Best Books for Young Adults 1999

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), has announced its 1999 list of Best Books for Young Adults. During 1998, more than 750 titles were submitted by publishers, librarians, and readers for consideration as best books for young adults for the year.

This list was narrowed by the fifteen member committee to 229 nominees and from this group, 71 titles were chosen as satisfying the requirements of both good literary quality while maintaining a popular appeal to young adult readers, ages 12 - 18. The Best Books list includes 51 fiction and 20 non-fiction with topics running the gamut from poetry and humor to adventure and survival stories from the Holocaust.

"All facets of interest to Young Adults were covered, providing a diverse list. There are four poetry collections, several biographies, a graphic novel and even a picture book for YA's. Sixty-five teen readers attended one of the sessions to speak about their favorite books on the list," said Carol Fox, chair of the YALSA Best Books for Young Adults Committee.

Three books received a unanimous vote from the committee: Rules of the Road by Joan Bauer, Putnam; Corpses, Coffins and Crypts: a History by Penny Colman, Holt; and My Louisiana Sky by Kimberly Willis Holt, Holt Publishing.

The committee also selected their "Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults" from titles on the list.

The draft of the complete list is also available via Fax-on-
Demand. To receive a fax, call 800-545-2433, press 8. The annotated list will also be available in the March 1999 Booklist and published in ALA's Guide to Best Reading, 1999.

Members of the YALSA Best Books for Young Adults Committee are Carol Fox, chair, El Dorado (Kansas) School District; Jane Byczek, Hinsdale (Illinois) Public Library; Katherine Fitch, Rachel Carson Middle School, Burke (Virginia); Susan Geye, Crowley Ninth Grade Campus, Crowley (Texas); Nancy Guidry, Santa Monica Public Library, Santa Monica (California); Eunice Harper, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore (Maryland); Claudine Jackson, Kansas City (Missouri) Public Library; Kitty Krahmke, Northland Public Library, Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania); Kimberly Lafferty, Issaquah (Washington) Library; Joy Lowe, Louisiana Tech University, Ruston (Louisiana); Suzanne Manczuk, West Windsor Plainsboro (New Jersey) Middle School; Rosemary Moran, Tulsa City-County Library (Oklahoma); Andrew Parson, Riverdale Country School, Bronx (New York); Alice Stern, Boston Public Library (Massachusetts); Ed Sullivan, New York Public Library (New York).

**Draft List - February 1999**

1. Abelove, Joan *Go and Come Back* DK Ink 1998 0789424762 Fiction
   Young Alicia, a native of the Peruvian jungle, tells her version of two white anthropologists stay in her native village.

   An outstanding tribute to the people who pursued excellence in recording the news through photography and text.

   Teen mom struggles to support and educate herself in this true to life graphic novel.
Jenna Boller at 17 years old gets an offer from her employer to drive her during the summer to Texas stopping along the way at her chain of shoe stores. Not only does Jenna develop more as a shoe salesperson, she learns that she has the strength to stand up to her alcoholic father.

5. Bennett, Cherie **Life in the Fat Lane** Delacorte 1998 0385322747 Fiction  
Shallow, self-centered Homecoming Queen Lara's life takes a turn for the worse when she inexplicably starts gaining more and more and more weight.

Poor Widge is compelled by his master to use his ability to transcribe in shorthand - in order to steal Mr. Shakespeare's play Hamlet!

A collection of 33 essays, poems, and short stories by prominent, successful women for young women.

8. Burgess, Melvin **Smack** Holt 1998 080505801 Fiction  
Gemma and Tar, two English teenagers, run away from their troubled homes, become squatters and get addicted to heroin.

Illustrated with shimmering Stephen Alcorn art work, this emotional collection of African-American poetry gives the reader both historical perspective and personal witness.

10. Colman, Penny **Corpses, Coffins, and Crypts: A History** Holt 1997 0805050663 Non-fiction  
What really happens when a person dies? Why are autopsies done - and how? Colman answers these questions and many others in her personal and well-researched account of death.
11. Cormier, Robert *Heroes* Delacorte 1998 0385325908 Fiction
Eighteen year old Francis comes back from World War II with his face blown off and a mission to murder his childhood hero.

