

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).

An asterisk (*) indicates that a book is one of our Top Ten titles (<https://ameliabloomer.wordpress.com/2016/01/11/2016-amelia-bloomer-top-ten/>). We have printable brochures available on our Resources Page: (<https://ameliabloomer.wordpress.com/about/amelia-bloomer-project-resources/>) 2016 Amelia Bloomer Project Brochure–Kids (<https://ameliabloomer.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/abp2016kidse2.pdf>) and 2016 Amelia Bloomer Project Brochure–Teens (<https://ameliabloomer.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/abp2016teens.pdf>).

Early Readers

Fiction

***Engle, Margarita.** *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music.* Illus. by Rafael López. 2015. Unpaged. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$16.99 (978-0-544-10229-3). PreS-Gr.2.

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.

Grimes, Nikki. *Chasing Freedom: The Life Journeys of Harriet Tubman and Susan B. Anthony, Inspired by Historical Facts.* Illus. by Michele Wood. 2015. 53p. Scholastic/Orchard, \$18.99 (978-0-439-79338-4). Gr.1-4.

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

Underwood, Deborah. *Interstellar Cinderella.* Illus. by Meg Hunt. 2015. Unpaged. Chronicle Books, \$16.99 (978-1-4521-2532-9). PreS-Gr.1.

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.

Vernon, Ursula. *Hamster Princess: Harriet the Invincible.* 247p. Penguin/Dial, \$12.99 (978-0-8037-3983-3). Gr.1-5.

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

Nonfiction

Butzer, Anna. *Maria Mitchell.* 2015. 24p. Capstone, \$21.32 (978-1-4914-0539-0). Gr.K-2.

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

***Deans, Karen.** *Swing Sisters: The Story of the International Sweethearts of Rhythm.* Illus. by Joe Cepeda. 2015. 32p. Holiday House, \$16.95 (978-0-8234-1970-8). Gr.1-4.

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.

Lang, Heather. *The Original Cowgirl: The Wild Adventures of Lucille Mulhall.* Illus. by Suzanne Beaky. 2015. Unpaged. Albert Whitman & Company, \$16.99 (978-0-8075-2931-7). PreS-Gr.3.

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.

McCully, Emily Arnold. *Queen of the Diamond: The Lizzie Murphy Story.* Illus. by the author. 2015.

Unpaged. Farrar Straus Giroux/Margaret Ferguson Books, \$17.99 (978-0-374-30007-4). K-Gr.3.

Despite being told that baseball was a game for boys, Lizzie Murphy proved herself to be a better player than most of them by making a career for herself in baseball.

Meltzer, Brad. *I Am Lucille Ball.* Illus. by Christopher Eliopoulos. 2015. Unpaged. Penguin/Dial, \$12.99

(978-0-525-42855-8). K-Gr.2.

Although many told her that physical comedy wasn't something proper girls did, Lucille Ball refused to give up on her dreams and went on to become a famous comedian, beloved performer and successful businesswoman.

Nolan, Nina. *Mahalia Jackson: Walking with Kings and Queens.* Illus. by John Holyfield. 2015. Unpaged.

HarperCollins/Amistad, \$17.99 (978-0-06-087944-0). Gr.K-3.

Gospel singer Mahalia Jackson did not let financial or racial adversity stand in the way of her dreams and she utilized her fame and success to promote civil rights and equality.

Paul, Miranda. *One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia.* Illus. by Elizabeth

Zunon. 2015. Unpaged. Millbrook Press, \$19.99 (978-1-4677-1608-6). Gr.K-3.

One Plastic Bag shows how Isatou Ceesay created a significant impact in her community and raised awareness globally about the impact of pollution on the environment.

Schatz, Kate. *Rad American Women A-Z.* Illus. by Miriam Klein Stahl. 2015. Unpaged. City Lights Books.

\$14.95. (978-0-87286-683-6) Gr.1-6.

This introduction to radical American women from Angela Davis to Zora Neale Hurston encourages young feminists (female and male) to make a change in their own world.

Shepherd, Jodie. *Mae Jemison.* 2015. 32p. Scholastic/Children's Press, \$23.00 (978-0-531-20595-2). PreS-Gr.2.

As the first African American woman in space, Mae Jemison broke many barriers in science and space technology. Her further work with philanthropies helps bring technology education to those who might not otherwise have access to it.

Taylor-Butler, Christine. *Rosa Parks.* 2015. 48p. Scholastic/Children's Press, \$6.95 (978-0-531-21209-7).

Gr.1-4.

Rosa Parks dedicated her life to fighting for civil rights and fought against the sexism that often kept her from being fully heard.

