

ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY LITERACY OFFICE
ADULT NEW READER BOOK CLUB COLLECTIONS

For more information, check the website at http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/literacy/book_clubs.html or call the Literacy Office at 217-785-6921 or 1-800-665-5576, x3.

Titles are arranged by **Grade Level**.

***The Barrio Kings* by William Kowalski**

The Barrio Kings tells the story of a young gang member who grows up in a rough neighborhood. After his brother is killed, he decides to try to make more of himself. The book recounts the challenges Rosario Gomez faces as he works toward getting his GED and taking care of his family.

Grade Level: 2-3

Themes: ESL, gang life, adult education

Presentation: rapid read

***Just Gone* by William Kowalski**

Seven year old Jamal and his fourteen year old sister land at Mother Anquelique's inner-city shelter when their mother is killed. There Jamal talks about Jacky Wacky who protects poor city children and punishes the adults who harm them. This short book unites mystical urban legends and action filled real life as Mother Angelique begins to wonder what Jamal knows that she does not understand

Grade Level: 2 3

Themes: homelessness, supernatural, urban life

Presentation: rapid read

***The Spider Bites* by Medora Sale**

Detective Rick "The Spider" Montoya has been framed for a crime he did not commit and his marriage is on the rocks because of his drinking. In this engaging story Rick becomes entangled in a twisted tale of set-ups, fires, missing people and death.

Grade Level: 2 3

Themes: mystery, marriage, trust

Presentation: rapid read

***The Way It Works* by William Kowalski**

Walter Davis is a young, ambitious college graduate who happens to be homeless. He believes that by living in his car for a short while, he will be able to find a job and set his life on the path to success. Unfortunately, a budding relationship with a young lady is disrupted by bad luck as he tries to hide the fact that he is homeless. He uses intelligence and ambition to turn around his situation.

Grade Level: 2-3

Themes: African American, homelessness, entrepreneurship

Presentation: rapid read

***Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story* by Ben Carson**

This is the inspiring, true story of Benjamin Carson; once a black child from the Detroit ghetto, now a renowned neurosurgeon. When Ben Carson was in middle school, he had the lowest grades in his class and was teased because of it. Worse yet, he didn't believe in himself. Read *Gifted Hands* to learn of how hard work and positive influences can make all the difference in your life. DVD included.

Grade Level: 4-5

Themes: hope, faith, persistence, racism

Presentation: biography

***The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros**

This is a story based on the author's life as a young Hispanic girl who faces challenges as she grows up in a Latino section of Chicago. Esperanza's story is told in a series of brief, poetic vignettes. Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 4-5

Themes: immigration, hispanic culture, writing, poetry

Presentation: short vignettes

***Seedfolks* by Paul Fleishman**

Set in Cleveland, Ohio, *Seedfolks* tells the story of the creation of a community garden that changes the lives of the neighbors surrounding the garden. The story is told from the perspective of a diverse group of characters – young, old, immigrants, Americans, etc. Each character is unique but together they create a vibrant, real community. Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 4-5

Themes: community, multi-culture, communication

Presentation: vignettes

***Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck**

George and Lennie are two crop hands who want to own their own acre of land with their own house and farm animals. The two men are working at a ranch and seem to be getting close to realizing their dream when tragedy strikes and all hope of their dream seems to be lost. A literary classic! Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 4-5

Themes: friendship, loneliness, the Great Depression

Presentation: chapter book

***DK Biography: Mother Teresa* by Maya Gold**

Mother Teresa was a remarkable woman who made the world a better place for thousands of poor, orphaned and ill around the world. This biography illustrates how Catholic nun Agnes Bojaxhiu, influenced people around the world through her work in Calcutta, India as one of the Missionaries of Charity. She once said "Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.

Grade Level: 5-6

Themes: poverty, humanitarian work, religion

Presentation: biography

***DK Biography: Nelson Mandela* by Lenny Hort**

Nelson Mandela served 27 years in prison, yet went on to be South Africa's first black President. An amazing man, he suffered imprisonment and exile to end apartheid in his beloved native country. This biography tells of Nelson Mandela's childhood through adulthood; it is an interesting read filled with photographs.

