

2019 OBCB Literature and Language Arts

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Literature and Language Arts Titles

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale: The Graphic Novel*. Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 2019.

This modern dystopian classic has now been adapted into graphic novel form. Through stunning art, Nault draws readers into the futuristic world of Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. Vintage, 1993.

Through this classic work originally written in 1963, marking the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, Baldwin speaks to the enduring legacy of slavery and racism in America. Blunt and beautiful, *The Fire Next Time* argues that America can never last as a nation until both white and Black people confront this history directly.

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. Mariner, 2007.

Now a modern classic, this graphic memoir explores Bechdel's fraught relationship with her father through her early life, and her coming out as a lesbian. While in college, she learns she and her father may have had more in common than she thought, but he dies before she can explore that with him, leading to more mysteries than answers.

Collins, Bridget. *The Binding*. Borough Press, 2019.

A young farmer suffers a mysterious mental collapse and is sent to work learning the forbidden art of creating books that hold the memories people don't want to remember. One night he uncovers a secret that unravels everything he thought he knew about his life.

Dhaliwal, Aminder. *Woman World*. Drawn & Quarterly, 2018.

A society of women try to survive and thrive after a post-apocalyptic event. Told in comic strip form, Dhaliwal answers the "what happens after?" question with humor and heart.

Grimes, Nikki. *Ordinary Hazards*. Wordsong, an imprint of Highlights, 2019.

A memoir in the form of a powerful and inspiring collection of poems, addressing the issues of love, family, responsibility, belonging, and finding a place in the world.

Gyasi, Yaa. *Homegoing*. Knopf, 2016.

This novel follows the paths of two half-sisters born in Ghana in the 1800s and their descendents over eight generations, as their lives are shaped by major events in Ghanaian and American history up to present day.

Hand, Cynthia, Meadows, Jodi, and Ashton, Brodi. *My Plain Jane*. HarperTeen, 2018.

A deadpan deconstruction of a gothic novel, with a ghost almost no one can see providing the commentary. This is a twisted version of *JANE EYRE* that will serve as an self-aware antidote to "the great gothic classic."

Jemison, N.K. How Long 'Til Black Future Month? Orbit, an imprint of Hachette Book Group, 2018.

Acclaimed speculative fiction author, Jemison, tackles a variety of tough topics in her compelling collection of imaginative stories.

Johnson, George M. All Boys Aren't Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020.

Johnson's memoir explores his life from his middle-class New Jersey childhood, to his life in the closet in college, until he finally comfortably comes out as a gay man. Johnson can use humor and lightness as well as the trauma of being sexually abused with equal grace.

Kaminsky, Ilya. Deaf Republic: Poems. Graywolf Press, 2019.

This story, told as a collection of poems, follows a town's response when a deaf boy is killed by soldiers during a protest.

King, A.S. Dig. Dutton Books, 2019.

A stunningly original novel, often called surreal, follows the lives and minds of 5 unknowingly connected teens as they grapple with identity, family, and society. Human complexities such as racism, drugs, disease, abuse, sexual confusion, power, and privilege entwine in a meditative tale of hope.

Krosoczka, Jarrett. Hey, Kiddo. Scholastic, 2018.

This author of hilarious elementary school graphic novels turns his pen toward a complicated graphic memoir of his youth with real complicated, flawed relatives who both raise him with love or neglect him in their misery. His art helps him build a normal life out of his not-normal circumstances.

Mailhot, Therese Marie. Heart Berries: A Memoir. Counterpoint, 2019.

Hospitalized in a mental hospital, Mailhot (Seabird Island Band), begins the process of healing from abuse and failed relationships.

McCulloch, Gretchen. Because Internet: Understanding the New Rules of Language. Riverhead Books, 2019.

Ever wondered about the difference between lol and LOL, or how emojis came to be? Learn how the Internet is changing the English language, and why that's a great thing.

Miller, Madeline. Circe. Little Brown and Co., 2018.

This novel speaks to women's agency, war's traumatic aftermath, and how strength emerges from emotional growth, fleshing out the classic stories of the Minotaur, the monster Scylla, the witch Medea, events from Homer's Odyssey, all reimagined from a strong-minded woman's viewpoint.

Newman, Leslea. October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard. Candlewick Press, 2012.

In a variety of poetry forms, Newman recalls the killing of gay college student, Matthew Shepard, from the unique perspectives of nature as nature looks helplessly on.

Pullman, Philip. Daemon Voices: On Stories and Storytelling. Vintage Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, 2019.

A collection of essays and speeches that chart Philip Pullman's enchantment with Story, from his own books to those of Blake, Milton, Dickens, and the Brothers Grimm, and delves into the role of Story in education, religion, and science.

Rankine, Claudia. Citizen: An American Lyric. Graywolf Press, 2014.

Claudia Rankine reflects on very sensitive, very personal, very real experiences for Black Americans on a day to day basis through essay, image, and poetry.

Reynolds, Jason. Long Way Down. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2017.

Last night, Will saw his brother's dead body laying in a pool of blood on the sidewalk. This morning, Will gets on the elevator to go after his brother's murderer. But what happens in that sixty second elevator ride will change his life forever.

Smith, Cynthia Leitich. Hearts Unbroken. Candlewick Press, 2018.

Native high school senior Louise Wolfe breaks up with her boyfriend and embraces her senior year while working out the conundrum of "dating while Native."

Stamper, Kory. Word by Word: The Secret Life of Dictionaries. Pantheon, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2017.

Stamper, a lexicographer with Merriam-Webster dictionary, has written a combination history of the English language and a memoir of work life reminiscent of The Office. Her essays are witty, often hilarious and show her love of the word in all its forms.

Summers, Courtney. Sadie. Wednesday Books, 2018.

Alternating between transcripts of a podcast and Sadie's first-person account, this novel is filled with biting commentary on sexual assault and the mistreatment of girls and women at the hands of predatory men. Though the novel isn't "true crime," it is easy to see its connections to the genre.

Thomas, Angie. The Hate U Give. Balzer & Bray, 2017.

Star, a smart African-American teen who attends a majority white private school, has the unquestioning support of her family as she attempts to recover from the trauma of witnessing one of her best friends being shot by police during a traffic stop. But she has to determine what steps she should take to seek justice.

Wang, Esme. The Collected Schizophrenias: Essays. Graywolf, 2019.

Wang explores the medical history of schizophrenias in relation to her own experience being diagnosed with multiple mental and physical illnesses.

Watson, Renee. Piecing Me Together. Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2017.

Jade, a Black scholarship student at a majority white private school, struggles to belong. When given a chance to be mentored by a Black college student, she is disappointed that her mentor is more interested in being a "savior" than a mentor. Class and privilege are studied in this honest, modern novel.

Whitehead, Colson. The Nickel Boys. Doubleday, 2019.

Based loosely on actual events, this novel centers around Elwood, a talented Black teen who hopes to attend college; but instead is wrongly incarcerated in a juvenile detention center where horrors ensue.