Turner, Ann. *My Name is Truth: The Life of Sojourner Truth.* Illus. by James Ransome. 2015. Unpaged.

HarperCollins, \$17.99 (978-0-06-075898-1). Gr 1-4.

Sojourner Truth used her voice to fight injustice at a time when few women were able to do so.

Wallmark, Laurie. *Ada Byron Lovelace and the Thinking Machine.* Illus. by April Chu. 2015. Unpaged.

Creston Books, \$17.99 (978-1-939547-20-0). Gr.K-3.

Ada Byron Lovelace had to fight to be taken seriously as a mathematician, but her determination put her in the forefront of mathematical and engineering research, making her a pioneer of computer science.

Middle Grade

Fiction

Al Mansour, Haifaa. *The Green Bicycle.* 2015. 346p. Penguin/Dial, \$16.99 (978-0-525-42806-0). Gr.4-8.

Wajda challenges the idea of 'acceptable' behavior for girls in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, by selling mix tapes and snacks to fund her dream of a bicycle. Despite the repercussions of her rebellious actions, she refuses to

have her feminist spirit silenced.

Cornwell, Betsy. *Mechanica*. 2015. 307p. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt/Clarion, \$17.99 (978-0-547-92771-8). Gr.5-8.

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.

Ellis, Grace, and Noelle Stevenson. *Beware the Kitten Holy (Lumberjanes, vol. 1)*. Illus. by Brooke Allen. 2015. 127p. Boom! Studios, \$14.99 (978-1-60886-687-8). Gr.6-9.

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.

Ellis, Grace, and Noelle Stevenson. *Friendship to the Max (Lumberjanes, vol. 2)*. Illus. by Brooke Allen. 2015. 111p. Boom! Studios, \$14.99 (978-1-60886-737-0). Gr.6-9.

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.

Hilton, Marilyn. *Full Cicada Moon*. 2015. 389p. Penguin/Dial, \$17.99 (978-0-525-42875-6). Gr.4-7.

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.

Shang, Wendy Wan-Long. *The Way Home Looks Now*. 2015. 261p. Scholastic, \$16.99 (978-0-545-60956-2). Gr.3-7.

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

Stead, Rebecca. *Goodbye Stranger*. 2015. 289p. Random House/Wendy Lamb Books, \$16.99 (978-0-385-74317-4). Grade 5-8.

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

Fertig, Dennis. *Sylvia Earle: Ocean Explorer*. 2015. 48p. Capstone/Heinemann, \$8.99 (978-1-4846-0475-5). Gr.3-6.

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.

Hile, Lori. *Rachel Carson: Environmental Pioneer*. 2015. 48p. Capstone/Heinemann, \$32.65 (978-1-4846-0471-7). Gr.3-6.

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.

Krieg, Katherine. *Marie Curie: Physics and Chemistry Pioneer*. 2015. 48p. Abdo Publishing/Core Library, \$22.95 (978-1-62403-377-3). Gr.4-6.

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

Lowery, Lynda Blackmon, as told to Elspeth Leacock and Susan Buckley. *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March.* Illus. by PJ Loughran. 2015. 127p. Penguin/Dial, \$19.99 (978-0-8037-4123-2). Gr.5-up.

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.

***O'Shaughnessy, Tam.** *Sally Ride: A Photobiography of America's Pioneering Woman in Space.* 2015. 153p. Macmillan/Roaring Brook Press, \$19.99 (978-1-59643-994-8). Gr.4-8.

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.

Prévot, Franck. *Wangari Maathai: The Woman Who Planted Millions of Trees.* Illus. by Aurélia Fronty. 2015. 45p. Charlesbridge, \$17.95 (978-1-58089-626-9). Gr.3-5.

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.

Rosa, Sonia. *When the Slave Esperança Garcia Wrote a Letter.* Illus. by Luciana Justiniani Hees. 2015. Unpaged. Groundwood/House of Anansi, \$18.95 (978-1-55498-729-0). Gr.3-6.

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.

Senker, Cath. *Stories of Women in the 1960s: Fighting for Freedom.* 2015. 112p. Heinemann Raintree/Capstone, \$31.32 (978-1-484-60866-1). Gr.4-8.

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.

Silvey, Anita. *Untamed: The Wild Life of Jane Goodall.* 2015. 96p. National Geographic, \$18.99 (978-1-4263-1518-3). Gr. 5-9.

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.

Waxman, Laura Hamilton. *Aerospace Engineer Aprille Ericsson.* 2015. 32p. Lerner, \$39.99 (978-1-4677-5793-5). Gr.3-5.

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.