12. Dessen, Sarah *Someone Like You* Viking 1998 0670877786 Fiction
Halley's relationship with best friend Scarlett undergoes some changes during their junior year after the death of Scarlett's boyfriend and revelation of Scarlett's pregnancy, as well as her own first serious relationship.

A fascinating account of the behaviors, treatments, and control of seven deadly diseases: smallpox, leprosy, plague, tuberculosis, malaria, cholera, and AIDS, and the scientists who studied and tamed them.

A chicken in a coma? Alexander 'Sandy' Huntington-Ackerman can barely cope with the serious stuff, like his diabolical Uncles trying to bump off his parents and steal the family fortune.

15. Flake, Sharon G. *The Skin I'm In Jump at the Sun* Hyperion 1998 0786804440 Fiction
Maleeka is 13 years old and finds that her extremely dark complexion makes her the butt of jokes and an outcast among her peers until a new teacher shows her, through example, that she can accept herself.

When sixteen-year-old Brent Bishop causes the death of a girl, he goes to the four corners of the country to build whirligigs in her memory.
17. Fletcher, Susan *Shadow Spinner* Atheneum 1998 0689818521 Fiction Young Marjan brings new stories to the Sultan's wife, Sharazade, officially confined to the Harem; Marjan must steal away to the market square to find new tales for each evening's story spinning.

18. Freedman, Russell *Martha Graham: A Dancer's Life* Clarion 1998 0395746558 Non-fiction Freedman shows us in words and photographs why Martha Graham was one of the most unusual women in 20th century art.

19. Griffin, Adele *The Other Shepards* Hyperion 1998 0786804238 Fiction Holland and her younger sister Geneva are haunted by the shadows of their two brothers and sister killed in an accident twenty years ago.

20. Haddix, Margaret *Among the Hidden* Simon & Schuster 1998 0689817002 Fiction Because the government has decreed that third children will be eliminated, Luke has remained hidden in his house for 12 years, when another hidden girl encourages him to take a chance in the hope of freedom.

21. Hardman, Ric Lynden *Sunshine Rider: The First Vegetarian Western* Delacorte 1998 0385325436 Fiction Wylie Jackson, 17 years old, works as a cook on a cattle drive from Texas. While on his own, he is searching for himself accompanied by his companion, Roselle, the cattalo.


23. Hesser, Terry Spencer *Kissing Doorknobs* Delacorte 1998 0385323298 Fiction Tara's life is nearly taken over completely by some of her very strange compulsions.
In a desperate attempt to save his little brother's life, 15-year-old D'Ray takes another young man's life, but is ultimately given a second chance at a better life by the victim's father.

Rick escapes from a juvenile detention facility near Las Vegas and ends up in the Utah wilderness where he finds a conservationist working with Condors and two arms dealers up to no good.

Set in rural 1950s Louisiana, twelve-year-old Tiger has some tough times growing up with her grandmother dying and trying to accept her mentally handicapped parents.

27. Jimenez, Francisco *The Circuit: Stories from the life-migrant child* Univ. of New Mexico Press 1997 0826317979 Non-fiction
Panchito's longing for a permanent home, time to attend school, and hope for his family's future makes this memoir/short story collection an emotionally charged read.

Fourteen-year-old Marley's idyllic life in the small town of Heaven is suddenly disrupted when she discovers her father and mother are not her real parents.

While running from the truth to escape painful memories of losing his eye, seventeen-year-old Luke gets himself into a series of dangerous situations.

A young worm gets a lesson in life and ecology from his wise father.

32. Laxalt, Robert **Dust Devils** University of Nevada Press 1997 0874173000 Fiction An Old West coming-of-age novella with bronc riding horse rustling, native wisdom, challenges of nature, and a little love story woven in.

33. Lester, Julius **From Slave Ship to Freedom Road** Dial Books 1998 0803718934 Non-fiction This stunning combination of art and lyricism causes one to pause and really think about the effects of slavery on all of humanity.

34. Lobel, Anita **No Pretty Pictures: A Child of War** Greenwillow 1998 0688159354 Non-fiction This highly regarded children's book illustrator recounts her childhood experiences as a Jew living in Nazi-occupied Poland, her imprisonment in a succession of concentration camps, and her life following the war as a displaced person in Sweden.

