2016 Amelia Bloomer List

Since 2002, the Amelia Bloomer Project has created an annual booklist of the best feminist books for young readers, ages birth through 18. We are part of the Feminist Task Force (/srrt/feminist-task-force) of the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association.

Introduction

We Should All Be Feminists, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s call to action, is a definitive answer to the oft-repeated question, “why feminism?” In a world where this question is still being raised, the Amelia Bloomer Project exists to honor and celebrate the exemplary feminist responses provided in literature for readers ages 0 to 18.

Global feminist movements have taken many forms this year. In The Green Bicycle, securing her own means of transportation empowers Wadjda to take control of her journey in a misogynist society. In The Born-Frees, we are introduced to a South African teen writing group, young women who “have always had voices. They just needed to be prompted, to have the questions asked, and for the rest of us to have ears to hear.” In Headscarves and Hymens, Mona Eltahawy definitively explains why the Middle East needs a sexual revolution and reminds all feminists to fight for gender equality in their own communities.

The fight starts with claiming and reintroducing women who impacted their societies and offer powerful models of action to young women. Millo Castro Zaldarriaga, a Chinese-African-Cuban musician “broke Cuba’s traditional taboo against female drummers” by pursuing her passion in Drum Dream Girl. In Audacity, Jewish labor activist Clara Lemlich claimed women’s place in the worker’s rights movement and built a community of like-minded people. The International Sweethearts of Rhythm defied racial and gender norms while bringing hope to audiences through the groundbreaking performances depicted in Swing Sisters.

At its core the movement begins with owning our personal feminist narratives. The title character of Henni embarks on a journey of self-awareness and seeks a home free of persecution and judgement. In Dumplin’, Willowdean embraces her authentic self, inspiring her friends and family. Three friends support each other as they navigate female adolescence and show that no journey is completed alone in Goodbye Stranger.

The Amelia Bloomer Project members hope this list inspires you to wear your feminism like a merit badge. As the Lumberjanes say,

“. . . (Do) my best
Every day, and in all that I do,
to be brave and strong,
to be truthful and compassionate,
to be interesting and interested,
to pay attention and question
the world around me”

Committee

The Amelia Bloomer Project is part of the Feminist Task Force of the American Library Association’s Social Responsibility Round Table. The 2016 Amelia Bloomer Project Committee Members are: Katie Dersnah
Mitchell, co-chair, Saline District Library (MI); Linda Parsons, co-chair, The Ohio State University, Marion (OH); Ann Bever, Dallas Public Library (TX); Katelyn Browne, University of Northern Iowa (IA); Kelly Dickinson, National Cathedral School (DC); Emily Fear, Sewickley Public Library (PA); Melissa Nemitz, West Windsor Public Library (NJ); Gesse Stark-Smith, Multnomah County Library (OR); Lizz Zitron, Pacific Lutheran University (WA); and Caitie Morphew (alternate), Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (PA).


### Early Readers

#### Fiction


On an island filled with music, a young girl longs to play the drums. She challenges gender norms to follow her passion, and her “dream-bright music” persuades her community that everyone should be allowed to dream.


An imaginary conversation between Harriet Tubman and Susan B. Anthony celebrates their triumphs for racial and gender equality.


This Cinderella has agency! She dreams of being the chief mechanic, swooning over starships and not boys, and saves the prince with a swift rocket repair.


Subverting fairytale conventions, Princess Harriet Hamsterbone takes matters into her own hands to save herself from a wicked fairy’s curse.

#### Nonfiction


The life of Maria Mitchell—a noted astronomer, librarian, and advocate for girls’ education—is presented for early readers.


From their early days in Mississippi to their travels around the world, the Sweethearts made people dance—and question their assumptions about race and gender.


