

Disclaimer: As with any resource used in classroom practice, teachers are advised to use their professional judgment in selecting any of the following texts. Some of the following texts contain mature language and/ or topics that are not suitable for all ages. When using these materials, be prepared to engage in difficult conversations.

Equity Issues and Novels for Study or Read-Aloud - Class, Poverty, Socio-Economic Status

Age

Appropriate

Title

Author

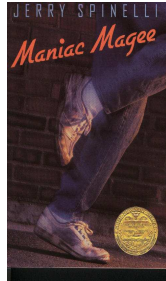
Picture

Synopsis

7+

Maniac Magee

Spinelli, Jerry

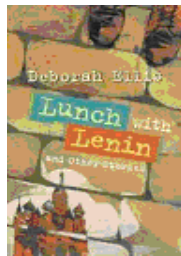


Maniac Magee is a homeless orphan who unknowingly breaks an unspoken rule in his new town: he's a white boy who wanders into the black part of town, and is taken in by a black family. Even when he finds out what he's done, he doesn't care. Because to Maniac, it just doesn't make sense. (Ain't that the truth?). He tries his best to bring the two sides of town together, but naturally, learns that some people are just set in their ways, and some kid who can untie a knot better than anyone else ain't gonna change everything. Racism. Homelessness. Identity. Pretty heavy for a children's book, but somehow Spinelli's story doesn't seem heavy at all.

12+

Lunch with Lenin
Greener
Grass

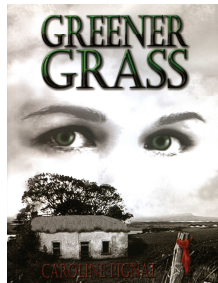
Ellis, Deborah



Deborah Ellis is no stranger to the world of politically themed young adult fiction. Her latest book, *Lunch with Lenin*, is a powerful and skillfully executed collection of short stories about the impact of drugs, alcohol, and addiction on the lives of young people. The stories portray teens in widely diverse settings. Kids in Moscow's Red Square, the streets of Ulan Bataar in Mongolia, a wealthy religious school in Bolivia, and the tiny community of Hay River in Canada's Northwest Territories are all struggling with the impact of illicit substances or addiction on themselves, their families, and their communities.

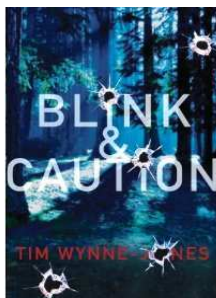
12+

Pignat, Caroline



Kit Byrne's family is a strong one, but their strength and unity are being severely tested, as life becomes more and more desperate in 19th century rural Ireland. Lord Fraser is the wealthy landowner, from which the Byrne's and many other families rent their lands. When the potato blight hits, the farmers can no longer make their payments much less produce food for themselves, and the cruel system has no mercy as Lord Fraser wields an iron fist, driving families from their homes and burning their cottages. Kit's dreams are now dashed as her family experiences a series of tragedies, and as she undergoes a daunting event that tears her away from her family. With her father dead, she must fight for survival and help her ailing mother and siblings escape Ireland for good. This story is a glimpse into the tragic events of the Great Hunger, the famine that devastated Ireland, forcing thousands of impoverished families to seek better livelihoods outside of their homeland.

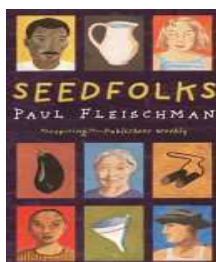
Blink and
Caution



Wynn-
Jones, Tim

14 +

Boy, did Blink get off on the wrong floor. All he wanted was to steal some breakfast for his empty belly, but instead he stumbled upon a fake kidnapping and a cell phone dropped by an "abducted" CEO, giving Blink a link to his perfect blonde daughter. Now Blink is on the run, but it's OK as long as he's smart enough to stay in the game and keep Captain Panic locked in his hold. Enter a girl named Caution. As in "Caution: Toxic." As in "Caution: Watch Your Step." She's also on the run, from a skeezy drug-dealer boyfriend and from a nightmare in her past that won't let her go. When she spies Blink at the train station, Caution can see he's an easy mark. But there's something about this naïve, skinny street punk, whom she only wanted to rob, that tugs at her heart, a heart she thought deserved not to feel. Charged with suspense and intrigue, this taut novel trails two deeply compelling characters as they forge a blackmail scheme that is foolhardy at best, disastrous at worst - along with a fated, tender partnership that will offer them each a rare chance for redemption.





