



Rise Up: Social Justice for Teens

Black Lives Matter, Human Rights, Civil Rights, Equal Rights, LGBTQ Rights, Voting Rights, Anti-Racism, Immigration—social justice issues are challenging us to change the way we think and act and grow. This booklist is a collection of favorite social justice stories to help you think more deeply about the world we live in. Some titles may be available in e-formats. Check the catalog or ask a librarian for assistance.

Young Adult Stories



Ahmed, Samira
Internment

YA Ahmed, Gr. 8 and up

Set in a horrifying near-future United States, Layla and her parents are suddenly taken from their home and forced into an internment camp for Muslim American citizens. With the help of new friends also trapped within the detention center, her boyfriend on the outside, and an unexpected alliance, Layla begins a journey to fight for freedom, leading a revolution against the internment camp's director and his guards.



Bajaj, Varsha
Count Me In

J/YA Bajaj, Gr. 5 and up

Told from two viewpoints, sixth-graders Karina and Chris use social media to stand up to racism in Houston, Texas, after an attack puts Karina's Indian American grandfather in the hospital.



Colbert, Brandy
The Voting Booth

YA Colbert, Gr. 8 and up

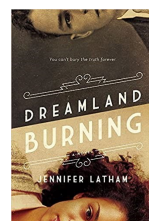
When Marva sees Duke turned away from their polling place, she takes it upon herself to make sure his vote is counted. She hasn't spent months doorbelling and registering voters just to see someone denied their right. And that's how their whirlwind day begins, rushing from precinct to precinct, cutting school, waiting in endless lines, turned away time and again, trying to do one simple thing: vote. They may have started out as strangers, but as Duke and Marva team up to beat a rigged system (and find Marva's missing cat), it's clear that there's more to their connection than a shared mission for democracy.



Gratz, Alan
Refugee

J/YA Gratz, Gr. 5 and up

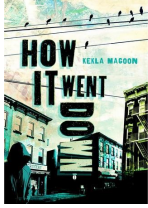
Although separated by continents and decades, Josef, a Jewish boy living in 1930s Nazi Germany; Isabel, a Cuban girl trying to escape the riots and unrest plaguing her country in 1994; and Mahmoud, a Syrian boy in 2015 whose homeland is torn apart by violence and destruction, embark on harrowing journeys in search of refuge, discovering shocking connections that tie their stories together.



Latham, Jennifer
Dreamland Burning

YA Latham, Gr. 8 and up

When Rowan finds a skeleton on her family's property, investigating the brutal, century-old murder leads to painful discoveries about the past. Alternating chapters tell the story of William, another teen grappling with the racial firestorm leading up to the 1921 Tulsa race riot, providing some clues to the mystery.

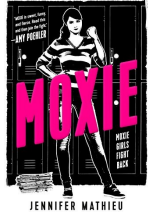


Magoon, Kekla

How It Went Down

YA Magoon, Gr. 9 and up

When sixteen-year-old Tariq Johnson is shot to death, his community is thrown into an uproar because Tariq was black and the shooter, Jack Franklin, is white, and in the aftermath everyone has something to say, but no two accounts of the events agree.

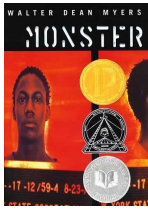


Mathieu, Jennifer

Moxie

YA Mathieu, Gr. 8 and up

Vivian Carter is fed up with a high school administration that thinks the football team can do no wrong. Fed up with sexist dress codes, hallway harassment, and gross comments from guys during class. Her mom was a tough-as-nails, punk rock Riot Grrrl in the '90s, and now Viv takes a page from her mother's past and creates a feminist zine that she distributes anonymously to her classmates. She's just blowing off steam, but what she has started is nothing short of a girl revolution.

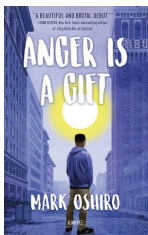


Myers, Walter Dean

Monster

YA Myers, Gr. 7 and up

While on trial as an accomplice to a murder, sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon records his experiences in prison and in the courtroom in the form of a film script as he tries to come to terms with the course his life has taken.

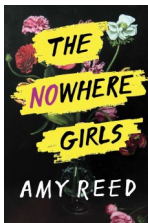


Oshiro, Mark

Anger Is a Gift

YA Oshiro, Gr. 8 and up

Six years ago, Moss Jefferies' father was murdered by an Oakland police officer. Along with losing a parent, the media's vilification of his father and lack of accountability has left Moss with near crippling panic attacks. Now, in his sophomore year of high school, Moss and his fellow classmates find themselves increasingly treated like criminals in their own school. New rules. Random locker searches. Constant intimidation and Oakland Police Department officers stationed in their halls. Despite their youth, the students decide to organize and push back against the administration. When tensions hit a fever pitch and tragedy strikes, Moss must face a difficult choice: give in to fear and hate or realize that anger can actually be a gift.

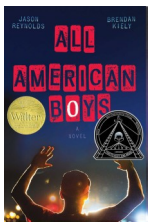


Reed, Amy

Nowhere Girls

YA Reed, Gr. 9 and up

After Grace learns of a girl who was run out of town for accusing the popular guys at school of gang rape, she convinces her friends Rosina and Erin to help her form an anonymous group of girls, called The Nowhere Girls, to resist the sexist culture at Prescott High. As their group grows in number their movement becomes about more than sex, and transforms the lives of its members, their school, and the entire community.