Lucille Mulhall, known as “America’s First Cowgirl,” followed her passion of riding and roping during a time when women were viewed as weak and unfit to participate in such physically grueling tasks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
<th>Grades</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McCully, Emily Arnold</td>
<td>Queen of the Diamond: The Lizzie Murphy Story</td>
<td>Farrar Straus Giroux/Margaret Ferguson Books</td>
<td>$17.99</td>
<td>978-0-374-30007-4</td>
<td>K-Gr.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meltzer, Brad</td>
<td>I Am Lucille Ball</td>
<td>Penguin/Dial</td>
<td>$12.99</td>
<td>978-0-525-42855-8</td>
<td>K-Gr.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schatz, Kate</td>
<td>Rad American Women A-Z</td>
<td>City Lights Books</td>
<td>$14.95</td>
<td>978-0-87286-683-6</td>
<td>Gr.1-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shepherd, Jodie</td>
<td>Mae Jemison</td>
<td>Scholastic/Children’s Press</td>
<td>$23.00</td>
<td>978-0-531-20595-2</td>
<td>PreS-Gr.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taylor-Butler, Christine</td>
<td>Rosa Parks</td>
<td>Scholastic/Children’s Press</td>
<td>$6.95</td>
<td>978-0-531-21209-7</td>
<td>Gr.1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner, Ann</td>
<td>My Name is Truth: The Life of Sojourner Truth</td>
<td>HarperCollins</td>
<td>$17.99</td>
<td>978-0-06-075898-1</td>
<td>Gr 1-4</td>
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**Middle Grade Fiction**

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<th>Title</th>
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<th>ISBN</th>
<th>Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al Mansour, Haifaa</td>
<td>The Green Bicycle</td>
<td>Penguin/Dial</td>
<td>$16.99</td>
<td>978-0-525-42806-0</td>
<td>Gr.4-8</td>
</tr>
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have her feminist spirit silenced.


Nicolette Lampton endures typical Cinderella trials: a dead mother, a dead father, a shrewish stepmother, two condescending stepsisters, and competition for the charming prince. Yet as Mechanica, Nicolette follows in her mother’s footsteps creating wondrous automata.


The Lumberjanes – Jo, Molly, Mal, April, and Ripley- are a group of young women spending the summer at a camp for “hard-core lady-types.” They work together to defeat monsters, and use their unique skills to solve the mystery of what’s really going on at the camp.


Once again, the Lumberjanes must depend on each other and combine their diverse talents to save their beloved camp—and possibly the universe.

**Hannigan, Kate.** *The Detective’s Assistant*. 2015. 361p. Little, Brown, $17.00 (978-0-316-40351-1). Gr.4-6.

Eleven-year-old Nell Warne arrives orphaned and unwelcomed at her Aunt Kitty’s doorstep. To prove her value in her independent aunt’s life, Nell helps Aunt Kitty solve cases with the Pinkerton Detective Agency.


Mimi is a half-Japanese, half-black young scientist who dreams of becoming an astronaut. As she adjusts to a new home in Vermont, she and many of her classmates fight for the right to take wood shop and the agency to dismantle racist and sexist stereotypes.


Through the story of Peter Lee and his family’s grief, this novel explores gender norms in the context of 1970s Little League baseball.


This novel broadly examines the meaning of life, love, friendship, and identity in the lives of middle school girls on the cusp of adolescence.

**Nonfiction**


As a pioneer marine botanist and fearless adventurer, Sylvia Earle explored depths others had never reached and saw things never seen before by woman or man.


Rachel Carson was determined to do what she loved and not what was expected of her. Her research and poetic writing on the dangers of pesticides changed the way Americans thought about conserving nature’s resources.

With the support of her family and other female scientists, Marie Curie discovered new elements and revolutionized science.


Lynda Blackmon Lowery was the youngest person on the Selma Voting Rights March. Having already been to jail nine times and beaten on Bloody Sunday, Lynda stood up for her rights and her freedom.


After spending years as an academic underachiever with a passion for tennis, Sally Ride discovered her love of physics and became the first American woman to travel to space.


Wangari Maathai dedicated her life to restoring Kenya’s land by planting millions of trees throughout the country. Although Maathai was met with political and sexist retaliation, she helped save her environment and empowered women through a common cause.


Esperança Garcia was a slave living in Brazil who, after learning to read and write, bravely decided to write a letter to the governor detailing her mistreatment and her desire to be returned to her family.


Through their accomplishments in political and social arenas, Betty Friedan, Ella Baker, Barbara Castle, and Mary Quant blazed paths and demonstrated new possibilities for American and British women.


Jane Goodall’s passion and perseverance led her to become the world’s foremost expert on chimpanzees. Having spent decades in field observation, Dr. Goodall now teaches new generations to care for and ensure the safety of large primates.


