AIN’T BURNED ALL THE BRIGHT  
BY JASON REYNOLDS, ILLUSTRATED BY JASON GRIFFIN  
CAITLYN DLOUHY BOOKS, 2022  
ISBN: 9781534439467

Over three “breaths,” a boy reflects on current social events from within his home, where his father isolates, sick, in a spare and powerfully illustrated blend of mixed-media collage and poetry.

ART OF PROTEST: CREATING, DISCOVERING, AND ACTIVATING ART FOR YOUR REVOLUTION  
BY DE NICHOLS, ILLUSTRATED BY VARIOUS ARTISTS  
BIG PICTURE, 2021  
ISBN: 9781536223255

Explore the art of the past to inform the revolutionary work of now! In addition to highlighting familiar works, this title also features pieces by young activist artists.

AVIVA VS. THE DYBBUK  
BY MARI LOWE  
LEVINE QUERIDO, 2022  
ISBN: 9781646141258

An isolated tween, haunted by a dybbuk (a restless ghost), navigates continued struggles at home and at school following her father’s murder, a hate crime, years before.

BOUNCE BACK  
BY MISAKO ROCKS!  
FEIWEL & FRIENDS, 2021  
ISBN: 9781250768452

Lilico moves from Japan to the U.S. and, despite a bully, manages to make friends, play basketball, and get a magical talking cat in this light and easy read for fans of graphic novels and manga.

BOY, EVERYWHERE  
BY A. M. DASSU  
TU BOOKS, 2021  
ISBN: 9781643792168

When the Syrian civil war hits too close to home, 13-year-old Sami must flee his idyllic life in Damascus, after which he endures a harrowing journey to England, the guilt of putting his family’s lives in danger, and questions about his identity as a refugee.

CITY OF THIEVES (BATTLE DRAGONS #1)  
BY ALEX LONDON  
SCHOLASTIC, 2021  
ISBN: 9781338716542

In a world where domesticated dragons are used for everything from transportation to sanitation, feuding bands of thieves engage in dangerous dragon battles over the city, and young Abel must protect his friends and family.

THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY  
BY CANDACE FLEMING  
SCHOLASTIC FOCUS, 2021  
ISBN: 9781338596618

Thieves, archaeologists, and rich, snobbish (and racist) Europeans play parts in this captivating book that combines history about Egyptian tombs with the tales of those who disturbed the ancient dead and were believed to be cursed.

THE DEADLIEST DISEASES THEN AND NOW  
BY DEBORAH HOPKINSON  
SCHOLASTIC FOCUS, 2021  
ISBN: 9781338360202

From the Middle Ages to today, a fascinating look at plagues and pandemics, how each began, and how they impacted the world.

THE DIRE DAYS OF WILLOWWEEP MANOR  
BY SHAENON K. GARRITY, ILLUSTRATED BY CHRISTOPHER BALDWIN  
MARGARET K. MCELDERRY BOOKS, 2021  
ISBN: 9781534460874

A fan of gothic romance novels finds herself in one, but there’s something a bit odd about the three handsome brothers, their manor, and its surroundings. A graphic novel with a humorous mix of romance and sci-fi.

DREAM, ANNIE, DREAM  
BY WAKA T. BROWN  
QUILL TREE BOOKS, 2022  
ISBN: 9780063017160

Daughter of immigrants, Annie Inoue has big dreams to be a star. When she gets a lead role in The King and I, her classmates suggest she only got the part because of her race.

FALLOUT: SPIES, SUPERBOMBS, AND THE ULTIMATE COLD WAR SHOWDOWN  
BY STEVE SHEINKIN  
ROARING BROOK, 2021  
ISBN: 9781534439467

This narrative nonfiction, mixed with recollections and factual information, will take readers back to post-World War II when the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were in conflict with each other.

FRANKIE & BUG  
BY GAYLE FORMAN  
ALADDIN, 2021  
ISBN: 9781534482531

Bug is convinced her summer is ruined, until a neighbor’s nephew, Frankie, arrives. A story about friendship, identity, and family (the one you’re born to and the one you choose).

THE GENIUS UNDER THE TABLE: GROWING UP BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN  
BY EUGENE YELCHIN  
CANDLEWICK, 2021  
ISBN: 9781536215526

A noted children’s book creator recounts growing up in Soviet Russia in a humorous and heartbreaking illustrated novel.

HOW TO CHANGE EVERYTHING: THE YOUNG HUMAN’S GUIDE TO PROTECTING THE PLANET AND EACH OTHER  
BY NAOMI KLEIN, ADAPTED BY REBECCA STEFOFF  
ATHENEUM, 2021  
ISBN: 9781534474529

An adaptation of earlier works for adults merged for a younger audience, this nonfiction title focuses mainly on climate change and the disastrous effects, but it also shines a light on what young people are doing to combat it.