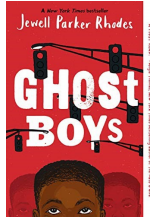


Reynolds, Jason and Brendan Kiely

All American Boys

YA Reynolds, Gr. 8 and up

When sixteen-year-old Rashad is mistakenly accused of stealing, classmate Quinn witnesses his brutal beating at the hands of a police officer who happens to be the older brother of his best friend. Told through Rashad and Quinn's alternating viewpoints.

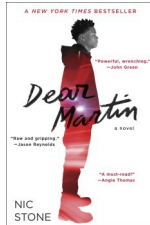


Rhodes, Jewell Parker

Ghost Boys

J/YA Rhodes, Gr. 5 and up

Twelve-year-old Jerome is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat. As a ghost, he observes the devastation that's been unleashed on his family and community in the wake of what they see as an unjust and brutal killing. Soon Jerome meets another ghost: Emmett Till, a boy from a very different time but similar circumstances. Emmett helps Jerome process what has happened, on a journey towards recognizing how historical racism may have led to the events that ended his life.

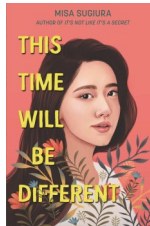


Stone, Nic

Dear Martin

YA Stone, Gr. 9 and up

Justyce McAllister is a good kid, an honor student, and always there to help a friend—but none of that matters to the police officer who just put him in handcuffs. Despite leaving his rough neighborhood behind, he can't escape the scorn of his former peers or the ridicule of his new classmates. Justyce looks to the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for answers and starts a journal to Dr. King to find out. Then comes the day Justyce goes driving with his best friend, Manny, windows rolled down, music turned up—way up, sparking the fury of a white off-duty cop beside them. Words fly. Shots are fired. In the media fallout, it's Justyce who is under attack.



Sugiura, Misa

This Time Will Be Different

YA Sugiura, Gr. 9 and up

Katsuyamas never quit—but seventeen-year-old CJ doesn't even know where to start. She's never lived up to her mom's type A ambition, and she's perfectly happy just helping her aunt, Hannah, at their family's flower shop. Then her mom decides to sell the shop—to the family who swindled CJ's grandparents when thousands of Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps during WWII. Soon a rift threatens to splinter CJ's family, friends, and their entire Northern California community; and for the first time, CJ has found something she wants to fight for.



Thomas, Angie

The Hate U Give

YA Thomas, Gr. 8 and up

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor black neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend, Khalil, at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon after-ward, Khalil's death is a national headline. When it becomes clear the police have little interest in investigating the incident, protesters take to the streets and Starr's neighborhood becomes a war zone. But what Starr does—or does not—say could destroy her community. It could also endanger her life.



Waller, Sharon Biggs

Girls on the Verge

YA Waller, Gr. 9 and up

On the very night Camille learns she got into a prestigious theater program, she also finds out she's pregnant. Camille reaches out to Annabelle, a girl she only barely knows from the theater. Annabelle agrees to drive her wherever she needs to go; best friend Bea doesn't agree with Camille's decision, but decides to come with. Over the course of a thousand miles, friendships will be tested and dreams will be challenged.



Watson, Renee and Ellen Hagen

Watch Us Rise

YA Watson, Gr. 8 and up

Jasmine and Chelsea are best friends on a mission—they're sick of the way women are treated even at their progressive NYC high school, so they decide to start a Women's Rights Club. They post their work online—poems, essays, videos of Chelsea performing her poetry, and Jasmine's response to the racial microaggressions she experiences—and soon they go viral. But with such positive support, the club is also targeted by trolls. When things escalate in real life, the principal shuts the club down. Not willing to be silenced, Jasmine and Chelsea will risk everything for their voices—and those of other young women—to be heard.



Yoon, Nicola

The Sun is Also a Star

YA Yoon, Gr. 8 and up

Natasha: I'm a girl who believes in science and facts. Not fate. Not destiny. Or dreams that will never come true. I'm definitely not the kind of girl who meets a cute boy on a crowded New York City street and falls in love with him. Not when my family is twelve hours away from being deported to Jamaica. Falling in love with him won't be my story. Daniel: I've always been the good son, the good student, living up to my parents' high expectations. Never the poet. Or the dreamer. But when I see her, I forget about all that. Something about Natasha makes me think that fate has something much more extraordinary in store—for both of us.

Graphic Novels



Lewis, John, and Andrew Aydin

March (Trilogy)

Adult/YA Lewis or Adult/YA 323.092 Lewis Le Gr. 7 and up

March is a vivid first-hand account of John Lewis' lifelong struggle for civil and human rights, meditating in the modern age on the distance traveled since the days of Jim Crow and segregation. Rooted in Lewis' personal story, it also reflects on the highs and lows of the broader civil rights movement.



Takei, George

They Called Us Enemy

YA B Takei or YA 791.43028 Takei Gr. 7 and up

In 1942, at the order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, every person of Japanese descent on the west coast was rounded up and shipped to one of ten "relocation centers," hundreds or thousands of miles from home, where they would be held for years under armed guard. *They Called Us Enemy* is George Takei's firsthand account of those years behind barbed wire, the joys and terrors of growing up under legalized racism, his mother's hard choices, his father's faith in democracy, and the way those experiences planted the seeds for his astonishing future.



Compiled by Jan T. Kamiya Young Adult Librarian
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August 2020