Despite being the only girl or African American in most of her science classes, Aprille Ericsson persevered to become an engineer at NASA. Ericsson uses her achievements to inspire other young women to pursue their STEM dreams.


Fannie Lou Hamer played an integral part in the Civil Rights Movement by raising her voice and fighting for freedom.

**Young Adult**

**Fiction**


Using fairy tales as a metaphor for her own life, Sephora finds a way through her great shame and deep
humiliation.

After emigrating from Russia to America, Clara defiantly pursues an education and becomes a union organizer. Despite being beaten, jailed, and blacklisted, she refuses to be silenced.

Unwilling to accept the rigid restrictions of her youth at the beginning of the 20th century, Addie Baum fought to be true to herself. Mentors and friends sustain her as she grows to be an independent, educated woman.

Not satisfied with the prospect of marriage and settling into an idle existence, Jo Montfort risks her fortune, family, friends and life when she defies society’s expectations by investigating the mysterious death of her father.

Dime is looking for love and security when she finds Daddy, Brandy, and L.A. She believes she is loved even as she is groomed to work as a prostitute. When a much younger girl joins their “family,” Dime realizes that she has to break the cycle.

As evidence of a gang rape starts to spread on social media, Kate struggles to be a force for truth and an advocate for justice while determining who she can trust.

Young Henni questions the subjugation and gender stereotypes of the theocratic society she lives in and strikes out on her own to discover truth and freedom.

In 1849, on the run from the law and disguised as boys, Sammy and Andy work together to survive and seek their freedom in the face of racism, sexism, stampedes, and deadly disease.

Raised with a strict fundamentalist adherence to the Bible, Rachel Walker has been taught that women can only become a loving helpmate to a husband. When a former member of her church moves back to town, Rachel begins to see other possibilities.

After deciding to enter Miss Teen Blue Bonnet Beauty Pageant, Willowdean and her friends defy expectations based on beauty and gain a greater sense of confidence and self worth.

Sixteen-year-old Eva Roth confronts the complexities of grief, relationships, and love of all kinds as she begins to forge her own voice and path as a woman and a poet.

Since Romy Grey accused the sheriff’s son of rape, she has been ostracized and bullied by the community.
When her former friend goes missing after a party Romy must decide if she’s willing to raise her voice against the cultural tides of silence and shame.


Based on a true story, this novel in verse gives voice to a group of young women who banded together to survive and reclaim their personhood in the face of the dehumanizing cruelty of Auschwitz.

**Nonfiction**

*Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi.* *We Should All Be Feminists.* 2015. 52p. Random House/Anchor Books, $7.95 (978-1-101-91176-1). Gr.7-up.

Adichie’s personal essay explains why she chose to be true to herself and work towards societal change in gender attitudes.


Photographs from the nineteenth century to the present depict the diverse experiences of African American women and their ongoing importance in American history.


In the South African township of Gugulethu, young women from the first generation born post-apartheid explore the challenges that they and their community face, including sexism, classism, sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS, and poverty.


Why has Ruth Bader Ginsburg become the subject of memes, art, and feminist baby Halloween costumes? Carmon and Knizhnik explore the justice’s history of legally justifying the equality of women and all marginalized people.


Young women photographers critique the ideal of beauty with thought-provoking photos that, without shame, celebrate the realistic and sometimes unsanitary female body.


In her autobiography, Alice Dunnigan explores the intersecting forces of racism and sexism, which she fought throughout her life and her career as a groundbreaking black female journalist.


Ellis, a playwright and journalist, reflects on how the heroines of classic novels have shaped her life and her ideas about gender roles, ideas of womanhood, and feminism.


Egyptian American feminist Mona Eltahawy crafts a passionate argument about the widespread legal & cultural issues facing girls and women in the Middle East and North Africa. She also explores her own journey into claiming a feminist identity.
With insight, humor, and thorough research, Harding tackles rape culture, including misconceptions and myths, its consequences for men and women of all ages, and how we can change it.

This dual biography recounts the separate paths the first and second women to serve on the Supreme Court took to their goal of legal equality for women.

Swaby highlights the accomplishments of women in science throughout history to help provide role models for girls and women pursuing science today.