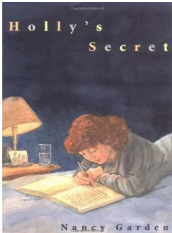
Fleischman,
P.

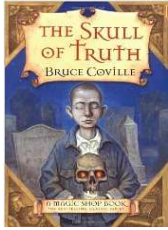


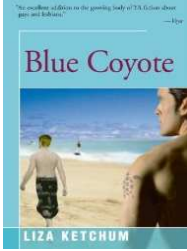
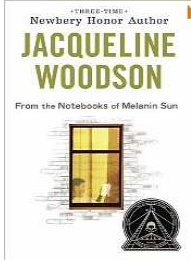
12+


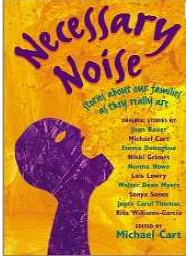


Seedfolks

A vacant lot, rat-infested and filled with garbage, looked like no place for a garden. Especially to a neighborhood of strangers where no one seems to care. Until one day, a young girl clears a small space and digs into the hard-packed soil to plant her precious bean seeds. Suddenly, the soil holds promise: To Curtis, who believes he can win back Lateesha's heart with a harvest of tomatoes; to Virgil's dad, who sees a fortune to be made from growing lettuce; and even to Maricela, sixteen and pregnant, wishing she were dead. Thirteen very different voices -- old, young, Haitian, Hispanic, tough, haunted, and hopeful -- tell one amazing story about a garden that transforms a neighborhood.

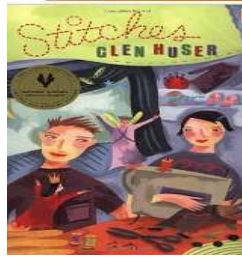
Equity Issues and Novels for Study or Read-Aloud - Gender, Gender Identity, Sex, Sexual Orientation

| Age Appropriate | Title | Author | Picture | Synopsis |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| 7 + | Box Girl | Withrow, Sarah |  The cover of 'Box Girl' shows a young girl in a pink shirt looking up at a man in a purple shirt who is lying on a bed with a colorful blanket. | The story of Gwen, whose mother ran away five years ago and whose father is gay. She struggles with friends, school and family. |
| 7 + | Case of the Stolen Scarab | Garden, Nancy |  The cover of 'Case of the Stolen Scarab' features a young boy and a man in a hat, with the title in large, stylized letters. | When Taylor-Michaelson family - Nikki and Travis and their two moms - buy an old inn in Vermont, they don't expect their first visitor to be the local sheriff with news of a robbery - and their second or be a bedraggled hiker with amnesia. Soon Nikki and Travis find themselves trying to solve a mystery that steadily grows more complicated. |
| 7 + | Faerie Wars | Brennan, Herbie | | The Fairie Wars is a blend of fantasy, mythology and science. When Henry learns that his dad and mom are separating because his mom is in love with another woman, he feels like his world is falling apart. Then he meets Pyrgus, a faerie crown prince from another world, and forgets his own troubles as he helps Pyrgus save his people from the Faeries of the night. |
| 7 + | Holly's Secret | Garden, Nancy |  The cover of 'Holly's Secret' shows a young girl with curly hair sitting at a desk, reading a book under a lamp. | When Holly's family moves to a new town, she changes her name and lies about her parents (two moms), hoping that she'll fit in. She learns that her true friends will stand by her and that love is the most important thing. |

| | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---|--|
| 7 + | Skull of Truth | Coville, Bruce |  | Charlie Eggleton stumbles into Mr. Elive's mysterious magic shop and finds the wisecracking skull that compels him to tell the truth...the skull also compels Charlie's favourite uncle to come out to his family. |
| 12+ | Am I Blue? | Baurer, Marion Dane |  | An anthology of stories by well-known children's authors, each portraying the subject and theme of growing up gay or lesbian, or with gay or lesbian parents or friends. Two of the stories feature LGBT parents in some way. |
| 12+ | Bad Boy | Wieler, D. |  | AJ thinks that all he wants in his life is to make the Triple A hockey team, with his best friend Tully. But when he learns that Tully is gay, he can't keep his fear and aggression from coming out onto the ice. He has to learn about friendship and to rebuild his trust in Tully. |
| 12+ | Blue Coyote | Ketchum, L. |  | Alex searches for his best friend who suddenly "disappears" in a veil of secrecy from their hometown. It's a suspenseful, emotional story of two teenage boys coming to terms with their sexuality and learning about the true value of friendship. |
| 12+ | From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun | Woodson, J. |  | When Melanin Sun's mother tells him she is in love with a woman, he has a decision to make; he will also learn the meaning of sacrifice, prejudice and love. |

| | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|---------------|---|---|
| 12+ | Geography Club | Hartinger, B. | | This is a fast paced, funny tale about teens who don't learn anything about Geography but discover plenty about the treacherous social terrain of high school. Their Geography club eventually becomes a Gay Straight Alliance club at the their school. |
| 12+ | Gravel Queen | Benduhn, T. |  | Life gets complicated when Aurin and Neila start getting close. Aurin has to maintain her existing friendships, despite her excitement about the uncertain future. This novel shows the celebratory, fun parts of teen life, and offers a positive outcome. |
| 12+ | Necessary Noise | ed. Cart, M. |  | This collection of stories includes pieces about all kinds of families, some about LGBT-headed ones. |
| 12+ | Out of the Shadows | Hines, S. |  | Rowena thinks her family is freakishly unique, and Jodie is afraid of her own feelings. They spend a long time not speaking about what really matters to them. They end up getting closer to each other, going through an array of feelings. |
| 12+ | Singing the Dogstar Blues | Goodman, A. |  | The two main characters in this mix of humor, science fiction, mystery and adventure are Joss, and earth teen, and Mavkel, an alien teen. In this coming-of-age story, Joss reconnects with her mom's ex-lover Louise, who was a pivotal figure while she was growing up. |

12+ Stitches Huser, Gary



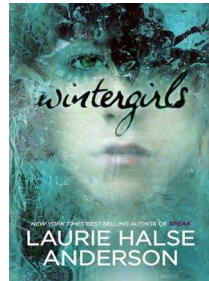
Travis knows he's different from his junior high classmates, he loves to sew and play with puppets. He want to become a professional puppeteer. These interests make Travis a ripe target for Shon and his friends, the school thugs. This story of the trials and tribulations of adolescence resonates with young adult readers.

12+ What Happened to Lani Garver? Plum-Ucci, C.



Lani is a new kid at school, and others are asking questions, mainly "Is Lani a boy or a girl?" Claire befriends Lani, but soon has to deal with shattered friendships and her own personal demons. The events that follow are tragic, and somewhat ambiguous, but the book does a wonderful job of introducing the concept of androgyny.

12+ Wintergirls Anderson, Laurie Halse

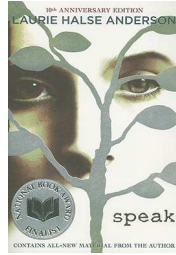


Lia and Cassie were best friends, wintergirls frozen in matchstick bodies. But now Cassie is dead. Lia's mother is busy saving other people's lives. Her father is away on business. Her stepmother is clueless. And the voice inside Lia's head keeps telling her to remain in control, stay strong, lose more, weigh less. If she keeps on going this way – thin, thinner, thinnest – maybe she'll disappear altogether. In her most emotionally wrenching, lyrically written book since the National Book Award finalist Speak, bestselling author Laurie Halse Anderson explores one girl's chilling descent into the all-consuming vortex of anorexia.

