, and heart. Things come to a head when Freddy’s best friend is in crisis on the same day as Laura’s birthday party.

Usdin, Carly
YA GN Usdin or YA GN Avant-Guards
Gr. 9 and up, Sports Fiction
Charlie transfers to art school in the hopes of getting a new start. When the spirited Olivia tries to recruit her to the school’s (admittedly terrible) basketball team, Charlie is hesitant—she used to be a basketball star, but left it all behind. When she does finally decide to join the team, she and the other players find themselves learning to trust and support one another.

* denotes a Top Ten Title.

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Clare, Cassandra and Chu, Wesley

The Red Scrolls of Magic
YA Clare, Gr. 8 and up
Fantasy

Part of the Shadowhunters universe and the first book in The Eldest Curses series, The Red Scrolls of Magic features High Warlock Magnus Bane and his new boyfriend, Alec Lightwood. Readers don't have to have read previous books in this universe to enjoy the wild ride as Bane, Lightwood, and a cast of diverse characters tear through Europe on a quest to stop a demon-worshipping cult so they can go back to enjoying their vacation together.

Drake, Julia

The Last True Poets of the Sea
YA Drake, Gr. 8 and up
Realistic fiction

Violet’s hard-partying ways escalate the same time her brother, Sam, attempts to take his life, so her parents send her to stay with her uncle in a small Maine town where she and Sam used to spend summers. There, she immerses herself in the mission to locate the shipwreck in which her ancestor was the sole survivor. She is joined by a group of local teens, led by the enigmatic Liv. As Violet untangles the threads of her family’s past, she finds herself falling for Liv.

Emezi, Akwaeke

*Pet
YA Emezi, Gr. 7 and up
Speculative Fiction

In Jam and Redemption’s hometown of Lucille, there are no monsters anymore — or so they’ve always been taught. But when a creature emerges from Jam’s mother’s painting and claims it’s here to hunt a monster, Jam and Redemption must reconsider what they thought they knew, and answer the question: how do you hunt monsters if no one will admit they exist?

Fowley-Doyle, Moïra

All the Bad Apples
YA Fowley-Doyle, Gr. 9 and up
Realistic fiction

The women in the Rys family have always been labeled as “bad apples.” When Deena Rys receives impossible letters from the older sister who jumped off a cliff, she and her friends set off on a journey across Ireland. Together they trace the path of the Rys women’s history and the curse that’s always followed them. Deena struggles to find a way to heal her family and give voice to the horrific abuse her ancestors endured.

Goslee, S. J.

How (Not) to Ask a Boy to Prom
YA Goslee, Gr. 9 and up
Realistic fiction

Nolan is perfectly fine opting out of social engagements to stay home and draw narwhals, but his big sister has other plans. She pushes Nolan into asking his secret crush, Si O’Mara, to the prom. His prom-posual goes horribly wrong when Bern accepts the invitation instead. Nolan and Bern start fake-dating and soon lines begin to blur of what is real between them.

Wexler, Django

Ship of Smoke and Steel
YA Wexler, Gr. 9 and up
Fantasy

Eighteen-year-old Isoka is a ward boss in a port city, using her combat magical skills to survive on the streets and providing for her sister’s more comfortable existence. Captured and threatened with the life of her sister, she agrees to use her skills to attempt to steal a legendary ghost ship. To accomplish her mission, Isoka will become a part of the brutal crew, battling creatures while navigating her unexpected feelings for a fellow fighter as well as a princess with her own dark power.

Zappia, Francesca

Now Entering Addamsville
YA Zappia, Gr. 9 and up
Supernatural Mystery

Addamsville is no stranger to ghosts, and unlike most people who live there, Zora knows they’re real because she can see them. Supernatural forces in Addamsville start causing fires that get people killed, and Zora is framed for their crimes. She’ll need to track down the true culprit. In a small town obsessed with ghosts but is unaware of the actual existence of spectres among them, will anyone believe the truth?

Nonfiction

Baumann, Jason, ed.

Love and Resistance
Adult NF 306.766 Ba, Gr.10 and up

Drawn from The New York Public Library Archives, this collection of photographs by Kay Lahusen and Diana Davies documents LGBTQ+ activists and activism in the 1960s and 70s. Photographs are organized into four sections: Visibility, Love, Pride, and Protest, and each section is contextualized in a brief introduction; individual photographs are also described and contextualized.

Bausum, Ann

Viral: the Fight Against AIDS in America
YA 362.19697 Ba, Gr. 9 and up

Bausum explores the AIDS crisis in America from the beginning to the present day in an easy to follow narrative that is compelling and fast-paced. Including information about ACT Up, presidential administrations’ funding of research and personal tales that include first hand sources, this is an engaging and well-researched book on HIV and AIDS. Includes a timeline, source notes and bibliography.