35. Marrin, Albert **Commander-in-Chief** Dutton 1997 0525458220 Non-fiction A look at how Lincoln's personal background affected the decisions he made during the Civil War.

36. Mastoon, Adam **The Shared Heart** Morrow 1997 0688149316 Non-fiction Four dozen gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered teens and young adults are presented through photographic portraits and personal essays.

37. Matcheck, Diane **The Sacrifice** Farrar, Straus, & Giroux 1998 0374363781 Fiction A fifteen-year-old Apsaslooka girl is determined to be a warrior, hunter, and the 'Great One' that was prophesied for her tribe.
38. McCaughrean, Geraldine **The Pirate's Son** Scholastic 1998 0590203444 Fiction
Imagine fulfilling your boyhood fantasy of sailing off with pirates: fourteen-year-old Nathan Gull's wishes turn into a reality, not always with the results he anticipated.

Twelve teenagers from South Africa share their experiences of life under and since apartheid, and their hopes for the future of their country.

40. McKissack, Patricia **Young, Black, and Determined: a Biography** Holiday House 1998 0823413004 Non-fiction
A biography of the black playwright Lorraine Hansberry who received great recognition at an early age for her contribution to the arts.

41. Mikaelson, Ben **Petey** Hyperion 1998 0786823763 Fiction
Petey is born with cerebral palsy in 1905, and is mistakenly diagnosed as an idiot and sent to live in an insane asylum. He meets many people in his life that are amazed with his 'joy and zest for life.' Eventually, he meets Trevor, a teenage boy, that changes his final years.

42. Napoli, Donna Jo **Sirena** Scholastic 1998 0590383884 Fiction
With both innocence and sensuality, the mermaid Sirena enchants a Greek sailor, only to find that her love for him forces her to make difficult choices.

43. Newth, Mette **The Dark Light** Farrar, Straus, & Giroux 1998 0374317011 Fiction
Young Tora becomes an outcast from her Norwegian village when it is discovered that she has contracted leprosy.

44. Nicholson, Joy **Tribes of Palos Verdes** St. Martin's Press 1997 0312156774 Fiction
A first novel by a tough, young writer. Family dynamics at their best and worst in the ever-fascinating setting of
Southern California.

45. Nye, Naomi Shihab *The Space between Our Footsteps* Simon and Schuster 1998 0689812337 Non-fiction
A collection of poems that speaks to the heart, paired with art works that are both beautiful and eclectic in style.

46. Paulsen, Gary *Soldier's Heart* Delacorte Press 1998 0385324987 Fiction
After facing the real fighting in the Civil War, Charlie realizes war is hell on earth both mentally and physically.

47. Peck, Richard *A Long Way from Chicago* Dial 1998 0803722907 Fiction
Humor is the name of the game: city kids Joey and Mary Alice visit their Grandma Dowdel in southern Illinois during rollicking summer vacations.

Sent to live with her great-aunt, Molly learns who she really is when the many secrets of the town are revealed.

Editor Philip has chosen poems that speak of the horror of war, not the glory.

Best friends Annie and Violet share the hardships of their lives in the Oklahoma Panhandle of the 1930's.

Zebra, Isabel and other teen protagonists struggle with finding themselves while confronting the adult world's rules and regulations.

52. Quarles, Heather *A Door Near Here* Delacorte 1998 0385325959 Fiction
Fifteen-year-old Katherine suddenly finds herself left alone
to care for herself and three younger siblings.

53. Ritter, John H. **Choosing up Sides** Philomel 1998 0399231854 Fiction
Luke has been taught by his preacher father that being left-handed is a sign of the Devil. Tragedy befalls this small town family of the 1920s when Luke discovers that he likes baseball, especially pitching with his left hand.

54. Rottman, S. L. **Hero** Peachtree 1997 1561451592 Fiction
After years of abuse from his mother and neglect from his father, ninth-grader Sean Parker is headed for trouble when he is sent to do community service at a farm owned by an old man who teaches Sean that he can take control of his own life.

55. Rowling, J.K. **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone** Scholastic Press/ Levine 1998 0590353403 Fiction
Harry Potter has another identity kept from him by his unloving, neglectful aunt and uncle; he receives a letter from the Hogwarts School of Wizardry and finds out he is somebody special.