12+

Speak

Anderson,
Laurie Halse

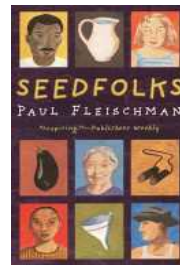


Melinda Sordino busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops. Now her old friends won't talk to her, and people she doesn't even know hate her from a distance. The safest place to be is alone, inside her own head. But even that's not safe. Because there's something she's trying not to think about, something about the night of the party that, if she let it in, would blow her carefully constructed disguise to smithereens. And then she would have to speak the truth.

12+

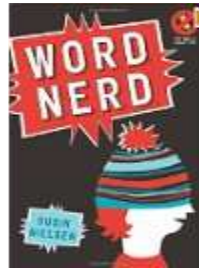
Seedfolks

Fleischman,
P.



A vacant lot, rat-infested and filled with garbage, looked like no place for a garden. Especially to a neighborhood of strangers where no one seems to care. Until one day, a young girl clears a small space and digs into the hard-packed soil to plant her precious bean seeds. Suddenly, the soil holds promise: To Curtis, who believes he can win back Lateesha's heart with a harvest of tomatoes; to Virgil's dad, who sees a fortune to be made from growing lettuce; and even to Maricela, sixteen and pregnant, wishing she were dead. Thirteen very different voices -- old, young, Haitian, Hispanic, tough, haunted, and hopeful -- tell one amazing story about a garden that transforms a neighborhood.

Word Nerd

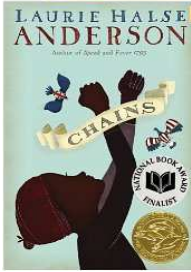



10+

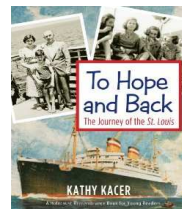
Nielsen, Susin

Twelve-year-old Ambrose is a glass-half-full kind of guy. A self-described “friendless nerd,” he moves from place to place every couple of years with his overprotective mother, Irene. When some bullies at his new school almost kill him by slipping a peanut into his sandwich — even though they know he has a deathly allergy — Ambrose is philosophical. Irene, however, is not and decides that Ambrose will be home-schooled....In this brilliantly observed novel, author Susin Nielsen transports the reader to the world of competitive Scrabble as seen from the honest yet funny viewpoint of a boy who’s searching for acceptance and for a place to call home.

Equity Issues and Novels for Study or Read-Aloud - Ancestry, Culture, Ethnicity, Language, Race, Religion

| <i>Age Appropriate</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Author</i> | <i>Picture</i> | <i>Synopsis</i> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| 12+ | Chains | Anderson, Laurie Halse |  | <p>As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight... for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom.</p> |
| 12+ | Goodbye Buffalo Bay | Loyie, Larry |  | <p>This memoir, a prose narrative, is Loyie's story of his time at the St. Bernard residential school on Buffalo Bay, and of his re-entry to the world beyond the school when, his education finished but by no means complete, he is sent home, not quite 14. It is an account of institutionalized emotional and physical brutality meted out by priests and nuns. It would be utterly heartbreaking were it not for Larry's resilience, his ability to survive the system, even overcome it, by learning how to stand up to the tyrannical – if not diabolical – Sister Denise, and how to find the best in the place in the form of the saintly Sister Theresa, whose time with Larry imparts in him a love of learning that will last for the rest of his life.</p> |