Hutchinson, Shaun David

*Brave Face
YA B Hutchinson or YA 616.85844 Hu, Gr. 10 and up, Memoir

Author Shaun David Hutchinson explores growing up, discovering his sexual identity and facing life-threatening depression in his memoir of his teen and young adult years. Hutchinson survives a suicide attempt and embarks on a journey of recovery and self-acceptance in this honest and, at times, humorous memoir.
Solomon, Rachel Lynn
**Our Year of Maybe**
YA Solomon, Gr. 9 and up
Realistic Fiction
Sophie and Peter have been best friends forever, even after Sophie turned down Peter’s romantic advance in middle school. Now they’re in high school and Sophie’s the one in love with him, but after she donates a kidney to Peter, they find themselves growing further apart rather than closer. Will Peter’s reinvigorated life mean the death of their friendship?

Wells, Rebecca Kim
**Shatter the Sky**
YA Wells, Gr. 9 and up
Fantasy
When Kaia is abducted by the empire, Maren sets off on a quest to steal a dragon, rescue her girlfriend, and save her way of life.

Villasante, Alexandra
**The Grief Keeper**
YA Villasante, Gr. 9 and up
Science Fiction/Romance
Marisol flees El Salvador with her younger sister Gabi, but they get caught crossing into the United States. When she’s told her asylum request has been denied, her only hope of staying and keeping her sister safe comes from a pilot program of a new technology that funnels the grief, trauma, and pain of wealthy patrons to poor immigrants with no other choices. Her new life is nothing like the American TV shows Marisol loves so much, but in living so closely with Rey, who lost her brother during a concert, it may not only be her grief Marisol feels.

Johnston, E.K.
**The Afterward**
YA Johnston, Gr. 9 and up
Fantasy
A year after the epic quest that brought Apprentice Knight Kalanthe and thief Olsa together, the two are torn apart by Kalanthe’s need to find a husband who can pay off her knight school loans.

Johnson, Lana Wood
**Technically, You Started It**
YA Johnson, Gr. 7 and up
Realistic Fiction
Haley’s classmate randomly sends her a text, and she thinks she knows who sent it. The text is from Martin Nathaniel Munroe II – but there happens to be two students in Haley’s class with this exact same name! Told entirely in text messages between Martin and Haley, this novel explores a case of mistaken identity as they build an unexpected friendship. But Haley needs to figure out which Martin is really sending the texts before their budding relationship turns into an epic disaster.

Hutchinson, Shaun David
**The Past and Other Things That Should Stay Buried**
YA Hutchinson, Gr. 9 and up
Speculative Fiction
July may be dead, but that doesn’t stop her from waking up in Dino’s family’s funeral home. Being thrown into this bizarre reality, the former best friends revisit the past as they navigate the surreal circumstances of the present.

Johnson, Rachel Lynn
**The Love & Lies of Rukhsana Ali**
YA Khan, Gr. 9 and up
Realistic Fiction
Rukhsana, a Bangladeshi-American teenager, must balance her life between conservative Muslim parents and her friends who don’t understand her family and culture. Rukhsana knows her family will not approve of her love life – she’s secretly dating a girl. Her parents discover the relationship and send her to relatives in Bangladesh to marry a nice, young Bengali man. Rukhsana finds unlikely allies as she carves out her own path to live the way she chooses.

Johnson, Lana Wood
**Our Year of Maybe**
YA Johnson, Gr. 9 and up
Realistic Fiction
When Kaylyn’s family history comes to light, their small town explodes in anger.

Johnson, Lana Wood
**These Witches Don’t Burn**
YA Wells, Gr. 9 and up
Fantasy
When Kaia is abducted by the empire, Maren sets off on a quest to steal a dragon, rescue her girlfriend, and save her way of life.

Johnson, Lana Wood
**Wild and Crooked**
YA Thomas, Gr. 9 and up
Realistic Fiction
Whether because of her infamous family history, their low-class status, or her sexuality, Kaylyn is used to others picking on her. When she attends a new high school, she uses a fake name to avoid notoriety and pretends to be a nice Southern Belle. She is surprised to find herself among the popular students. But she also befriends one of the least popular – Gus Peake who’s known as “the disabled kid” because of his cerebral palsy. When Kaylyn’s family history comes to light, their small town explodes in anger.

Johnson, Rachel Lynn
**That’s Not What Happened**
YA Keplinger, Gr. 8 and up
Realistic Fiction
Three years after a mass school shooting, Lee and the other survivors are still trying to come to terms with what happened that day. While Lee has to decide if she should tell the truth about the details surrounding her best friend’s death, she also has to deal with what comes after high school, prom, and how to explain to her friends that she is asexual.

Johnson, Lana Wood
**The Grief Keeper**
YA Villasante, Gr. 9 and up
Science Fiction/Romance
Marisol flees El Salvador with her younger sister Gabi, but they get caught crossing into the United States. When she’s told her asylum request has been denied, her only hope of staying and keeping her sister safe comes from a pilot program of a new technology that funnels the grief, trauma, and pain of wealthy patrons to poor immigrants with no other choices. Her new life is nothing like the American TV shows Marisol loves so much, but in living so closely with Rey, who lost her brother during a concert, it may not only be her grief Marisol feels.

