

Summary of Titles

Brown Girl Dreaming, by Jacqueline Woodson **CommonSense Rating:** 10+

Pages: 368

Summary: BROWN GIRL DREAMING is a memoir in verse that depicts Jaqueline Woodson growing up in different places during a unique time in American history. She's born in Ohio, to which her father's family traces a proud lineage, but raised in the South, where she encounters the sweetness of life with grandparents as well as the sting of Jim Crow. She moves back to the North and navigates a noisier place with hard edges and warm friends. How can she reconcile her different worlds? Will she be able to find her voice, not only so she can stand out but so she can make sense of the topsy-turvy world around her?

Booked by Kwame Alexander

CommonSense Rating: 12+

Pages: 320

Summary: This novel in verse tells the story of Nick, who has on his mind what every middle school soccer lover does: soccer, playing soccer video games, avoiding school assignments, and more soccer. Just as his plans for a fantastic soccer season are getting started, he learns his parents are getting a divorce. Navigating middle school gets even harder when Nick's bullies come back to school, his best friend has to play on another team, and his favorite rapping librarian keeps trying to get him to read all kinds of dumb books. Will Nick ever get his plan to become a world soccer star back on track?

Chains, by Laurie Halse Anderson

CommonSense Rating: 11+

Pages: 316

Summary: Isabel and her younger sister, Ruth, were promised that they would be freed at their mistress' death. Instead, her nephew sells them to a wealthy Loyalist and his sadistic wife. At the Locktons' home in New York, the girls are made to work nonstop while the British and Americans fight over the city. When a young slave on the American side asks Isabel to become a spy, she agrees on his assurance that they'll help free her. But the Americans are ultimately no more interested her freedom than the British.

Ghost by Jason Reynolds

CommonSense Rating: 10+

Pages: 208

Summary: GHOST is Castle Cranshaw's new nickname -- he gave it to himself and it sticks when he challenges a track team's best sprinter to a race. Running is as easy for him as breathing, probably because he's been doing it all his life. An emerging track star with a past, Ghost has to figure out why he runs -- is it toward what his life could be or away from his past? Luckily, he has new friends on the team, his coach, and even his mom to help him figure it all out.

Monster by Walter Dean Meyers

CommonSense Rating: 13+

Pages: 281

Summary: Steve's in jail, on trial for murder. He's young, he's terrified, and he's black. He's sure no one will believe him. Does Steve even believe in himself? You decide when you read this fast-moving book written like a movie script. The courtroom mystery hits home with enough drama and realism to attract even reluctant readers.

Piecing Me Together by Renee Watson

CommonSense Rating: 13+

Pages: 288

Summary: In PIECING ME TOGETHER, Jade is a high-achieving student and artist (in collage and photography) at an exclusive private school. She's the person other students turn to when they need help in school, but for some reason, all anyone else can see is that she needs help. Just because she doesn't have a lot of money, is African American, and comes from a poor neighborhood, everyone is always trying to fix what's "wrong" with her. The truth is there's nothing wrong with her. She has a lot she can give to the world if they'd only wake up and realize that in trying to fix her, they shatter her whole self every time she steps foot out the door. When she's nominated to take part in a mentorship program with an African American mentor, Jade balks, but the promise of a full college scholarship at the end makes it too good to pass up. Can she accept this extra help and still keep the pieces of herself together? Can she affect change in her world, or will she be shattered beyond repair?

Hidden Figures by Margot Lee Shetterly

CommonSense Rating: 10+

Pages: 198

Summary: HIDDEN FIGURES YOUNG READERS' EDITION tells the story of four African-American women who worked as mathematicians at NASA and its predecessor, NACA, helping to design aircraft and spacecraft. The book begins in 1943, when the U.S. needed to develop faster planes for the war effort to compete with Germany, and continues through the postwar years during the Cold War and the space race, when we competed with Russia to launch spacecraft. The four women profiled grew up in the segregated South and earned their math degrees at "colored" institutions. Talented mathematicians all, they worked under conditions of segregation -- not being able to use "white" bathrooms at work and having to sit in segregated sections in the lunchroom. Nonetheless, they distinguished themselves by their focus and work and contributed significantly to the research and development of the agency.