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25 books chosen by the American Library Association & Children’s Book Council Joint Committee to provide guidance to parents, caregivers, teachers, librarians, and others interested in discovering books for children who read at an advanced level and are seeking more challenging, but still age-appropriate, books.
*Ada Twist, Scientist* by Andrea Beaty. Illus. by David Roberts
Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2016
A wonderful story told in rhyme, Ada asks questions and performs experiments to understand the world around her. Just like a scientist! ▲ Spanish.

*Detective Gordon: The First Case* by Ulf Nilsson. Illus. by Gitte Spee
Gecko Press, 2016
A chapter book mystery starring Detective Gordon, a toad searching for the thieves behind a stolen stash of nuts in a woodland setting. ▲ Spanish.

*Flora and Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures* by Kate DiCamillo. Illus. by K. G. Campbell
Candlewick Press, 2013
Flora rescues Ulysses from a vacuum cleaner and discovers he has incredible magical powers. He’s also a squirrel.

*National Geographic Book of Nature Poetry* by J. Patrick Lewis
National Geographic Kids, 2015
A broad variety of nature poetry paired with breathtaking photographs that celebrate how inspiring nature can be.

*The Roots of Rap: 16 Bars on the 4 Pillars of Hip-Hop* by Carole Boston Weatherford. Illus. by Frank Morrison
Little Bee Books, 2019
The history of hip-hop, including its roots in folktales, spirituals and poetry, and the art and dance that co-evolved with it.

*Spanish.*

*Anna Hibiscus* by Atinuke. Illus. by Lauren Tobia
Kane Miller Books, 2010
The charming, fascinating stories about the spunky Anna detailing her urban, middle-class life in contemporary Africa, joyfully celebrate family and everyday life while gently exploring social justice issues in such a way as to captivate young readers.

*Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin and June Jo Lee. Illus. by Man Booker Press, 2018
A successful food truck cook’s life story and how he decided what he wanted to do with his life.

*The Day the Universe Exploded My Head: Poems to Take You into Space and Back Again* by Allan Wolf. Illus. by Anna Raff
Candlewick Press, 2019
Blast off into space with a wide variety of space poems, from silly pun-filled verses to serious poems; notes on the poems and a glossary of space terms are included.

*Echo Echo: Reverso Poems about Greek Myths* by Marilyn Singer. Illus. by Joséé Masse
Mirror poems that are meant to be read backwards and forwards present two sides of classic Greek Myths.

*I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark* by Debbie Levy. Illus. by Elizabeth Baddeley
The first Jewish woman to sit on the United States Supreme Court, Ginsburg’s life story and fight for equal rights for all is the subject of this biographical picture book.

*Insect Superpowers* by Kate Messner. Illus. by Jillian Nickell
Chronicle Books, 2019

*Spanish.*

*Firebird* by Misty Copeland. Illus. by Christopher Myers
Penguin Young Readers / G P Putnam’s Sons, 2014
Written by the American Ballet Theater dancer Misty Copeland, this beautifully illustrated story encourages a young ballet dancer to not let her low self-image and lack of confidence get in her way.

*Mr. Wolf’s Class* by Aron Steinke
Scholastic / Graphix, 2018
A 4th grade first time teacher is anxious to have the first day of school go smoothly in this graphic novel.

*Pugs of the Frozen North* by Philip Reeve. Illus. by Sarah McIntyre
Random House Children’s Books / Yearling, 2016
A lively step up from early chapter books, Not-So-Impossible Tales are packed with big adventure, quirky misfits, and two-color art on almost every page.

*Spanish.*

*The Princess in Black* by Andrea Beaty. Illus. by Shannon and Dean Hale.
*The Princess in Black and the Stolen stairs* by Shannon and Dean Hale.
*The Princess in Black and the Stolen Stairs* by Shannon and Dean Hale. Illus. by LeUyen Pham
The prim and perfect princess has an alter ego who dresses all in black and saves the kingdom while staving off threats.

*Weekends with Max and His Dad* by Linda Urban. Illus. by Katie Kath
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2018
Third-grader Max pursues neighborhood adventures with his dad as they both adjust to recent changes in their family.

*Trombone Shorty* by Troy Andrews. Illus. by Bryan Collier
Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2015
The true story of a musician who bucked the odds to achieve his dreams.

*The Stuff of Stars* by Marion Dane Bauer. Illus. by Ekua Holmes
Candlewick Press, 2015
Gorgeously illustrated, this book explores nothing less than the formation of the universe.

