

BCALA and

GNCRT

**BLACK LIVES MATTER,
BLACK LITERATURE
MATTERS
COMICS READING
LIST**

2022



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BLACK LIVES MATTER BLACK LITERATURE MATTERS COMICS READING LIST 2022

Across the Tracks: Remembering Greenwood, Black Wall Street, and the Tulsa Race Massacre (A)

Alverne Ball, writer; Stacey Robinson, illustrator

The majority of this comic is spent portraying the founding and development of Greenwood Avenue. Fewer pages are spent on the Tulsa Race Massacre, putting the beautiful Greenwood District first. An additional essay details the Indigenous history of Tulsa, lending important context to this historic neighborhood.

The Adventures of Sparrowboy (J)

Brian Pinkney

In this comics-inspired picture book, a paperboy discovers he has superpowers like his hero Falconman.

After the Rain (A)

Nnedi Okorafor, writer; John Jennings, adapter; David Brame, artist

During a dark and stormy Nigerian night, Chioma opens up the door to a supernatural entity who leaves an indelible mark on her. In order to survive the reckoning, she must confront her identity and resolve the tumultuous feelings swirling within.

APB: Artists Against Police Brutality: A Comic Book Anthology (A)

Bill Campbell, editor; Jason Rodriguez, editor; John Jennings, editor

Over 50 artists share stories of police brutality as well as thoughts and feelings around family, racism, and law enforcement through sometimes humorous, but more often brutal images.

A = Adult
YA = Young Adult
J = Juvenile

Big Black: Stand at Attica (A)

Frank "Big Black" Smith, writer; Jared Reinmuth, writer; Ameziane, artist

Big Black's memoir about his time as a prisoner in Attica State Prison and the 1971 rebellion against injustices in the prison system.

Bingo Love: Jackpot Edition (YA)

Tee Franklin, writer; Jenn St-Onge, artist; Joy San, colorist

Two young women meet at church bingo in 1963, and fall in love. They are forced apart and both marry men. Decades later, they meet again at church bingo, and rekindle their romance.

Bitter Root (A)

David F. Walker, writer; Chuck Brown, writer; Sanford Greene, artist

The Sangerye family is racing the clock to save 1920s New York from supernatural forces threatening to infect the community with hate.

Black and Black [AF] (A)

Kwanza Osajefo, writer; Tim Smith 3, designer; Jamal Igle, artist

In Black, when a young man survives being shot by police, he discovers that he is part of a small group of Black people who possess superpowers. Black [AF] expands the universe and follows a Black teenage girl with superpowers living in rural Montana.

Black Heroes of the Wild West: Featuring Stagecoach Mary, Bass Reeves, and Bob Lemmons (J)

James Otis Smith

This nonfiction graphic novel brings to life the tales of three African American historical figures who made an impact on the Western expansion of the United States, known for their success in stage coach driving, as a US marshal, and in horsemanship.

Black History in Its Own Words (YA)

Ronald Wimberly

Black history, as told through quotes from the Black men and women who shaped and made it.

Black Panther & the Crew: We Are the Streets (YA)

Ta-Nehisi Coates, writer; Yona Harvey, writer; Jackson Butch Guice, artist; Mack Chater, artist; Stephen Thompson, artist

Harlem activist Ezra and others are dying in police custody and civil unrest is growing. Misty, Storm, Black Panther, Luke Cage, and Eden come together to figure out what happened to Ezra.

The Crossover (Graphic Novel) (J)

Kwame Alexander, writer; Dawud Anyabwile, artist

Adapted from the Newbery award-winning novel in verse, this coming-of-age story features twin brothers, and their relationships to each other, to their father, and to basketball. The sequel, Booked, is slated for publication in 2022.

Djeliya (YA)

Juni Ba

In gorgeously-hued illustrations, Djeliya tells the story of the last prince of a dying West African kingdom on a quest alongside his Djeli, or storyteller, to find the mysterious wizard who destroyed his world.

Dream Big, Little One (J)

Vashti Harrison

A board book adaptation of Harrison's Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History which highlights eighteen amazing women and briefly shares their accomplishments.

