



The Hope in a Box 50

Fifty books for an LGBTQ-
inclusive English classroom



***The Hope in a Box 50* is a curated primer in LGBTQ English literature for middle and high school students.**

Hope in a Box, Inc. is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit working to ensure that every student feels safe, welcome, and included at school—regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. We donate “Hope in a Box” to educators: books featuring LGBTQ characters, detailed curricula for these books, and coaching on LGBTQ themes and inclusive pedagogy.

The Hope in a Box 50 was developed in collaboration with dozens of teachers and university professors across the United States. It draws on book award lists, school lesson plans, literary criticism, and lived classroom experience. This list focuses on young adult literature and represents a range of time periods, formats, and identities.

For questions, comments, or press inquiries, contact the Hope in a Box Program Director, Daniel Tartakovsky, at daniel@hopeinabox.org.

For more information, visit www.hopeinabox.org, and follow us on Facebook and Twitter @HopeinaBoxInc

Note: Some educators have requested a version of the list that they can easily copy paste. Here is a Google spreadsheet with the list of 50 books and their descriptions: <https://tinyurl.com/y2ctwx7u>

The Hope in a Box 50 LGBTQ-inclusive books

Within each group, sorted alphabetically by author last name

✓ Hope in a Box Curriculum Guide available

	Last name	First name	Title
Middle school	Bigelow	Lisa Jenn	Hazel's Theory of Evolution
	Bunker	Lisa	Felix Yz
	Clark	Cat	The Pants Project
	✓ Gino	Alex	George
	Hennessey	M.G.	The Other Boy
	✓ Herring Blake	Ashley	Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World
	Hitchcock	Shannon	One True Way
	Holt	K.A.	Redwood and Ponytail
	Howe	James	Totally Joe
	Knowles	Jo	See You At Harry's
	Polonsky	Ami	Gracefully Grayson
Woodson	Jacqueline	The House You Pass on the Way	
Middle & early high school	Callender	Kacen	Hurricane Child
	Emezi	Akwaeke	Pet
	Green, Levithan	John, David	Will Grayson, Will Grayson
	LaCour	Nina	We Are Okay
	✓ Levithan	David	Boy Meets Boy
	Miller	Madeline	The Song of Achilles
	Okparanta	Chinelo	Under the Udala Trees
	Renault	Mary	The Charioteer
	✓ Saenz	Benjamin	Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe
	Selvadurai	Shyam	Funny Boy
	Silvera	Adam	They Both Die at the End
Williamson	Lisa	The Art of Being Normal	
High school	Allison	Dorothy	A Bastard Out of Carolina
	Anzaldúa	Gloria	Borderlands/La Frontera
	✓ Baldwin	James	Giovanni's Room
	✓ Bechdel	Alison	Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic
	Cunningham	Michael	The Hours
	Danforth	Emily	The Miseducation of Cameron Post
	Eugenides	Jeffrey	Middlesex
	Fu	Kim	For Today I Am A Boy
	Greer	Andrew	Less
	✓ Kaufman	Moisés	The Laramie Project
	Kramer	Larry	The Normal Heart
	McCullers	Carson	The Heart is a Lonely Hunter
	✓ Nazemian	Abdi	Like a Love Story
	Rothman-Zecher	Moriel	Sadness is a White Bird
	Russo	Meredith	If I Was Your Girl
	Sedaris	David	Me Talk Pretty One Day
	Talley	Robin	Lies We Tell Ourselves
	Torres	Justin	We the Animals
	Truong	Monique	The Book of Salt
	Walker	Alice	The Color Purple
	Whaley	John Corey	Highly Illogical Behavior
	✓ Wilde	Oscar	The Picture of Dorian Gray
	Wilson	Martin	What They Always Tell Us
Womack	Craig	Drowning in Fire	
✓ Woodson	Jacqueline	Red at the Bone	
Woolf	Virginia	Mrs. Dalloway	

Middle school books (page 1 of 3)

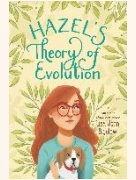
Sorted alphabetically by author last name

✓ Hope in a Box Curriculum Guide available

Last name	First name	Title
-----------	------------	-------

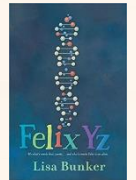
Bigelow	Lisa Jenn	Hazel's Theory of Evolution
----------------	------------------	------------------------------------

Goodreads: Hazel knows all about life on Earth...when she's not hanging out with her best friend, Becca, or helping care for the goats on her family's farm, she loves reading through dusty old encyclopedias. But even Hazel doesn't have answers for the questions awaiting her as she enters eighth grade. Due to redistricting, she has to attend a new school where she worries no one will understand her. And at home things get worse when she discovers one of her moms is pregnant. Hazel can't wait to be a big sister, but her mom has already miscarried twice. Hazel fears it might happen again....As Hazel struggles through the next few months, she'll grow to realize that if the answers to life's most important questions can't be found in a book, she'll have to find them within herself.