Lisa and Sol board the luxury ship St. Louis in Hamburg, Germany, on May 13, 1939. Lisa and her family are in first class; Sol and his parents are below in tourist class. The children have mixed feelings—they're excited to be beginning this voyage to a better life and sad to be leaving their old lives behind. They are Jewish, as are almost all of the 937 passengers on board, and although war has not been officially declared in Europe, the Nazis have been persecuting Jews for years. As they set sail for Cuba, the atmosphere on the ship is optimistic, led by the German captain Gustave Shröder, who is determined to see his passengers to safety. But as they learn that Hitler's propaganda has turned the country against them, the mood changes to despair. They are turned away—first from Cuba, then the United States, and then Canada. The story of Lisa and Sol is set against the tragic true history of the St. Louis. Denied entry from port after port, the captain was forced to return his Jewish passengers to Europe, where many died in the Holocaust. Through the eyes of Sol and Lisa, we see the injustice and hea



12+ To Hope and Back Kacer, Kathy

The House on Mango Street is the remarkable story of Esperanza Cordero. Told in a series of vignettes – sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous – it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.



12+ The House on Mango Street Cisneros, Sandra

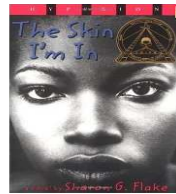
Jordan-
Fenton,
Christy and
Margaret

The moving memoir of an Inuit girl who emerges from a residential school with her spirit intact. Eight-year-old Margaret Pokiak has set her sights on learning to read, even though it means leaving her village in the high Arctic. Faced with unceasing pressure, her father finally agrees to let her make the five-day journey to attend school, but he warns Margaret of the terrors of residential schools. At school Margaret soon encounters the Raven, a black-cloaked nun with a hooked nose and bony fingers that resemble claws. She immediately dislikes the strong-willed young Margaret. Intending to humiliate her, the heartless Raven gives gray stockings to all the girls -- all except Margaret, who gets red ones. In an instant Margaret is the laughingstock of the entire school. In the face of such cruelty, Margaret refuses to be intimidated and bravely gets rid of the stockings. Although a sympathetic nun stands up for Margaret, in the end it is this brave young girl who gives the Raven a lesson in the power of human dignity.



10+ Fatty legs

10+ The Skin I'm In Flake,
Sharon G.

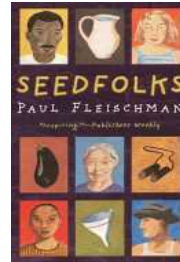


Thirteen-year-old Maleeka, uncomfortable because her skin is extremely dark, meets a new teacher with a birthmark on her face and makes some discoveries about how to love who she is and what she looks like.

12+

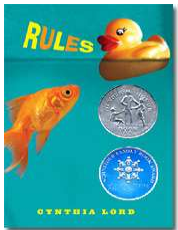
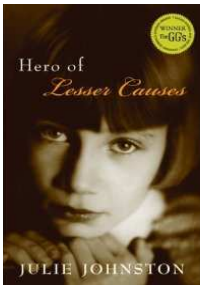
Seedfolks

Fleischman,
P.



A vacant lot, rat-infested and filled with garbage, looked like no place for a garden. Especially to a neighborhood of strangers where no one seems to care. Until one day, a young girl clears a small space and digs into the hard-packed soil to plant her precious bean seeds. Suddenly, the soil holds promise: To Curtis, who believes he can win back Lateesha's heart with a harvest of tomatoes; to Virgil's dad, who sees a fortune to be made from growing lettuce; and even to Maricela, sixteen and pregnant, wishing she were dead. Thirteen very different voices -- old, young, Haitian, Hispanic, tough, haunted, and hopeful -- tell one amazing story about a garden that transforms a neighborhood.

Equity Issues and Novels for Study or Read-Aloud - Age, Intellectual Ability, Physical Ability, Size