Fights: One Boy's Triumph Over Violence (YA)

Joel Christian Gill

Joel faces violence at home, at school, and in his neighborhood throughout his childhood and teen years. Joel sometimes turns to violence himself, but finds better ways to cope with life.

The Harlem Hellfighters (A)

Max Brooks, writer; Caanan White, artist

Fictionalized story of the all-Black 369th Infantry. It follows members of the group from enlistment to their brave fight in World War I France and never shies away from the prejudice they encountered along the way.

Harriet Tubman: Toward Freedom (J)

Whit Taylor, writer; Kazimir Lee, artist

In a pinkish sepia tone that suits its time period, this graphic biography offers a brief glimpse into Tubman's life that is well-suited to middle- or high-school classrooms.

Hot Comb (A)

Ebony Flowers

In this 2020 Eisner award-winning short story collection, ethnographer, teacher and cartoonist Ebony Flowers recounts rich coming-of-age experiences with hair, community and culture.

"This artwork shows kids of different ethnic backgrounds gaining knowledge through reading. The use of bright colors brings a sense of liveliness and joy. This cover is meant to inspire kids to pick up a book to learn about other people, explore different worlds and increase awareness of self."

**DeKalb School of the Arts:
Art Department (cover designers)**

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I Am Alfonso Jones (YA)

Tony Medina, writer; Stacey Robinson, artist; John Jennings, artist

Alfonso Jones, a young black teen, is only trying to buy a suit when an off-duty cop mistakes a clothes hanger for a gun and shoots him on sight.

Icon: A Hero's Welcome (YA)

Dwayne McDuffie, writer; M.D. Bright, artist

Augustus Freeman, a super powered alien being crash lands on Earth and is raised by enslaved individuals in pre-Civil War America. Now a lawyer in the 1990s, Augustus becomes a superhero with the help of a teen girl.

Incognegro: A Graphic Mystery (New Edition) and Incognegro: Renaissance (A)

Mat Johnson, writer; Warren Pleece, artist

In Incognegro, two fictional black reporters who are able to "pass" as white are sent to Mississippi to investigate the murder of a white woman. In the prequel, Incognegro: Renaissance, reporter Zane Pinchback goes "incognegro" for the first time to solve a murder.

Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation (A)

Octavia Butler, writer; Damian Duffy, adapter; John Jennings, artist

Published as a graphic novel adaptation of Octavia E. Butler's Kindred, main character Dana time travels from her apartment in Los Angeles in 1976 to a plantation in pre-Civil War Maryland. Dana encounters Rufus, the young son of Tom Weylin, a powerful slave owner. Their lives become intertwined as Dana uncovers her violent ancestry and Rufus commands brutal control over the plantation after his father's death.

The Life of Frederick Douglass: A Graphic Narrative of an Extraordinary Life (A)

David F. Walker, writer; Damon Smyth, artist; Marissa Louise, artist

Whether you only know of Frederick Douglass by name or are already familiar with his storied life, this comics biography will pull you in and leave you with an intimate appreciation of the celebrated abolitionist.

The Little Rock Nine and the Fight for Equal Education (J)

Gary Jeffrey, writer; Nana Li, artist

Nonfiction graphic novel about the African American students chosen to integrate a high school in Little Rock, Arkansas after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down school segregation.

Long Way Down (YA)

Jason Reynolds, writer; Danica Novgorodoff, artist

When Will's brother is shot, he takes a long elevator ride down to seek revenge. On each floor, someone from his past gets on the elevator to show him how retaliation actually plays out. A graphic adaptation of the popular novel in verse.

Malcolm X: A Graphic Biography (YA)

Andrew Helfer, writer; Randy DuBurke, artist

Graphic nonfiction biography charting the life and times of Malcolm X from his youth as Malcolm Little to the national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam.

March v. 1-3 and Run (YA)

John Lewis, writer; Andrew Aydin, writer; Nate Powell, artist; L. Fury, artist

A history of the Civil Rights Movement, as experienced by civil rights leader and U.S. congressman John Lewis.