*Whoosh!: Lonnie Johnson’s Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions* by Chris Barton. Illus. by Don Tate
Charlesbridge, 2016
This biography of the NASA engineer who accidentally invented one of the best toys of all time is inspiring and engaging. ▲ Spanish.
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Reading Beyond

for Children in Grades 2-3
reading at a 5th Grade level

25 books chosen by the American Library Association & Children's Book Council Joint Committee to provide guidance to parents, caregivers, teachers, librarians, and others interested in discovering books for children who read at an advanced level and are seeking more challenging, but still age-appropriate, books.
Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart
by Candace Fleming
Random House Children’s Books / Yearling, 2019
A riveting look at the life, disappearance, and search for legendary aviatrix Amelia Earhart.

Go for the Moon: A Rocket, a Boy, and the First Moon Landing
by Chris Gall
Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group / Roaring Brook Press, 2019
A boy creates his own adventures to accompany the Apollo 11 astronauts in this picture book filled with scientific details and fun facts.

Her Own Two Feet: A Rwandan Girl’s Brave Fight to Walk
by Meredith Davis & Rebeka Uwitonze
Scholastic / Focus, 2019
A Rwandan girl born with clubfoot moves to America and endures numerous surgeries in this story of faith and perseverance.

Migrations: Open Hearts, Open Borders
by ICPBS (various authors)
Illus. by various
Candlewick Studio, 2019
Postcard images of birds (and words) by 50+ creators from all over the world send messages of hope for human migration.

The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How Maria Merian’s Art Changed Science
by Joyce Sidman
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2018
A biography of Maria Sibylla Merian, a pioneering 17th-century scientist and artist who documented the metamorphosis of butterflies.

The One and Only Ivan
by Katherine Applegate. Illus. by Patricia Castelao
Inspired by the true story of a captive gorilla who spent 27 years in an enclosure in a shopping mall.

The Parker Inheritance
by Varian Johnson
Scholastic, 2018
A multigenerational family story set in South Carolina explores the history of racism in a mystery with elements of The Westing Game.

A Place to Belong
by Cynthia Kadohata. Illus. by Julia Kuo
Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing / Atheneum, 2019
Story illuminating the history of post-WWII Japan, told through a Japanese-American girl whose family was expatriated and had to join her grandparents on a farm outside Hiroshima.

The Poetry of Us
by J. Patrick Lewis
National Geographic Kids, 2018
A wide variety of old and new poets, poetic techniques, forms, and topics covering life in the United States, from large cities to rural areas.

Random Body Parts: Gross Anatomy Riddles in Verse
by Leslie Bulion. Illus. by Mike Lowery
Peachtree Publishing Company, 2015
Anatomy riddles with high-level vocabulary and a Shakespeare theme.

The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus
by Jen Bryant. Illus. by Melissa Sweet
Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2014
Roget is more than the creator of the thesaurus, this extensive biography shows many aspects of his life, from his list-loving childhood to his inventions. ▲ Spanish.

*Science Comics: Trees: Kings of the Forest
by Andy Hirsch
Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group / First Second, 2018
A personified acorn (and its woodland friends) teach us about photosynthesis, the mycorrhizal network, and other science details behind the growth of a tree.

*Secret Coders
by Gene Luen Yang. Illus. by Mike Holmes
Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group / First Second, 2015
In this graphic novel, Hopper is a new student at a school filled with secrets. She and friend Eni use the magic of coding to figure out what’s been hidden, but will they be discovered?

What Do You Do with a Voice Like That?
by Chris Barton. Illus. by Ekua Holmes
Scholastic / Graphix, 2013
Graphic novel adaptation of the popular fantasy series shows the world of warring dragons in full color.

Women in Science: 50 Fearless Pioneers Who Changed the World
by Rachel Ignotofsky
Ten Speed Press, 2016
Profiles of 50 women leaders in STEM, as well as an illustrated scientific glossary and supplemental information.

* asterisk denotes one book of a series. ▲ denotes Spanish edition available
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The Best at It
by Maulik Pancholy
HarperCollins Children’s Books / Balzer+Bray, 2019
An Indian American boy in Indiana, nervous about entering middle school, tries to follow his grandfather’s advice and become the best.

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Young Reader’s Edition
by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer
Penguin Young Readers / Puffin Books, 2016
The memoir of William Kamkwamba, who created a windmill to bring lighting to his family home in Malawi. A true story about ingenuity from a pioneering Malawian. A true story about personal and global issues, including a diverse cast of characters, including a diverse cast of characters, including a diverse cast of characters.

The Bridge Home
by Padma Venkatraman
Penguin Young Readers / Nancy Paulsen Books, 2019
Four homeless children in India form a chosen family and support each other through difficult times in this debut novel.

*Front Desk
by Kelly Yang
Scholastic / Arthur A. Levine Books, 2018
A resourceful Chinese immigrant girl makes friends and solves mysteries while working at the front desk of the motel that her parents manage for an exploitive owner.