***Weatherford, Carole Boston.** *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer: The Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement.* Illus. by Ekoa Holmes. 2015. 45p. Candlewick Press, \$17.99 (978-0-7636-6531-9). Gr.4-7.

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

Young Adult

Fiction

Arnold, Elana K. *Infamous.* 2015. 192p. Lerner/CarolrhodaLab, \$18.99 (978-1-4677-3849-1). Gr.10-up. Using fairy tales as a metaphor for her own life, Sephora finds a way through her great shame and deep

humiliation.

Crowder, Melanie. *Audacity*. 2015. 389p. Penguin/Philomel, \$17.99 (978-0-399-16899-4). Gr.7-up.
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.

***Diamant, Anita.** *The Boston Girl*. 2014. 336p. Simon & Schuster/Scribner, \$26.00 (978-1-4391-9935-0). Gr.9-up.

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.

Donnelly, Jennifer. *These Shallow Graves*. 2015. 488p. Random House/Delacorte, \$19.99 (978-0-385-73765-4). Gr.7-up.

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.

Frank, E.R. *Dime*. 2015. 322p. Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, \$17.99 (978-1-4814-3160-6). Gr.10-up.

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.

Hartzler, Aaron. *What We Saw*. 2015. 324p. HarperCollins/HarperTeen, \$17.99 (978-0-06-233874-7). Gr.9-up.

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.

Lasko-Gross, Miss. *Henni*. 2015. 155p. Z2 Comics, \$19.99 (978-1-940878-02-7). Gr.8-up.

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.

Lee, Stacey. *Under A Painted Sky*. 2015. 374p. Penguin/G.P. Putnam's Sons, \$16.99 (978-0-399-16803-1). Gr. 7- up.

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.

***Mathieu, Jennifer.** *Devoted*. 2015. 328p. Macmillan/Roaring Brook Press. \$16.99 (978-1-59643-911-5). Gr.7-up.

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.

Murphy, Julie. *Dumplin'*. 2015. 375p. HarperCollins/Balzer and Bray, \$17.99 (978-0-06-232718-5). Gr.9-up.

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.

Rabb, Margo. *Kissing in America*. 2015. 391p. HarperCollins, \$17.99 (978-0-06-232237-1). Gr.9-up.

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.

Summers, Courtney. *All The Rage*. 2015. 336p. Macmillan/St. Martin's Griffin, \$18.99 (978-1-250-02191-5). Gr.10-up.

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.

Wiviott, Meg. *Paper Hearts*. 2015. 337p. Simon & Schuster/Margaret K. McElderry, \$17.99 (978-1-4814-3983-1). Gr.7-up.

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.

***African American Women: Photographs from the National Museum of African American History and Culture.** 2015. 72p. GILES/D Giles Limited, \$16.95 (978-1-907804-48-9). Gr.6-up.

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

***Burge, Kimberly.** *The Born Frees: Writing with the Girls of Gugulethu*. 2015. 348p. W.W. Norton and Co., \$26.95 (978-0-393-23916-4). Gr.9-up.

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.

***Carmon, Irin, and Shana Knizhnik.** *Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*. 2015. 227p. HarperCollins/Dey Street, \$19.99 (978-0-06-241583-7). Gr.8-up.

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.

Collins, Petra, ed. *Babe*. 2015. 173p. Prestel, \$29.95 (978-3-7913-8103-9). Gr.10-up.

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

Dunnigan, Alice (author) and Carol McCabe Booker (editor). *Alone atop the Hill: Autobiography of Alice Dunnigan, Pioneer of the National Black Press*. 2015. 223p. University of Georgia, \$26.95 (978-0-8203-4798-1). Gr.9-up.

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, Samantha. *How to Be a Heroine: Or, What I've Learned from Reading Too Much*. 2015. 264p. Random House/Vintage, \$14.95 (978-1-101-87209-3). Gr.9-up.

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.

Eltahawy, Mona. *Headscarves and Hymens: Why the Middle East Needs a Sexual Revolution*. 2015. 240p. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$25.00 (978-0-86547-803-9). Gr.10-up.

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.

Harding, Kate. *Asking for It: The Rise of Rape Culture—and What We Can Do About It.* 2015. 261p. Perseus/DaCapo, \$15.99 (978-0-7382-1702-4). Gr.10-up.

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.

Hirshman, Linda. *Sisters in Law.* 2015. 390p. HarperCollins, \$28.99 (978-0-06-223846-7). Gr.10-up.

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, Rachel. *Headstrong: 52 Women Who Changed Science—and the World.* 2015. 273p. Broadway Books, \$16.00 (978-0-553-44679-1). Gr.9-up.

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