

## **Suggested Fiction for Middle School Justice Unit**

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#### **CORRUPTION, CULTS, PERSECUTION, RIGHTS**

**Bamboo People**, Mitali Perkins, 2010. (contemporary, child soldier ) (Lexile: 680)

Two Burmese boys, one a Karenni refugee and the other the son of an imprisoned Burmese doctor, meet in the jungle and in order to survive they must learn to trust each other.

**Between Shades of Gray**, by Ruta Sepetys, 2011. (historical, WWII Siberia prison camp ) (Lexile: NA)

In 1941, fifteen-year-old Lina, her mother, and brother are pulled from their Lithuanian home by Soviet guards and sent to Siberia, where her father is sentenced to death in a prison camp while she fights for her life, vowing to honor her family and the thousands like hers by burying her story in a jar on Lithuanian soil. Based on the author's family, includes a historical note.

**Bread and Roses, Too**, by Katherine Paterson, 2006. (historical, child labor) (Lexile: 810)

Jake and Rosa, two children, form an unlikely friendship as they try to survive and understand the 1912 Bread and Roses strike of mill workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

**The Door of No Return**, by Sarah Mussi, 2008. (adventure, political corruption) (Lexile: 710)

16 year old Zac never believed his grandfather's tales about their enslaved ancestors being descended from an African king, but when his grandfather is murdered & the villains come after Zac, he sets out for Ghana to find King Baktu's long-lost treasure before the murderers do.

**Guantanamo Boy**, by Anna Perera, 2011. (realistic, false arrest) (Lexile: 900)

Six months after the events of September 11, 2001, Khalid, a Muslim 15-year-old boy from England, is kidnapped during a family trip to Pakistan and imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he is held for two years suffering interrogations, water-boarding, isolation, and more for reasons unknown to him.

**Half Brother**, by Kenneth Oppel, 2010. (historical, animal rights) (Lexile: NA)

In 1973, a behavioral psychologist pursues his latest research project--an experiment to determine whether chimpanzees can acquire advanced language skills--he brings home a baby chimp named Zan & asks his 13 year old son to treat Zan like a little brother.

**Incantation**, by Alice Hoffman, 2006. (historical, religious persecution) (Lexile: 730)

During the Spanish Inquisition, sixteen-year-old Estrella, brought up a Catholic, discovers her family's true Jewish identity, and when their secret is betrayed by Estrella's best friend, the consequences are tragic.

**Keeping Corner**, by Kashmira Sheth, 2007. (historical, women's rights) (Lexile: 760)

In India during WWI, thirteen-year-old Leela's happy, spoiled childhood ends when her husband since age nine, whom she barely knows, dies, leaving her a widow whose only hope of happiness could come from Mahatma Ghandi's social and political reforms.

**Leaving Fishers**, by Margaret Peterson Haddix, 1997. (realistic, cults) (Lexile: 790)

After joining her new friends in the religious group called Fishers of Men, Dorry finds herself immersed in a cult from which she must struggle to extricate herself.

**The Loud Silence of Francine Green**, by Karen Cushman, 2006. (historical, McCarthyism) (Lexile: 750)

In 1949, thirteen-year-old Francine goes to Catholic school in Los Angeles where she becomes best friends with a girl who questions authority and is frequently punished by the nuns, causing Francine to question her own values.

**Marcelo in the Real World**, by Francisco X. Stork, 2009. (realistic, ethics, autism) (Lexile: 700)

Marcelo Sandoval, a seventeen-year-old boy on the high-functioning end of the autistic spectrum, faces new challenges, including romance and injustice, when he goes to work for his father in the mailroom of a corporate law firm.

**No Shame, No Fear**, by Ann Turnbull, 2004. (historical, religious persecution, romance) (Lexile: 730)

In England in 1662, a time of religious persecution, fifteen-year-old Susanna, a poor country girl and a Quaker, and seventeen-year-old William, a wealthy Anglican, meet and fall in love against all odds.

**Trash**, by Andy Mulligan, 2010. (mystery, political corruption, poverty) (Lexile: 850)

Fourteen-year-olds Raphael and Gardo team up with a younger boy, Rat, to figure out the mysteries surrounding a bag Raphael finds during their daily life of sorting through trash in a third-world country's dump.

**Uprising**, by Margaret Peterson Haddix, 2007. (historical, women's rights) (Lexile: 790)

In 1927, Mrs. Livingston recalls her experiences at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory, including miserable working conditions that led to a strike, then the fire that took the lives of her two best friends. Includes historical notes.

