TEACHERS’ CHOICES 2015 Reading List
What Is the Teachers’ Choices List?

For teachers looking for the best new titles to add to their classroom library, the Teachers’ Choices list is the place to start. Not only is it where they’ll find the best books for ages 5 to 14, but they’ll also know it comes from a source they can rely on—their fellow educators. Since 1989, the International Literacy Association’s Teachers’ Choices project has identified outstanding trade books published in the last year that teachers themselves choose as being exceptional for curriculum use. Parents will also find the list invaluable, as it provides excellent choices for reading aloud or for help answering important questions prompted by children’s experiences as they grow up.

Primary Readers
(Grades K–2, Ages 5–8)

All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom
Under the hot Texas sun in 1865, a family celebrates the first Juneteenth, the day that freedom comes to the slaves. Endnotes provide a timeline and additional resources about the holiday.

Feathers: Not Just for Flying
Sixteen diverse birds from five continents are highlighted with detailed descriptions of how these birds use their feathers for a multitude of tasks.

*Fiona’s Lace
Patricia Polacco. Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman.
When Fiona’s family emigrated from Ireland to Chicago, her beautiful handmade lace helped supplement the family’s income—until one fateful night when it helped save their lives.

Found
Bear finds a lost stuffed bunny and is determined to find its owner, but when he starts to become attached to the toy, will he still be able to do the right thing?
Gaston
When a poodle and a bulldog puppy are inadvertently switched at birth and raised by the wrong mothers, readers learn about the importance of accepting and celebrating each other’s differences.

Ivan: The Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla
This is the nonfiction account of the life of Ivan, the shopping mall gorilla whom readers first met in the novel, The One and Only Ivan.

The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky’s Abstract Art
This picture book biography of the Russian painter, Vasya Kandinsky, explains how he ventured from his staid and controlled upbringing into the uncharted world of abstract art.

The Scraps Book: Notes From a Colorful Life
Lois Ehlert. Beach Lane.
Children’s book illustrator Lois Ehlert takes readers inside her studio as she shares her life’s story and the creative process that inspires her picture book art.

*Under the Same Sun
Sharon Robinson. Ill. AG Ford. Scholastic.
The daughter of baseball great Jackie Robinson has created a picture book account of her mother’s return to the family’s ancestral home of Tanzania on the occasion of her 85th birthday.

Who Was Here: Discovering Wild Animal Tracks
Mia Posada. Millbrook.
Life-size animal prints are displayed in the habitat where they were found and readers must guess who left these marks behind. Factual descriptions of each animal accompany the guessing game.
Intermediate Readers
(Grades 3–5, Ages 8–11)

Animal Stories: Heartwarming True Tales From the Animal Kingdom

True stories of remarkable contributions from animals from around the world are showcased. Additional facts, a map, timeline, and other resources supplement the text.

Fly Away
Patricia MacLachlan. Margaret K. McElderry.

Lucy is the only one in her family who does not sing. When they visit a relative in North Dakota just as flood waters threaten their home, Lucy finds her voice and the courage to use it to save her younger brother.

Guts & Glory: The American Civil War

Told in chronological order from the first battle to the last, this book recounts the stories of the heroes and villains and the good luck and misfortune that define the bloodiest years in our country’s history.

Hidden: A Child’s Story of the Holocaust

This graphic novel recounts a Jewish grandmother’s memories of being hidden during her childhood when the Nazis occupied France during World War II.

*A Home for Mr. Emerson

Quotes from Ralph Waldo Emerson supplement this picture book biography of the life of one of America’s greatest philosophers.
Pay It Forward: Young Readers Edition
Catherine Ryan Hyde. Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman.
Rewritten for a middle-grades audience, this book recounts how the “pay it forward” movement began. A curriculum guide for teachers is included.

The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus
This picture book biography about Peter Roget’s fascination with words explains how his famous thesaurus came to be. Extensive endnotes supplement the reading for teachers and students.

Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family’s Fight for Desegregation
Duncan Tonatiuh. Abrams Books for Young Readers.
Sylvia Mendez and her family fought for the rights of Mexican immigrants to attend public schools in California seven years before the federal case of Brown v. Board of Education.

*Super Sniffers: Dog Detectives on the Job
Dorothy Hinshaw Patent. Bloomsbury USA Children’s.
Dogs use their noses for amazing work, from finding victims of avalanches to detecting cancer and sniffing out invasive weeds. Endnotes provide additional resources.

Winter Bees and Other Poems of the Cold
Poems about how various living things survive the cold, combined with new scientific facts and detailed linoleum prints, convince readers that winter is not as barren as it seems.
Advanced Readers
(Grades 6–8, Ages 11–14)

Because They Marched: The People’s Campaign for Voting Rights That Changed America
Archival photographs combined with journalistic essays commemorate the 50th anniversary of the marches that led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Endnotes provide additional resources.

Boundaries: How the Mason-Dixon Line Settled a Family Feud & Divided a Nation
Sally M. Walker. Candlewick.
This nonfiction text explains the family feuds, surveying science, and natural boundaries that led to the demarcation of the Mason-Dixon Line, and ultimately the divide between North and South.

Bugged: How Insects Changed History
This examination of insects—both beneficial and destructive—shows how these fascinating creatures have influenced human life throughout history.

Colonel Theodore Roosevelt
David A. Adler. Holiday House.
From cowboy to soldier, from conservationist to Nobel Peace Prize winner, this biography includes photographs, letters, and primary documents to retell the life story of our 26th president.

The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion & the Fall of Imperial Russia
Candace Fleming. Schwartz & Wade.
This biography, with supporting photographs, details the Romanov family history, contrasting their exorbitant wealth with the suffering of peasants and industrial workers, while also explaining the changing political climate.
**5 Elephants**  
Rob Laidlaw. Fitzhenry & Whiteside.  
By showcasing the stories of five famous elephants, the author introduces readers to facts and figures about the elephant population and the challenges they face in their natural habitats and in captivity.

**I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World (Young Readers Edition)**  
Malala Yousafzai with Patricia McCormick. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.  
Adolescent readers will learn how a girl their age found the courage to stand up for what she believed and, despite a near-fatal injury, overcame countless obstacles to become an international champion for peace. A glossary and timeline of important events accompany the text.

**I Lived on Butterfly Hill**  
Eleven-year-old Celeste’s idyllic world is uprooted when her native Chile falls under the dictatorship of Pinochet. Her philanthropist parents must go into hiding, while Celeste is sent to stay with an aunt in Maine.

**The Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the Fight for Civil Rights**  
Steve Sheinkin. Roaring Brook.  
Port Chicago was a busy Navy base during World War II, and like most units in the military, it was highly segregated. When a devastating explosion killed many servicemen, a group of 50 brave sailors dared to fight for better working conditions.

**Threatened**  
Eliot Schrefer. Scholastic.  
Luc, an orphan living in Gabon, leaves his home to accompany a scientist into the jungle to study chimpanzees. When the professor disappears, Luc is left alone to fight for his own life, as well as to protect these creatures he has grown to love.

*Books that received the highest amount of votes.*
More About Teachers’ Choices

Thank you to the 2014–2015 ILA Teachers’ Choices cochairs, team leaders, and review teams. The project members were Joyce Gulley (cochair) and April Wulber (cochair). Team leaders in the field test were Jane Dewailly, Dina Evans, Tammy Everett, Kim Fairbanks, Heather Jones, Amy McClure, Cecilia McCormick, and Susan Zolper.

For more information on the Teachers’ Choices list, or to learn how to become involved, visit literacyworldwide.org/choices.