Grade Level: 5-6

Themes: social activism, apartheid, history

Presentation: biography

***Hope Was Here* by Joan Bauer**

Tulip is a teenage girl whose mother abandoned her as an infant and who never knew her dad. But she and her aunt are looking for a brighter future so Tulip changes her name to Hope and they move to Wisconsin. There they both find the new directions they needed, including a political race, new relationships and a new sense of self. Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 5-6

Themes: friendship, ethics, changes

Presentation: chapter book

***Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis**

A coming of age story set in 1936 in Flint, Michigan where an orphaned 14 year old boy sets out to find his estranged father. Through a series of circumstances Bud finds a place to call home and people to call family. Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 5-6

Themes: poverty, racism, perseverance

Presentation: chapter book

***Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan**

Esperanza Rising tells the story of a young Mexican girl during the Great Depression. Esperanza lives a charmed life as a Mexican rancher's daughter until her father is killed. She and her mother must flee Mexico to California to make a new life for themselves. Find out what Esperanza must do to make the United States her home. Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 5-6

Themes: immigration, Great Depression, family

Presentation: chapter book

***To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee**

We are not born with hatred and prejudice. *To Kill A Mockingbird* demonstrates how we each choose to react to our experiences and form opinions about the world. A truly classic novel. Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 5-6

Themes: good vs. evil, small town living, racism

Presentation: chapter book

***Three Little Words* by Ashley Rhodes-Courter**

This memoir tells the story of a woman who entered the foster care system as a four year old and the challenges she endured in her numerous placements. Her final placement was with a wonderful couple who demonstrated to her that she was both loveable and promising. Read it to find out what the three little words are. Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 5-6

Themes: adoption, foster care, child abuse

Presentation: chapter book

***Abraham Lincoln: Photobiography* by Russell Freedman**

This biography is rich with photos of Mr. Lincoln throughout his life. Lincoln was a man who lived many years of his adult life in Springfield, Illinois. The text gives insight into his childhood, courtship with Mary Todd, his family life as well as his political career and the American Civil War. Through this book the reader will become well acquainted with Mr. Lincoln. Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 6-7

Themes: history, American Civil War, abolition, late 20th century life

Presentation: photobiography

***Of Beetles & Angels* by Mawi Asgedom**

Of Beetles & Angles tells the true story of a young Eritrean boy who emigrates from Sudan with his mother, sister and brother to join his father in the U.S. The book tells the amazing story of his family's adjustment moving from a Sudanese refugee camp to suburban Chicago and ultimately to Harvard University.

Grade Level: 7-8

Themes: immigration, helping others, refugees, writing, memoirs

Presentation: chapter book

***An Invisible Thread* by Laura Schroff**

This book is based on the true story of a young, homeless boy and a female executive in New York City. A chance meeting on the streets allowed for a life changing relationship to develop for both Laura and Maurice. The story tells how their chance meeting led to a thirty year friendship and transformed each of them. Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 7-8

Themes: urban life, homelessness, African-American, poverty

Presentation: chapter book

***The Buddha in the Attic* by Julie Otsuka**

This book tells the story of a group of young Japanese women who were brought to San Francisco as picture brides in the early 1900's. The first person account of their arrival in the U.S., meeting their husbands, their work, their children, provides a stark look at their transition to a new land and a new life. Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 8-9

Themes: immigration, ESL, motherhood, spirituality, Asian culture and history

Presentation: chapter book

The Other Wes Moore by Wes Moore

Two boys named Wes Moore, are born within twelve months of each other and grow up blocks from each other in Baltimore. Although they don't know one another, their lives have numerous similarities as well as differences. This book explores how circumstances and decisions impact lives. Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 8-9

Themes: African American, urban life, trials, crime, substance abuse

Presentation: chapter book

The Twelve Tribes of Hattie by Ayana Mathis

As a young girl, Hattie flees Georgia for Philadelphia as part of the Great Migration in the 1920's. Hattie has eleven children and a grandchild who make up the twelve tribes; a chapter for each one. She raises her children to prepare them for the difficulties she is sure they will encounter in life, as she has. The story is deep and moving and demonstrates strength, forgiveness and redemption Audio CD included.

Grade Level: 8-9

Themes: African American, infidelity, drug abuse, death, hardship, poverty, social reform

Presentation: chapter book, each chapter stands alone