**Wicked Girls: A Novel of the Salem Witch Trials**, by Stephanie Hemphill, 2010.(historical, novel in verse) (Lex: 700)

A fictionalized account, told in verse, of the Salem witch trials, told from the perspective of three of the real young women living in Salem in 1692--Mercy Lewis, Margaret Walcott, and Ann Putnam, Jr.

## HOLOCAUST

**After the War**, by Carol Matas, 1996. (historical) (Lexile: 840)

After being released from Buchenwald at the end of World War II, fifteen-year-old Ruth joins the underground organization Berihah, and risks her life to lead a group of children across Europe to Palestine.

**Annexed**, by Sharon Dogar, 2010. (historical) (Lexile: NA)

Retells the story of Anne Frank from the perspective of Peter, who overcomes an initial loathing for the precocious young diarist before falling in love with her and questioning his faith in light of frightening persecutions.

**The Berlin Boxing Club**, by Robert Sharenow, 2011. (historical) (Lexile: 880)

In 1936 Berlin, fourteen-year-old Karl Stern, considered Jewish despite a non-religious upbringing, learns to box from the legendary Max Schmeling while struggling with the realities of the Holocaust.

**The Book Thief**, by Markus Zusak, 2006. (historical) (Lexile: 730)

Trying to make sense of the horrors of World War II, Death relates the story of Liesel--a young German girl whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding, as well as their neighbors.

**The Boy in the Striped Pajamas**, by John Boyne, 2006. (historical) (Lexile: 1080)

Bored and lonely after his family moves from Berlin to a place called "Out-With" in 1942, Bruno, the son of a Nazi officer, befriends a boy in striped pajamas who lives behind a wire fence.

**Maus: A Survivor's Tale**, by Art Spiegelman, 1986. (historical, biographical, graphic novel) (Lexile: NA)

The author-illustrator traces his father's imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp through a series of disarming and unusual cartoons arranged to tell the story as a novel.

**Milkweed**, by Jerry Spinelli, 2003. (historical) (Lexile: 510)

Captures the hardships and cruelty of life in the ghettos of Warsaw during the Nazi occupation of World War II, through the eyes of a Jewish orphan who must use all his wits and courage to survive unimaginable events and circumstances.

**Tropical secrets: Holocaust refugees in Cuba**, by Margarita Engle, 2009. (historical) (Lexile: 1170)

Escaping from Nazi Germany to Cuba in 1939, a young Jewish refugee dreams of finding his parents again, befriends a local girl with painful secrets of her own, and discovers that the Nazi darkness is never far away.

## PEER PRESSURE, BULLYING

**The Astonishing Adventures of Fanboy & Goth Girl**, by Barry Lyga, 2006. (realistic) (Lexile: 710)

A fifteen-year-old "geek" who keeps a list of the high school jocks and others who torment him, and pours his energy into creating a great graphic novel, encounters Kyra, Goth Girl, who helps change his outlook on almost everything, including himself.

**Blank Confession**, by Pete Hautman, 2010. (realistic) (Lexile: 700)

A new and enigmatic student named Shayne appears at high school one day, befriends the smallest boy in the school, and takes on a notorious drug dealer before turning himself in to the police for killing someone.

**Buddha Boy**, by Kathe Koja, 2003. (contemporary, realistic) (Lexile: 1090)

Justin spends time with Jinsen, the unusual and artistic new student whom the school bullies torment and call Buddha Boy, and ends up making choices that impact Jinsen, himself, and the entire school.

**The Chocolate War**, by Robert Cormier, 1974. (contemporary, realistic) (Lexile: 820)

Jerry Renault is forced into a psychological showdown with Trinity School's gang leader, Archie Costello, for refusing to be bullied into selling chocolates for the annual fund raising.

**Dark Days of Hamburger Halpin**, by Josh Berk, 2010. (mystery, realistic) (Lexile: NA)

When Will Halpin transfers from his all-deaf school into a mainstream Pennsylvania high school, he faces discrimination and bullying, but still manages to solve a mystery surrounding the death of a popular football player in his class.

**Everybody Sees the Ants**, by A. S. King, 2011. (historical-1970s, realistic, humorous) (Lexile: 710)

Overburdened by his parents' bickering and a bully's attacks, fifteen-year-old Lucky Linderman begins dreaming of being with his grandfather, who went missing during the Vietnam War, but during a visit to Arizona, his aunt and uncle and their beautiful neighbor, Ginny, help him find a new perspective.