The Massacre of Black Wall Street (A)

Natalie Chang, writer; Clayton Henry, illustrator; Marcelo Mailo, colorist

This scrolling digital comic, commissioned as a companion piece to HBO's Watchmen series, tells the true and untold story of the 1921 Massacre of Black Wall Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in which as many as 300 Black Tulsans were murdered, thousands were left homeless, and the economic prosperity of Black Wall Street obliterated. This nonfiction comic features extensive source material links and resources.

Miles Morales: Shock Waves (J)

Justin A. Reynolds, writer; Pablo Leon, artist

When a natural disaster strikes his mother's homeland of Puerto Rico, Miles (a.k.a. Brooklyn's own friendly neighborhood Spider-Man) and his friends rush to save the day with a fundraising block party. But they soon discover that the philanthropic CEO who is helping them plan the party seems to have ulterior motives.

Monster: A Graphic Novel (YA)

Walter Dean Myers, writer; Guy A. Sims, adapter; Dawud Anyabwile, artist

Teen Steve Harmon records his experience of awaiting trial for robbery and murder. A graphic adaptation of the award-winning Walter Dean Myers novel.

MPLS Sound (A)

Joseph Phillip Illidge, writer; Hannibal Tabu, writer; Meredith Laxton, art; Tan Shu, colorist

A fictional account of an up-and-coming funk band in early 1980s Minneapolis, and their relationship with Prince. While Starchild is not a real band, its members are clearly inspired by Prince's real-life friends and collaborators.

New Kid and Class Act (J)

Jerry Craft

Jordan and Drew are two Black middle schoolers at the predominantly white Riverdale Academy Day School, where they navigate microaggressions, tokenism, and not fitting in. In addition to winning the Coretta Scott King Award and other prestigious awards, New Kid is also the first graphic novel to win the Newbery Award.

The Nib (A)

The Nib is a webcomic publisher primarily focused on political and social commentary. Over the years, a number of creators have published invaluable work on Black experience in the United States. We have provided links to a few selections below, but it is not exhaustive.

- "African-Americans Are More Likely to Distrust the Medical System. Blame the Tuskegee Experiment." by Whit Taylor and Chris Kindred
- "Black Mothers Face Far Worse Health Outcomes. How Do We Fix It?" by Whit Taylor
- "The Great Debate: Martin Luther King, Jr. vs Robert F. Williams" by Ben Passmore
- "Lighten Up" by Ronald Wimberly
- "She Dared to Be Herself: Shirley Chisholm's Legacy" by Whit Taylor and Shannon Wright
- "The Weight of Being Black in America" by Bianca Xunise

Nubia: Real One (YA)

L.L. McKinney, writer; Robyn Smith, art

Nubia may have superhuman strength like Wonder Woman, but in a society that would rather see her as a threat, she has to hide her powers to stay safe. When a member of the richest and most powerful family in town starts harassing her best friend, Nubia has to decide whether to stay in the shadows or embody the hero she knows she is.

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The Other History of the DC Universe (A)

John Ridley, writer; Giuseppe Camuncoli, art; Alex Dos Diaz, art
Iconic moments in DC Comics' history told from the perspective of DC's BIPOC superheroes, including Jefferson Pierce, Karen Beecher-Duncan, Mal Duncan, Tatsu Yamashiro, Renee Montoya, and Anissa Pierce.

Parable of the Sower: A Graphic Novel Adaptation (A)

Octavia Butler, writer; Damian Duffy, adapter; John Jennings, artist
Set in the year 2024 in Los Angeles, main character Lauren lives in a harmonious neighborhood surrounded by walls for protection. Lauren keeps a journal and develops a new belief system called Earthseed. One summer, the walls around her neighborhood come down after an attack, and Lauren is forced to travel north through dangerous areas to find a new home.

Quincredible Vol. 1: Quest to Be the Best! (YA)

by Rodney Barnes, author; Selina Espiritu, illustrator; Kelly Fitzpatrick, colorist
Quin is a normal teen just trying to fit in. But Quin discovers a secret superpower: invulnerability. Can Quin use his new super-ability to save his family and his New Orleans community?

