

## Great Books for Teens by African-American Authors <sup>[1]</sup>



Check out these terrific titles for teens written by African-American authors!

Includes winners of the Coretta Scott King Award.

The Death of Jayson Porter <sup>[2]</sup> by Jaime Adoff

In the Florida projects, sixteen-year-old Jayson struggles with the harsh realities of his life which include an abusive mother, a drug-addicted father, and not fitting in at his predominately white school, and bring him to the brink of suicide.

We Could Be Brothers <sup>[3]</sup> by Derrick Barnes

Two eighth-graders from very different backgrounds, Robeson "Crease" Battlefield and Pacino Clapton, discover in afterschool detention that they have a great deal in common.

Kendra <sup>[4]</sup> by Coe Booth

High schooler Kendra longs to live with her mother who, unprepared for motherhood at age fourteen, left Kendra in the care of her grandmother.

Tyrell <sup>[5]</sup> by Coe Booth

Fifteen-year-old Tyrell, who is living in a Bronx homeless shelter with his spaced-out mother and his younger brother, tries to avoid temptation so he does not end up in jail like his father. Sequel: Bronxwood <sup>[6]</sup>.

Bucking the Sarge <sup>[7]</sup> by Christopher Paul Curtis

Deeply involved in his cold and manipulative mother's shady business dealings in Flint, Michigan, fourteen-year-old Luther keeps a sense of humor while running the Happy Neighbor Group Home For Men, all the while dreaming of going to college and becoming a philosopher.

Jason and Kyra <sup>[8]</sup> by Dana Davidson

Jason is a basketball star and one of the most popular guys in school. Brainy Kyra isn't so popular, but she doesn't care what other people think. Find out what happens when the unlikely duo is paired up for a class project.

The Battle of Jericho <sup>[9]</sup> by Sharon Draper

A high school junior and his cousin suffer the ramifications of joining what seems to be a "reputable" school club. Sequels: November Blues <sup>[10]</sup> and Just Another Hero <sup>[11]</sup>.

Copper Sun <sup>[12]</sup> by Sharon Draper

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. Coretta Scott King Award winner.

The Skin I?m In <sup>[13]</sup> by Sharon Flake

Thirteen-year-old Maleeka, uncomfortable because her skin is extremely dark, meets a new teacher with a birthmark on her face and makes some discoveries about how to love who she is and what she looks like.

Bang! <sup>[14]</sup> by Sharon Flake

A teenage boy must face the harsh realities of inner city life, a disintegrating family, and destructive temptations as he struggles to find his identity as a young man.

Bronx Masquerade <sup>[15]</sup> by Nikki Grimes

While studying the Harlem Renaissance, students at a Bronx high school read aloud poems they've written, revealing their innermost thoughts and fears to their formerly clueless classmates.

The First Part Last <sup>[16]</sup> by Angela Johnson

Bobby's carefree teenage life changes forever when he becomes a father and must care for his adored baby daughter. Coretta Scott King and Printz Award winner.

Day of Tears <sup>[17]</sup> by Julius Lester

Emma has taken care of the Butler children since Sarah and Frances's mother, Fanny, left. Emma wants to raise the girls to have good hearts, as a rift over slavery has ripped the Butler household apart. Now, to pay off debts, Pierce Butler wants to cash in his slave "assets", possibly including Emma.

Harlem Hustle <sup>[18]</sup> by Janet McDonald

Eric "Hustle" Samson, a smart and street-wise seventeen-year-old dropout from Harlem, aspires to rap stardom, a dream he naively believes is about to come true.

47 <sup>[19]</sup> by Walter Mosley

Number 47, a fourteen-year-old slave boy growing up under the watchful eye of a brutal master in 1832, meets the mysterious Tall John, who introduces him to a magical science and also teaches him the meaning of freedom.

Dope Sick <sup>[20]</sup> by Walter Dean Myers

Seeing no way out of his difficult life in Harlem, seventeen-year-old Jeremy "Lil J" Dance flees into a house after a drug deal goes awry and meets a weird man who shows different turning points in Lil J's life when he could have made better choices.

Monster <sup>[21]</sup> by Walter Dean Myers

While on trial as an accomplice to a murder, sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon records his experiences in prison and in the courtroom in the form of a film script as he tries to come to terms with the course his life has taken. Printz Award winner.

Flygirl <sup>[22]</sup> by Sherri L. Smith

During World War II, a light-skinned African American girl "passes" for white in order to join the Women Airforce Service Pilots.

Black Boy White School <sup>[23]</sup> by Brian F. Walker

When fourteen-year-old Anthony "Ant" Jones from the ghetto of East Cleveland, Ohio, gets a

scholarship to a prep school in Maine, he finds that he must change his image and adapt to a world that never fully accepts him, but when he goes home he discovers that he no longer truly belongs there either.

#### Sellout [24] by Ebony Wilkins

NaTasha loves her life of affluence in Park Adams, but her grandmother fears she has lost touch with her roots and whisks her off to Harlem, where NaTasha meets rough, street-wise girls at a crisis center and finds the courage to hold her own against them.

#### Maxine Banks Is Getting Married [25] by Lori Aurelia Williams

When seventeen-year-old Maxine's best friend gets married, Maxine suddenly decides that she and her boyfriend Brian should too, but things do not turn out the way she expected, and both she and Brian realize that they are not as grown up as they thought.

#### Jumped [26] by Rita Williams-Garcia

The lives of Leticia, Dominique, and Trina are irrevocably intertwined through the course of one day in an urban high school after Leticia overhears Dominique's plans to beat up Trina and must decide whether or not to get involved.

#### After Tupac and D Foster [27] by Jacqueline Woodson

In the New York City borough of Queens in 1996, three girls bond over their shared love of Tupac Shakur's music, as together they try to make sense of the unpredictable world in which they live.

## Topic Guide:

- Teens

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