**Jake, reinvented**, by Gordon Korman, 2003. (realistic) (Lexile: 800)

Rick becomes friends with the popular new boy, Jake Garrett, football player and host of superlative parties, and in the process discovers the true nature of his schoolmates and uncovers the mystery of Jake's past. Re-imagines "The Great Gatsby" with a cast of characters from Fitzgerald High.

## PEER PRESSURE, BULLYING

**Orchards**, by Holly Thompson, 2011. (realistic, novel in verse,) (Lexile: NA) (author is Wenham native)  
Sent to Japan for the summer after an eighth-grade classmate's suicide, half-Japanese, half-Jewish Kana Goldberg tries to fit in with relatives she barely knows and reflects on the guilt she feels over the tragedy back home.

**Scored**, by Lauren McLaughlin, 2011. (science fiction, dystopia) (Lexile: NA) (author is Wenham native)  
In the not-so-distant future, teenaged Imani must struggle within a world where a monolithic corporation assigns young people a score that will determine the rest of their lives.

## CIVIL RIGHTS, RACISM

**Black and White**, by Paul Volponi, 2005. (realistic, sports) (Lexile: 710)  
Two star high school basketball players, one black and one white, experience the justice system differently after committing a crime together and getting caught.

**Bone by Bone by Bone**, by Tony Johnston, 2007. (historical) (Lexile: 680)  
In 1950s Tennessee, ten-year-old David's racist father refuses to let him associate with his best friend Malcolm, an African American boy.

**Code Talker**, by Joseph Bruchac, 2005. (historical) (Lexile: 910)  
After being taught in a boarding school run by whites that Navajo is a useless language, Ned Begay and other Navajo men are recruited by the Marines to become Code Talkers, sending messages during World War II in their native tongue.

**The Cruisers**, by Walter Dean Myers, 2010. (contemporary, realistic, freedom of speech) (Lexile: NA)  
Friends Zander, Kambui, LaShonda, and Bobbi, caught in the middle of a mock Civil War at DaVinci Academy, learn the true cost of freedom of speech when they use their alternative newspaper, The Cruiser, to try to make peace.

**Guardian**, by Julius Lester, 2008. (historical) (Lexile: 870)  
In a rural southern town in 1946, a white man and his son witness the lynching of an innocent black man. Includes historical note on lynching.

**Mississippi Trial, 1955**, by Chris Crowe, 2002. (race relations) (Lexile: 870)  
In Mississippi in 1955, a sixteen-year-old finds himself at odds with his grandfather over issues surrounding the kidnapping and murder of a fourteen-year-old African American from Chicago.

**My Mother the Cheerleader**, by Rob Sharenow, 2007. (historical) (Lexile: 820)  
Thirteen-year-old Louise uncovers secrets about her family and her neighborhood during the violent protests over school desegregation in 1960 New Orleans.

**Riot**, by Walter Dean Myers, 2009. (historical) (Lexile: NA)  
In 1863, fifteen-year-old Claire, the daughter of an Irish mother and a black father, faces ugly truths and great danger when Irish immigrants, enraged by the Civil War and a federal draft, lash out against blacks and wealthy "swells" of New York City.

**To Kill a Mockingbird**, by Harper Lee, 1960. (historical, race relations) (Lexile: 870)  
Scout's father defends a black man accused of raping a white woman in a small Alabama town during the 1930s.

## SLAVERY

**Chains**, by Laurie Halse Anderson, 2008. (historical) (Lexile: 780) (first book in **Seeds of America** trilogy)  
After being sold to a cruel couple in New York City, a slave named Isabel spies for the rebels during the Revolutionary War.

**Copper Sun**, by Sharon Draper, 2006. (historical) (Lexile: 820)  
Two fifteen-year-old girls--one a slave and the other an indentured servant--escape their Carolina plantation and try to make their way to Fort Moses, Florida, a Spanish colony that gives sanctuary to slaves.

**Days of Little Texas**, by R.A. Nelson, 2009. (supernatural) (Lexile: NA)  
Sixteen-year-old Ronald Earl King, who has been a charismatic evangelist since he was ten years old, is about to preach at a huge revival meeting on the grounds of an old plantation, where, with confusing help from the ghost of a girl he could not heal, he becomes engaged in an epic battle between good and evil.

**The Glory Field**, by Walter Dean Myers, 1994. (historical) (Lexile: 800)  
Follows a family's 241 year history, from the capture of an African boy in the 1750s through the lives of his descendants, as their dreams and circumstances lead them away from and back to the small plot of land in South Carolina that they call the Glory Field.