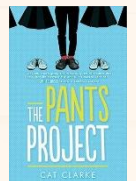
Bunker	Lisa	Felix Yz
---------------	-------------	-----------------

Amazon: When Felix Yz was three years old, a hyperintelligent fourth-dimensional being became fused inside him after one of his father's science experiments went terribly wrong. The creature is friendly, but Felix—now thirteen—won't be able to grow to adulthood while they're still melded together. So a risky Procedure is planned to separate them...but it may end up killing them both instead. This book is Felix's secret blog, a chronicle of the days leading up to the Procedure....When it all might be over in a few days, what matters most?



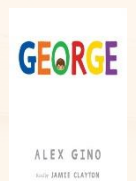
Clark	Cat	The Pants Project
--------------	------------	--------------------------

Kirkus: In a few months, Liv effects a major change in his new middle school's antiquated dress code while simultaneously acquiring the courage to come out as transgender. From the start, readers are drawn into the story by 11-year-old Liv's believable, humor-tinged narration...Liv has become increasingly less tolerant of being assigned female pronouns and the name "Olivia." Being required to wear a skirt daily at middle school is the last straw. He—still "she" to others—works to convince the school's new principal that students should have some choice in clothing...Along the way, he contends with a mean-spirited bully and the loss of a former friend even as he makes new, more loyal friends and wrestles with his own shortcomings...Liv's two moms add further dimension to a tale that unabashedly affirms the importance of accepting and celebrating differences.



Gino	Alex	George
-------------	-------------	---------------

Stonewall Book Awards Winner. Kirkus: George, a fourth-grader who knows she is a girl, despite appearances, begins to tell her secret. The word "transgender" is used midway through, but far more work is done by the simple choice to tell George's story using third-person narration and the pronouns "she" and "her." Readers then cringe as much as George herself when bullies mock her or—perhaps worse—when well-meaning friends and family reassure her with sentiments like "I know you'll turn into a fine young man." Each year the fourth-graders at George's school perform a dramatized version of Charlotte's Web...George becomes convinced that if she plays Charlotte, her mom will finally see her as a girl...A coda to the Charlotte's Web story, in which George presents herself as a girl for the first time, is deeply moving in its simplicity and joy. Warm, funny, and inspiring.



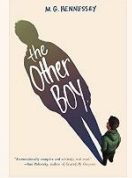
Middle school books (page 2 of 3)

Sorted alphabetically by author last name

✓ Hope in a Box Curriculum Guide available

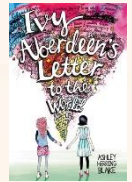
Last name	First name	Title
Hennessey	MG	The Other Boy

Kirkus: Twelve-year-old Shane Woods is seriously into baseball, video games, the graphic novel he's drawing, and a redheaded classmate named Madeline...The white sixth-grader has been inseparable from his Chinese-American best friend, Josh Choi, since they met, but Josh can tell Shane's distracted by something. Josh figures it's Madeline, but Shane's about to get a prescription for testosterone...Shane is in "stealth mode," when a trans person keeps their gender status private until they share it with someone important to them. It's bugging Shane that he hasn't told Josh...His own story is ripped out of his control when a bully finds out and spreads it around the whole school...The adults in Shane's life don't always get everything right, but they basically want to support him, which feels both realistic and aspirational...This is the story with a triumphant-but-realistic ending that trans kids haven't had enough of. It's challenging but not tragic, and it ends with bright, beautiful hope.



Herring Blake	Ashley	Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World
---------------	--------	------------------------------------

Goodreads: When a tornado rips through town, twelve-year-old Ivy Aberdeen's house is destroyed and her family of five is displaced. Ivy feels invisible and ignored in the aftermath of the storm--and what's worse, her notebook filled with secret drawings of girls holding hands has gone missing. Mysteriously, Ivy's drawings begin to reappear in her locker with notes from someone telling her to open up about her identity. Ivy thinks--and hopes--that this someone might be her classmate, another girl for whom Ivy has begun to develop a crush. Will Ivy find the strength and courage to follow her true feelings?



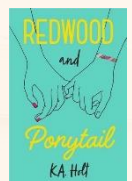
Hitchcock	Shannon	One True Way
-----------	---------	--------------

Kirkus: In 1977 North Carolina, a mutual crush is not so simple for seventh-grade girls Allie and Sam. Following the death of her older brother, Allie and her mom leave New Jersey and Allie's father behind. At her new school, Allie joins the newspaper staff and befriends charismatic, tomboyish Sam. When the girls' feelings for each other bloom beyond friendship, they feel pressured to keep their secret...[The] town's animosity toward two lesbian teachers is a harrowing example for how some view same-sex relationships...Allie feels shame for disappointing her mother and snaps a rubber band against her wrist whenever she thinks about kissing Sam, while for Sam it may never be safe to come out in her conservative Christian household. Throughout, Allie asks "hard questions" about whether homosexuality is right in the eyes of the Bible or her community. Ultimately and affirmingly, her adult role models encourage her to be true to herself. A compelling and honest addition to the few existing stories about gay middle schoolers.