| <i>Age Appropriate</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Author</i> | <i>Picture</i> | <i>Synopsis</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---|--|
| 8+ | Rules | Lord, Cynthia |  | <p>This is the story of Catherine, a twelve-year-old girl who loves art and longs for a friend. Catherine is the sister and often-babysitter for her autistic brother, David, and she often has a hard time fitting in with her classmates because of David's behaviors. She works hard to help David be more "normal," specifically by giving him rules to live by that most people take for granted. Her best friend is away for the summer visiting her father, so Catherine is excited when she learns that the family moving in next door includes a girl her age. She spends most of her summer days helping her mother with David, visiting the clinic where David receives occupational therapy, and hoping that Christy, her new neighbor, will not be scared off by David's differences. At the clinic, Catherine befriends a wheelchair-bound boy named Jason who "talks" through a communication book he keeps with him at all times. The story somewhat predictably comes to a climax when Catherine must choose whether or not to invite Jason to a community dance when challenged to do so by Christy, who doesn't know about David.</p> |
| 12+ | Hero of Lesser Causes | Johnston, Julie |  | <p>World War II has just been won, and everything seems possible to young Keely Connor. She sees herself as a hero on a white charger, able to conquer the world, even though in reality her charger is Lola, the placid horse that lives in the field behind her house. One fateful summer day her brother Patrick is stricken with polio. Here is an enemy Keely cannot conquer. Frustrated by his near-total paralysis, the boy lashes out at family and friends, and castigates himself. Eager to bolster Patrick's morale, his sister enlists the help of best friend Ginny and Alex, a good-natured new neighbor. Although the story takes off slowly (a paragraph is spent on toasting bread), it accelerates into a spectacular novel, balancing coming-of-age angst with the grief from a sudden, devastating affliction.</p> |

12+

Stargirl

Spinelli,
Jerry



Leo Borlock follows the unspoken rule at Mica Area High School: don't stand out--under any circumstances! Then Stargirl arrives at Mica High and everything changes--for Leo and for the entire school. After 15 years of home schooling, Stargirl bursts into tenth grade in an explosion of color and a clatter of ukulele music, enchanting the Mica student body. But the delicate scales of popularity suddenly shift, and Stargirl is shunned for everything that makes her different. Somewhere in the midst of Stargirl's arrival and rise and fall, normal Leo Borlock has tumbled into love with her. In a celebration of nonconformity, Jerry Spinelli weaves a tense, emotional tale about the fleeting, cruel nature of popularity--and the thrill and inspiration of first love.

12+

Egghead

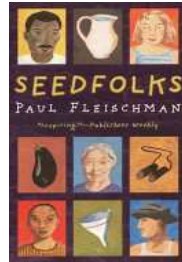
Pignat,
Caroline



Will Reid is a gawky kid who wears fake turtlenecks, is obsessed by his ant farm project, and is lousy at gym. In other words, he's the perfect target for Shane, the Grade 9 bully. Katie has been Will's friend in elementary school, but defending him in the high school environment comes at an unforeseen cost - she dreads the rumours that link them in a boyfriend/girlfriend way she's never considered. Devan has been part of Shane's bullyboy team until now, when he comes to realize that it's not so smart to mindlessly back up each nasty attack of Shane's. Together the three young teens are struggling to find their way out of one of the classic dilemmas of life: how not to be a bystander to bullying, how to stand up for your friends, and how to deal with consuming rage

12+

Fleischman,
Seedfolks P.



A vacant lot, rat-infested and filled with garbage, looked like no place for a garden. Especially to a neighborhood of strangers where no one seems to care. Until one day, a young girl clears a small space and digs into the hard-packed soil to plant her precious bean seeds. Suddenly, the soil holds promise: To Curtis, who believes he can win back Lateesha's heart with a harvest of tomatoes; to Virgil's dad, who sees a fortune to be made from growing lettuce; and even to Maricela, sixteen and pregnant, wishing she were dead. Thirteen very different voices -- old, young, Haitian, Hispanic, tough, haunted, and hopeful -- tell one amazing story about a garden that transforms a neighborhood.

10+

Firegirl Abbott, Tony



Tom's a normal seventh-grader, negotiating a slightly prickly stage in his long friendship with Jeff...The arrival of new girl Jessica Feeney, however, changes everything; Jessica, who is attending a local hospital for treatment, has been badly burned by a fire, and her terrible disfigurement shocks the class into confusion. This isn't the usual book about adjustment to difference; instead, Abbott brilliantly explores the kids' struggle to manage the intrusion of abnormality in their lives...this is a thoughtful exploration of a brief interlude's lasting impact