HOW TO FIND WHAT YOU’RE NOT LOOKING FOR  
BY VEERA HIRANANDANI  
KOKILA, 2021  
ISBN: 9780525555032

Sixth-grader Ariel Goldberg is surprised by her parents’ negative reaction when her older sister marries a man from India who doesn’t share their Jewish faith. Set in 1967 Connecticut, this historical novel tackles racism, anti-Semitism, learning differences, and family strife.

JUST LIKE THAT  
BY GARY D. SCHMIDT  
CLARION, 2021  
ISBN: 9780544048473

Set in the 1960s, the separate stories of Meryl Lee Kowalski and Matt Coffin weave together as they work to overcome grief and loneliness.
ALSC reading lists are created by children’s librarians as a resource to share with patrons, and may also be available in ebook, audio book, braille, and large print formats. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to explore this list to find resources that may match or spark their child’s interest. Connect with your local library to find out what’s happening this summer.

KALEIDOSCOPE
BY BRIAN SELZNICK
SCHOLASTIC, 2021
ISBN: 9781338777246
A multi-genre series of short stories interweave to connect two characters through time, interspersed with Selznick’s complex, signature pencil illustrations.

A KIND OF SPARK
BY ELLE MCNICOLL
CROWN, 2021
ISBN: 9780593374269
Addie wants to memorialize the women once tried as witches in her small town, hoping to change the opinions people have of them, as well as the opinions they have about her autism.

LAST GAMER STANDING
BY KATIE ZHAO
SCHOLASTIC PAPERBACKS, 2021
ISBN: 9781338741506
In the near future, Reyna Cheng studies at an elite academy dedicated to virtual reality gaming. Secretly playing under a tough male avatar to avoid misogynistic harassment, she attempts to win it all at the Junior Dayhold Tournament.

MELTDOWN: EARTHQUAKE, TSUNAMI, AND NUCLEAR DISASTER IN FUKUSHIMA
BY DEIRDRE LANGELAND
ROARING BROOK, 2021
ISBN: 9781626727007
This engaging nonfiction read chronicles the disaster of the Fukushima nuclear meltdown in 2011, including images and first-person accounts.

NOTABLE NATIVE PEOPLE: 50 INDIGENOUS LEADERS, DREAMERS, AND CHANGEMAKERS FROM PAST AND PRESENT
BY ADRIENNE KEENE, ILLUSTRATED BY CIARA SANA
TEN SPEED PRESS, 2021
ISBN: 9781984857941
Short biographies present some of the most influential Native activists, entertainers, and artisans throughout history, with vibrant portraits of each. Also includes information about colonialism, land rights, and the importance of representation.

PARTLY CLOUDY
BY TANITA S. DAVIS
KATHERINE TEGEN BOOKS, 2021
ISBN: 9780062937001
As the only Black student in her new class, middle-schooler Madalyn wrestles with questions about friendship, deeply ingrained assumptions, and unacknowledged prejudices among different races, all against the backdrop of the threat of California’s wildfires.

PONY
BY R. J. PALACIO
KNOPF, 2021
ISBN: 9780553508116
Young adult Silas recounts an epic journey tracking his kidnapped father with the help of Silas’s ghostly companion, Mittenwool, a fearsome Arabian horse, and a cantankerous U.S. marshal in a genre-defying saga set in 1860s Ohio. Also an excellent audiobook.

RACE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE EARTH: SURVIVING ANTARCTICA
BY REBECCA E. F. BARONE
HENRY Holt, 2021
ISBN: 9781250257802
This gripping piece of nonfiction looks at two hazardous expeditions to the South Pole, adventures that take place a century apart, that each set records and risked lives.

RHINOS IN NEBRASKA: THE AMAZING DISCOVERY OF THE ASHFALL FOSSIL BEDS
BY ALISON PEARCE STEVENS, ILLUSTRATED BY MATT HUYNH
HARRY HORT, 2021
ISBN: 9781250266576
A look at the Ashfall Fossil Beds in Nebraska, where fossils from twelve million years ago were found, when rhinos, elephants, and camels roamed North America.

TOO BRIGHT TO SEE
BY KYLE LUKOFF
DIAL, 2021
ISBN: 9780593111154
Bug lives in a haunted house and must figure out not only what their uncle’s ghost is trying to say but also how to get others to accept the revelation.

WE BELONG
BY COOKIE HIPONIA EVERMAN, ILLUSTRATED ABIGAIL DELA CRUZ
DIAL, 2021
ISBN: 9780593112205
A mother tells her daughters two tales—one of her immigration and the other about the daughter of a Pilipino god—in this novel in verse.

THE WOMAN ALL SPIES FEAR: CODE BREAKER ELIZABETH SMITH FRIEDMAN AND HER HIDDEN LIFE
BY AMY BUTLER GREENFIELD
RANDOM HOUSE, 2021
ISBN: 9780593127193
An engrossing biography of expert code breaker Elizabeth Smith Friedman’s life and achievements.

WORSER
BY JENNIFER ZIEGLER
MARGARET FERGUSON BOOKS, 2022
ISBN: 9780823449569
Socially awkward and word-obsessed Will falls in with a group of fellow linguists who help him find a new normal in the wake of his mother’s stroke.