

Summer Reading Book Choices

The following books explore issues of identity, social justice, and ongoing social problems. Choose **one** book to read this summer. It is highly recommended that you look up the books and ascertain which issues they address before you choose one so that you can read according to your own interests.

Crank Ellen Hopkins

Kristina Snow is the perfect daughter, until she meets a boy who introduces her to drugs. She becomes a very different person, struggling to control her life and her mind, as she grows up and has children of her own. (NPR)

March (Books 1, 2,3) by John Lewis (graphic novel)

Congressman John Lewis (GA-5) is an American icon, one of the key figures of the civil rights movement. His commitment to justice and nonviolence has taken him from an Alabama sharecropper's farm to the halls of Congress, from a segregated schoolroom to the 1963 March on Washington, and from receiving beatings from state troopers to receiving the Medal of Freedom from the first African-American president. (Amazon)

Little Fires Everywhere Celeste Ng

Celeste Ng's new novel is about two families in the heart of America who can't seem to see into each other's hearts. The Richardsons are a happy family with four children. "The soft smells of detergent and cooking and grass mingle in the entryway" of their lovely Ohio home, Ng writes.

Then, Mia Warren and her teenage daughter, Pearl, pull up with everything they own in their Volkswagen Rabbit, and rent the Richardsons' guest house. The two families become enmeshed in each other's lives in all ways. The result is *Little Fires Everywhere*. (NPR)

Snow Sisters by Tom Wilinsky and Jen Sternick

High school students Soph, who attends private school in Manhattan, and Tess, a public school student who lives on a dairy farm in New Hampshire are thrown together as roommates at a week-long writing conference. As they get to know each other and the other young women, both Soph and Tess discover unexpected truths and about friendship, their craft, and how to hold fast to their convictions while opening their hearts to love. (Amazon)

The Hate You Give by Angie Thomas

To everyone at her school with a predominantly white population, Starr is the cool African American girl who is part of a semi-athletic group of friends, and has a sweet, yet oblivious boyfriend. That's about all they know about her. They don't know that she lives across town in Garden Heights, an area that's known as the ghetto. Basically, she's a part of two polar opposite communities, and Starr has to put on a different face for each one.

At school, she worries about her attitude and her actions, which in the wrong light could place her in the stereotype of the "angry black woman." At home, she's ridiculed for losing her roots. Her two lives have always been separate, until she takes a ride home with her friend Khalil in

Garden Heights, when they're pulled over by a cop. With both of them unarmed, Khalil is taken out of the car, without a clear reason why. While they wait for the cop to return to the car, Khalil moves toward Starr in the car to check on her, and is shot dead. Being the only witness to Khalil's brutal murder, Starr must decide if she's willing to have her two worlds collide in a fight for justice. (Tenn Reads)

If I Was Your Girl by Meredith Russo

Amanda Hardy is the new girl in school. Like anyone else, all she wants is to make friends and fit in. But Amanda is keeping a secret, and she's determined not to get too close to anyone.

But when she meets sweet, easygoing Grant, Amanda can't help but start to let him into her life. As they spend more time together, she realizes just how much she is losing by guarding her heart. She finds herself yearning to share with Grant everything about herself, including her past. But Amanda's terrified that once she tells him the truth, he won't be able to see past it.

Because the secret that Amanda's been keeping? It's that at her old school, she used to be Andrew. Will the truth cost Amanda her new life, and her new love? (Amazon)

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

"Speak up for yourself--we want to know what you have to say." From the first moment of her freshman year at Merryweather High, Melinda knows this is a big fat lie, part of the nonsense of high school. She is friendless, outcast, because she busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, so now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. Only her art class offers any solace, and it is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party: she was raped by an upperclassman, a guy who still attends Merryweather and is still a threat to her. Her healing process has just begun when she has another violent encounter with him. But this time Melinda fights back, refuses to be silent, and thereby achieves a measure of vindication. In Laurie Halse Anderson's powerful novel, an utterly believable heroine with a bitterly ironic voice delivers a blow to the hypocritical world of high school. She speaks for many a disenfranchised teenager while demonstrating the importance of speaking up for oneself. (Amazon)