56. Sachar, Louis **Holes** FSG 1998 0374332657 Fiction
Stanley Yelnatz suffers from a curse brought on by his great-great grandfather who stole a pig from a one-legged gypsy. Now Stanley must dig one hole every day in a correctional camp for juvenile boys, and for a crime he didn't even commit - stealing Sweet Feet Clyde Livingston's tennis shoes.

57. Salisbury, Graham **Jungle Dogs** Delacorte 1998 0385321872 Fiction
James 'Boy' Regis learns some tough lessons about courage and respect while growing up in Hawaii.

58. Silvey, Anita, selector **Help Wanted: Short Stories- Young People Work** Little, Brown 1997 0316791482 Fiction
These twelve stories by authors such as Michael Dorris, Ray Bradbury, and Judith Ortiz Cofer deal with an important rite
of passage for teens - the first job.

59. Spinelli, Jerry **Knots in My Yo-yo String** Knopf 1998  
Non-fiction  
Author Jerry Spinelli talks about all the important things that happened to him in his first 16 years of life.

60. Springer, Nancy **I am Mordred** Philomel 1998 0399231439  
Fiction  
Young Mordred is confused and isolated; when he discovers his personal history, his only wish is to escape his fate.

61. Sweeney, Joyce **Spirit Window** Delacorte 1998 038532510X  
Fiction  
Miranda falls in love with her grandmother's island bird sanctuary as well as the caretaker and fights her father when he wants to sell the island.

62. Thomas, Jane Resh **Behind the Mask; The Life of Queen Elizabeth I** Clarion 1998 0395691206  
Non-fiction  
Despite a wretched childhood and at times fearing for her life, Elizabeth became one of the most influential women in history.

63. Thomas, Velma Maia **Lest We Forget: The Passage from Africa to Slavery and Emancipation** Crown 1997 0609600303  
Non-fiction  
Artifacts from the Black Holocaust Exhibit are used to create a three dimensional interactive story of slavery in America.

64. Turner, Ann **A Lion's Hunger: Poems of First Love** Marshall Cavendish 1998 0761450351  
Non-fiction  
Poems that follow a young girl's relationship with a boy; their first meeting, dating, falling in love, and eventual break up.

65. Walter and Roeckelein **Making Up Megaboy** DK Ink 1998 0789424886  
Fiction  
A community tries to make sense of the murder committed by 13-year-old Robbie Jones.

66. Weaver, Will **Hard Ball** Harper 1998 0060271213
Besides competing on the baseball field and for Suzie's attention, Billy and King must learn to deal with their father's anger and aggressiveness.

67. Werlin, Nancy *The Killer's Cousin* Delacorte 1998 0385325606 Fiction
After 17-year-old David is acquitted of murder, he moves in with his aunt and uncle in another town to escape his past, but he finds his new home a lot less safe and secure than he'd hoped for.

68. Willis, Connie *To Say Nothing of the Dog* Bantam Books 1997 0553099957 Fiction
Lady Schrapnell is paying to rebuild Coventry Cathedral in the 21st century; Oxford scientists are time-traveling via 'the net' to recover authentic treasures (and repair disastrous mistakes), often with hilarious consequences.

69. Wilson, Diane *I Rode a Horse of Milk White Jade* Orchard Books 1998 0531300242 Fiction
Oyuna, crippled as a toddler and orphaned at seven, manages with sheer determination to become 'one who speaks with horses,' a woman who attempts to seek the great Kublai Khan.

70. Woodson, Jacqueline *If You Come Softly* Putnam 1998 0399231129 Fiction
Despite their differences (she is white, he is black), Jeremiah and Ellie feel an immediate connection and then must cope with the world's reaction to them.

71. Yolen, Jane and Coville, Bruce *Armageddon Summer* Harcourt Brace 1998 0152017674 Fiction
The world will end on Thursday, July 27, 2000. That's what Reverand Beelson has told his congregation. Marina's mom believes. So does Jed's dad. That's why they've dragged Marina and Jed to a mountain retreat with the rest of the reverand's flock. From this vantage point, the Believers will wait the two weeks until the Fires of Hell(reverand's cap letters) descend upon the rest of the world.