**The Other Side of Dark**, by Sarah Smith, 2010. (supernatural) (Lexile: 650)  
Since losing both of her parents, fifteen-year-old Katie can see and talk to ghosts, which makes her a loner until fellow student Law sees her drawing of an historic Boston house and together they seek a treasure rumored to be hidden there by illegal slave-traders.

## Suggested NonFiction for Middle School Justice Unit

**An Unspeakable Crime: The Prosecution and Persecution of Leo Frank**, by Elaine Marie Alphin, 2010. (Lexile: 1210) (Y 364.15 ALP) In 1913, Mary Phagan, a 13-year-old employee at an Atlanta pencil factory was found murdered. Police suspected Leo Frank, who was a northerner and a Jew. His trial captured national attention. A mob stormed the prison where Frank was being held and lynched him. Leo Frank thus became the only known Jew lynched in American history.

**They Called Themselves The K.K.K.: The Birth of an American Terrorist Group**, by Susan Campbell Bartoletti, 2010. (Lexile: 1180) (Y 322.42 BAR) This is the story of how a secret terrorist group took root in America's democracy. Filled with chilling and vivid personal accounts unearthed from oral histories, congressional documents, and diaries.

**Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice**, by Phillip Hoose, 2009. (Biography) (Lexile: 1000) (Y B COLVIN) Based on extensive interviews with Claudette Colvin and many others, Phillip Hoose presents the first in-depth account of an important yet largely unknown civil rights figure, skillfully weaving her dramatic story into the fabric of the historic Montgomery bus boycott and court case that would change the course of American history.

**Farewell to Manzanar: A True Story of Japanese American Experience During and After the World War II Internment**, by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, 1973. (Biography) (Lexile: 1040) (Y B HOUSTON) The American-born author describes her family's experience and impressions when they were forced to relocate to a camp for the Japanese in Owens Valley, California, during World War II.

**Flesh and Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and its Legacy**, by Albert Marrin, 2011. (Lexile: NA) (J 974.7 MAR) Describes the conditions in the textile industry in the early 20th century behind the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company that led to the death of many young women, and explains its impact on the labor movement and on society.

**The Force Born of Truth : Mohandas Gandhi and the Salt March, India, 1930**, by Betsy Kuhn, 2011. (Lexile: NA) (Y 954.03 KUH) Young Gandhi -- Gandhi in South Africa -- Gandhi returns to India -- Setting the stage -- The Salt March -- Gandhi breaks the salt laws -- The end of the Raj -- "A message for the whole world."

**Kids On Strike!**, by Susan Campbell Bartoletti, 1999. (Lexile: 920) (Y 331.892 BAR) Describes the conditions and treatment that drove workers, including many children, to various strikes, from the mill workers strikes in 1828 and 1836 and the coal strikes at the turn of the century to the work of Mother Jones on behalf of child workers.

**Open the Jail Doors -- We Want to Enter: The Defiance Campaign Against Apartheid Laws, South Africa, 1952**, by Stuart A. Kallen, 2010. (Lexile: NA) (Y 323.16 KAL) Discusses apartheid in South Africa and the fight for its prohibition, including notable protests, arrests, and anti-apartheid leaders that eventually brought the downfall of the system.

**Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood**, by Marjane Satrapi, 2003. (autobiography, graphic novel format) (Y B GRAPHIC SATRAPI) The great-granddaughter of Iran's last emperor and the daughter of ardent Marxists describes growing up in Tehran in a country plagued by political upheaval and vast contradictions between public and private life.

Subject search terms to find similar nonfiction in the Library's online catalog (at [www.hwlibrary.org](http://www.hwlibrary.org)) : civil rights, emancipation, equality, freedom, human rights, justice, labor movement, revolutions, social justice.

Grade Level	Text Measure Lexile Range
4	650L to 850L
5	750L to 950L
6	850L to 1050L
7	950L to 1075L
8	1000L to 1100L
9	1050L to 1150L
10	1100L to 1200L
11-12	1100L to 1300L

This bibliography was compiled by Kim Claire, Young Adult/Reference Librarian, Hamilton-Wenham Library, January 2012. Email: [kclaire@mvlc.org](mailto:kclaire@mvlc.org) Phone: 978-468-5577 x14 **Informed Teens** blog at: [www.hwlibrary.org](http://www.hwlibrary.org)