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi (graphic novel)

It's 1980 in Iran, and Marjane Satrapi isn't rocking out to Michael Jackson or watching Dallas; she's being forced to wear a veil at her school, which is now segregated. The boys and girls are **separated**. This marks the beginning of years of **political** and religious turmoil in Iran. (Shmoop)

The Book of Unknown Americans by Cristina Henríquez

Arturo Rivera was the owner of a construction company in Pátzcuaro, México. One day, as his beautiful fifteen-year-old daughter, Maribel, is helping him at a work site, she sustains an injury that casts doubt on whether she'll ever be the same again. And so, leaving all they have behind, the Riveras come to America with a single dream: that in this country of great opportunity and resources, Maribel can get better.

When Mayor Toro, whose family is from Panamá, sees Maribel in a Dollar Tree store, it is love at first sight. It's also the beginning of a friendship between the Rivera and Toro families, whose web of guilt and love and responsibility is at this novel's core. (cristina.henriquez.com)

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Saenz

Aristotle is an angry teen with a brother in prison. Dante is a know-it-all who has an unusual way of looking at the world. When the two meet at the swimming pool, they seem to have nothing in common. But as the loners start spending time together, they discover that they share a special friendship—the kind that changes lives and lasts a lifetime. And it is through this friendship that Ari and Dante will learn the most important truths about themselves and the kind of people they want to be. (Good Reads)

X: A Novel by Ilyasah Shabazz

Co-written by Malcolm X's daughter, this riveting and revealing novel follows the formative years of the man whose words and actions shook the world. (Good Reads)

Breathing Underwater by Alex Flinn

To his friends, popular and handsome sixteen-year-old Nick Andreas has led a charmed life. But the guys in Nick's anger management class know differently. So does his ex-girlfriend Caitlin. Now it looks like the only person who doesn't realize how far from perfect Nick's life has become is Nick himself.

Skink No Surrender by Carl Hiaasen

Classic Malley — to avoid being shipped off to boarding school, she takes off with some guy she met online. Poor Richard — he knows his cousin's in trouble before she does. Wild Skink — he's a ragged, one-eyed ex-governor of Florida, and enough of a renegade to think he can track Malley down. With Richard riding shotgun, the unlikely pair scour the state, undaunted by blinding storms, crazed pigs, flying bullets, and giant gators. (carlhiaasen.com)

The Curious Incident Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. Although gifted with a superbly logical brain, Christopher is autistic. Everyday interactions and admonishments have little meaning for him. Routine, order and predictability shelter him from the messy, wider world. Then, at fifteen, Christopher's carefully constructed world falls apart when he finds his neighbor's dog, Wellington, impaled on a garden fork, and he is initially blamed for the killing.

Christopher decides that he will track down the real killer and turns to his favorite fictional character, the impeccably logical Sherlock Holmes, for inspiration. But the investigation leads him down some unexpected paths and ultimately brings him face to face with the dissolution of his parents' marriage. As he tries to deal with the crisis within his own family, we are drawn into the workings of Christopher's mind. (Book Browse)

The Running Dream - by Wendelin Van Draanen

Jessica thinks her life is over when she loses a leg in a car accident. She's not comforted by the news that she'll be able to walk with the help of a prosthetic leg. Who cares about walking when you live to run?

As she struggles to cope with crutches and a first cyborg-like prosthetic, Jessica feels oddly both in the spotlight and invisible. People who don't know what to say, act like she's not there. Which she could handle better if she weren't now keenly aware that she'd done the same thing herself to a girl with CP named Rosa. A girl who is going to tutor her through all the math she's missed. A girl who sees right into the heart of her.

With the support of family, friends, a coach, and her track teammates, Jessica may actually be able to run again. But that's not enough for her now. She doesn't just want to cross finish lines herself—she wants to take Rosa with her. (Good Reads)