Keplinger, Kody
**That’s Not What Happened**
YA Keplinger, Gr. 8 and up
Realistic Fiction
Three years after a mass school shooting, Lee and the other survivors are still trying to come to terms with what happened that day. While Lee has to decide if she should tell the truth about the details surrounding her best friend’s death, she also has to deal with what comes after high school, prom, and how to explain to her friends that she is asexual.

Konigsberg, Bill
**The Music of What Happens**
YA Konigsberg, Gr. 9 and up
Realistic Fiction
A chance encounter leads Max to help Jordan run a quirky food truck, which may be the only thing standing between Jordan and his severely depressed mother from becoming homeless. Max is...
hiding his own trauma, while Jordan is struggling with the responsibility of taking care of his mother, the resentment he feels towards his two best friends. Opposites attract as they struggle to face their demons.

Legrand, Claire
Sawkill Girls
YA Legrand, Gr. 9 and up
Horror
People have been disappearing for decades on the island of Sawkill Rock, but lately those disappearances have been getting more frequent. As the horror comes closer and closer, Val, Marion, and Zoey must work together to find a way to thwart the evil that preys on their home.

London, Alex
Black Wings Beating
YA London, Gr. 8 and up
Fantasy
In a world that revolves around birding and falconry, fraternal twins Brysen and Kylee are often at odds. He’s determined to be a great falconer but lacks skill, while Kylee is gifted but antagonistic towards the craft. Still, the siblings rely on each other to survive. When Brysen has to capture the elusive and lethal Ghost Eagle in order to save his boyfriend’s life, Kylee accompanies him, despite her own misgivings.

McLemore, Anna-Marie
Blanca & Roja
YA McLemore, Gr. 8 and up
Magical Realism/Fairy Tale Adaptation
For generations, there have always been two daughters in the del Cisne family, and destiny dictates that shortly after the younger sister’s 15th birthday, one sister will turn into a swan and the other will remain human. When two local missing children reappear in the woods near the sisters’ home, Blanca and Roja’s bond is tested. They find themselves confronting their ideas about family, love, and identity while waiting expectantly to discover their fate.

Mejia, Tehlor Kay
*We Set the Dark on Fire*
YA Mejia or YA-SF Mejia, Gr. 9 and up
Speculative Fiction
Daniela Vargas is the Medio School for Girls’ top student, and upon her graduation, she’s guaranteed a life of comfort and luxury as she’s picked to be one of two wives to the city’s most promising young bachelor. As Primera, she’s been through years of rigid training, but nothing prepares her for the decisions she’ll have to make after her marriage — especially not when she’s asked to spy for the resistance, or when she finds herself falling for someone forbidden.

Nazemian, Abdi
Like a Love Story
YA Nazmian, Gr. 10 and up
Historical Fiction
Set in 1989 NYC against the backdrop of the AIDS crisis, the story of three teens intertwine: Reza, a recent Iranian immigrant battling his attraction to other men; Art, an out-and-proud activist and photographer; and Judy, a plus-size fashion designer and Art’s best friend, whose uncle is dying of AIDS. In an attempt to avoid the truth about himself, Reza starts dating Judy.. Soon she falls in love with him, but he’s fallen in love with Art. Can Reza untangle this web without losing his friends?

Poston, Ashley
The Princess and the Fangirl
YA Poston, Gr. 10 and up
Fairy Tale Adaptation
While Imogen wants to save a character in a movie franchise, the actress who plays the character, Jessica, would like to leave. When they meet at a fan convention, they are mistaken for each other. After the super-secret script to the Starfield sequel leaks, suddenly all fingers are pointed at Jessica. Jessica and Imogen agree to switch places to discover the culprit.

Rowell, Rainbow
Wayward Son
YA Rowell, Gr. 9 and up
Fantasy/Paranormal Romance
Simon, Penny, and Baz triumphed over the villain in Carry On, but the happy ending hasn’t turned out like they expected. Without his powers, Simon is a couch potato with wings, and the hope of a real relationship between Simon and Baz has gone nowhere. When an opportunity arises to ride to the rescue, the three embark on a road trip across the American West.

Russo, Meredith
Birthday
YA Russo, Gr. 9 and up
Realistic Fiction
Eric and Morgan’s families were thrust together the day they were born when they were all snowed-in at the hospital thanks to a freak, out-of-season September blizzard that hit their Tennessee community. Over the course of six birthdays, their lives unfold in complex and beautiful ways.

Schrieve, Hal
Out of Salem
YA Schrieve, Gr. 8 and up
Paranormal Fiction
Z is nonbinary and recently lost their family in the car crash that turned Z into a zombie. Now, Z is under suspicion from their uncle, their classmates, and society in general. They’re soon befriended by Aysel, a werewolf of Turkish descent, and Tommy, a boy who’s bullied for his alleged fey ancestry. When werewolves are blamed for the death of a local man, anti-monster sentiment rises, including in local law enforcement, which puts all three teens at risk.

Silverman, Laura
You Asked for Perfect
YA Silverman, Gr. 9 and up
Realistic Fiction
Ariel is stressed out trying to make sure everything about his high school years is perfect so that he can get into the best college. But after failing a calculus quiz, he asks Amir to tutor him. Math may not be Ariel’s thing, but Amir might just be perfect for him.