Girl Rising: Changing the World One Girl at a Time
by Tanya Lee Stone
Random House Children’s Books / Wendy Lamb, 2017
A compelling collection of stories of girls around the world who managed to get an education despite efforts to keep them from attending school.

Gracefully Grayson
by Ami Polonsky
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2014
Sixth-grader Grayson feels stuck in the wrong gender’s body but hopes to be cast as the female lead in the school play. An emotional and courageous journey of self-discovery to be one’s true self. ▲ Spanish.

Harbor Me
by Jacqueline Woodson
Penguin Young Readers / Nancy Paulsen Books, 2018
Six sixth graders meet weekly to talk about personal and global issues, providing safe harbors for them before it’s too late.

Hurricane Child
by Kacen Callender
Scholastic Press, 2018
Set in the Caribbean (the U.S. Virgin Islands), this coming-of-age novel explores topics of loneliness, abandonment, friendlessness, and love.

Illegal
by Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin. Illus. by Giovanni Rigano
Sourcebooks, 2018
A graphic novel exploring the plight of undocumented immigrants in which a Ghanaian refugee child journeys to Europe to reunite with his siblings. ▲ Spanish.

The Inquisitor’s Tale: Or, The Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog
by Adam Gidwitz. Illus. by Hatem Aly
Penguin Young Readers / Dutton, 2016
A medieval tale, told from multiple points of view, about three children with extraordinary gifts on an incredible journey.

Interment
by Samira Ahmed
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2019
This cautionary tale takes place in an internment camp in California for Muslim Americans, with a teen leading a revolution against the camp’s director and guards. ▲ Spanish.

The Journey of Little Charlie
by Christopher Paul Curtis
Scholastic Press, 2018
Set in 1858, a boy from South Carolina tries to settle a debt for his sharecropper family by accompanying a plantation owner on a journey to Canada to capture a fugitive slave. ▲ Spanish.

The Lightning Queen
by Laura Resau
Scholastic Press, 2016
A glimpse of the encounter between two fascinating but marginalized Mexican cultures—the Rom and the Mixtec Indians—while sharing an unlikely friendship that spans generations.

Lincoln’s Grave Robbers
by Steve Sheinkin
Scholastic Press, 2013
A counterfeiting ring plotted to ransom Lincoln’s body to secure the release of their imprisoned ringleader. Then the Secret Service conducted a daring election night sting operation.

Moonbird: A Year on the Wind with the Great Survivor B95
by Phillip Hoose
Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012
This book shows the obstacles that shorebirds called rufa red knots face as a worldwide team of scientists and conservationists try to save them before it’s too late.

The Night Diary
by Veera Hiranandani
Penguin Young Readers / Kokila, 2018
In 1947, as India was divided into two countries—India (for Hindus) and Pakistan (for Muslims)—a half-Muslim, half-Hindu girl wonders where she will be safe.

One Last Word: Wisdom from the Harlem Renaissance
by Nikki Grimes
Bloomsbury Children’s Books, 2017
Using the Golden Shovel poetic form, Nikki Grimes shares classic poetry and her own poems to bring the Harlem Renaissance to life for young readers.

Pathfinders: The Journeys of 16 Extraordinary Black Souls
by Tonya Bolden
Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2017
A collection of sixteen mini-biographies of African-American trailblazers, brought to life with detailed histories and illustrations.

Promise of Change: One Girl’s Story in the Fight for School Equality
by Jo Ann Allen Boyce and Debbie Levy
Bloomsbury Children’s Books, 2019
In 1956, Jo Ann Allen was one of twelve African-American students who broke the color barrier and integrated Clinton High School in Tennessee.

Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor’s Story
by Caren Stelson
Lerner / Carolrhoda Books, 2016
After surviving the bombing of her hometown of Nagasaki, Sachiko Yasui’s story of the aftermath and her journey of healing is captured by biographer Caren Stelson.

Samurai Rising: The Epic Life of Minamoto Yoshitsune
by Pamela S. Turner. Illus. by Gareth Hinds
Charlesbridge, 2016
Gareth Hinds’s stylistic graphic adaptation of the Bard’s romantic tragedy offers modern touches—including a diverse cast that underscores the story’s universality.

The Watch that Ends the Night: Voices from the Titanic
by Allan Wolf
Candlewick Press, 2013
The Titanic story, told in verse (24 voices), with extensive back matter, including coded messages to decipher and historical documents.

We Will Not Be Silent
by Russell Freedman
HMH Books for Young Readers / Clarion Books, 2016
The true story of the White Rose student resistance movement that defied Nazi Germany.

* asterisk denotes one book of a series. ▲ denotes Spanish edition available