A Right to Be Hostile: The Boondocks Treasury (YA)

Aaron McGruder
Collection of over 800 comic strips featuring commentary on American life, culture and politics from the perspective of two witty and insightful boys and their grandfather.

Shortcut (J)

Donald Crews
In this picture book, a group of children encounter a freight train after taking a shortcut on the tracks.

Showtime at the Apollo: The Epic Tale of Harlem's Legendary Theater (YA)

Ted Fox, writer; James Otis Smith, adapter and artist
This graphic adaptation of the 1983 prose work depicts the history of the Apollo theater, as well as legendary artists that performed there.

Tales of the Talented Tenth: No. 2, Bessie Stringfield (J)

Joel Christian Gill
A graphic biography of Bessie Stringfield, a Black woman who rode a motorcycle across the United States eight times in the 1930s and 1940s.

Twins (J)

Varian Johnson, writer; Shannon Wright, artist
Best friends and twin sisters, Maureen and Francine Carter start to grow apart when they enter the 6th grade.

Victor LaValle's Destroyer (YA)

Victor LaValle, writer; Dietrich Smith, artist
In horror novelist Victor LaValle's modern take on the Frankenstein story, Dr. Frankenstein is drawn to action when she loses her son in a police shooting.

Wake: The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts (A)

Rebecca Hall, writer; Hugo Martinez, artist
Follow historian Rebecca Hall as she hunts down hidden, haunting stories of slave revolts led by women. Hugo Martinez gives light to these lost stories with realistic black and white illustrations.

When Stars Are Scattered (J)

Omar Mohamed, writer; Victoria Jamieson, writer and artist; Iman Geddy, colorist
Omar is a Somali kid living in a refugee camp in Kenya after losing his parents in the war. Omar is desperate to change his life for the better and must figure out a way to go to the camp's school while still taking care of his brother, Hassan, who has disabilities and is nonverbal.

When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop (J)

Laban Carrick Hill, writer; Theodore Taylor III, artist
This picture book introduces the beginnings of hip hop in the 1970s and 1980s through the biography of DJ Kool Herc, starting on the island of Jamaica and moving to the Bronx, NYC.

Woke Baby (J)

Mahogany Browne, writer; Theodore Taylor, illustrator
This board book reframes the natural tendencies of babies in terms of what it means to be woke.

The YouNeek YouNiverse: E.X.O. - The Legend of Wale Williams Part One, Iyanu: Child of Wonder, and Malika: Warrior Queen (YA)

Roye Okupe, writer; Sunkanmi Akinboye, artist; Godwin Akpan, artist and colorist; Chima Kalu, artist; Raphael Kazeem, colorist
Stories in the YouNeek YouNiverse are set in different time periods of the same world, covering Yoruba history, West African historical fantasy, and Nigerian Afrofuturism.

Your Black Friend and Other Strangers (A)

Ben Passmore
The title comic is an exploration of the stresses and harm a Black man experiences in his everyday life through his relationships with non-Black people. Other comics, ranging from hilarious to poignant, tackle such subjects as gentrification, dating, art, religion, and others.

Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty (YA)

G. Neri, writer; Randy DuBurke, artist
A fictional retelling of the life of 11-year-old Robert "Yummy" Sandifer, which attempts to explain the circumstances that turned a young boy from candy-loving child to gun-wielding gang member.

Supplementary Reading:

Black Comics: Politics of Race and Representation (A)
Sheena C. Howard and Ronald L. Jackson II, editors.

Invisible Men: The Trailblazing Black Artists of Comic Books (A)
Ken Quattro



Members of the BCALA and GNCRT Collaborative Committee who contributed to this list: Deimosa Webber-Bey (BCALA Chair); Elizabeth Flores; Jessica Cerri; Miranda Webster; Sally Engelfried; Sandra Farag; Shira Pilarski (GNCRT Chair); Tamela Chambers; Tatanisha 'Tiki' Love