Holt	K.A.	Redwood and Ponytail
------	------	----------------------

Kirkus: Two middle school girls grapple with their blossoming feelings for each other in this verse novel. Tam is a volleyball player sometimes mistaken for a boy. Kate is a popular cheerleader...When they meet face to face, they strike an immediate rapport. Soon the two are having lunch together every day and linking pinkies in the halls. As they grow closer, each finds herself questioning who she thought she was...Tam and Kate share the first-person narration, which keenly conveys each girl's joys and inner turmoil...A trio of unseen watchers...represent the observant school-hallway bystanders, providing commentary and speculation in the manner of a Greek chorus. Their verses can be read vertically or horizontally, resulting in multiple meanings...A glowing, heartfelt addition to the middle-grade LGBTQ genre.



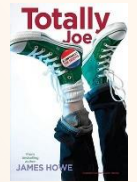
Middle school books (page 3 of 3)

Sorted alphabetically by author last name

Last name	First name	Title
-----------	------------	-------

Howe	James	Totally Joe
-------------	--------------	--------------------

Simon & Schuster: Meet Joe Bunch. Lovable misfit and celebrity wannabe from Paintbrush Falls, New York. Like his longtime best friends Addie, Skeezie, and Bobby, Joe's been called names all his life. So when he's given the assignment to write his alphabiography -- the story of his life from A to Z -- Joe has his doubts. This whole thing could be serious ammunition for bullying if it falls into the wrong hands. But Joe discovers there's more to the assignment -- and his life -- than meets the eye. Especially when he gets to the letter C, which stands for Colin Briggs, the coolest guy in the seventh grade (seriously) -- and Joe's secret boyfriend. By the time Joe gets to the letter Z, he's pretty much bared his soul about everything. And Joe's okay with that because he likes who he is. He's Totally Joe, and that's the best thing for him to be. Here is an exuberant, funny, totally original story of one boy's coming out -- and coming-of-age.



Knowles	Jo	See You At Harry's
----------------	-----------	---------------------------

Amazon: Starting middle school brings all the usual challenges -- until the unthinkable happens, and Fern and her family must find a way to heal. Twelve-year-old Fern feels invisible. It seems as though everyone in her family has better things to do than pay attention to her...If it wasn't for Ran, Fern's calm and positive best friend, there'd be nowhere to turn. Ran's mantra, "All will be well," is soothing in a way that nothing else seems to be. And when Ran says it, Fern can almost believe it's true. But then tragedy strikes- and Fern feels not only more alone than ever, but also responsible for the accident that has wrenched her family apart. All will not be well. Or at least all will never be the same.



Polonsky	Ami	Gracefully Grayson
-----------------	------------	---------------------------

Amazon: Grayson Sender has been holding onto a secret for what seems like forever: "he" is a girl on the inside, stuck in the wrong gender's body. The weight of this secret is crushing, but sharing it would mean facing ridicule, scorn, rejection, or worse. Despite the risks, Grayson's true self itches to break free. Will new strength from an unexpected friendship and a caring teacher's wisdom be enough to help Grayson step into the spotlight she was born to inhabit? Debut author Ami Polonsky's moving, beautifully-written novel about identity, self-esteem, and friendship shines with the strength of a young person's spirit and the enduring power of acceptance



Woodson	Jacqueline	The House You Pass on the Way
----------------	-------------------	--------------------------------------

Kirkus: The middle child in the county's only mixed-race family, Evangeline defiantly changed her name years ago to Staggerlee, after the anti-hero in a ballad, but the finger-pointing has driven her within herself, leaving her friendless and lonely--lonelier still for the memory of the pleasure she took in kissing a girl in grade school. Along comes Trout, another self-named teenager, from a branch of the family that had cut off her parents after their marriage. The attraction is quick, strong, and mutual; Trout's visit may be a short one, but it's long enough for each to open up, find the courage to say the word gay--and to remember that they're only 14, too young to close off options. Woodson takes readers another step down the road when Trout later writes to admit that she's gone head over heels for a guy, and Staggerlee, though feeling betrayed, realizes that she and Trout are both growing and going their own ways. A provocative topic, treated with wisdom and sensitivity, with a strong secondary thread exploring some of the inner and outer effects of biracialism.



Middle school & early high school books (page 1 of 3)

Sorted alphabetically by author last name

Last name	First name	Title
-----------	------------	-------

Callender	Kacen	Hurricane Child
------------------	--------------	------------------------

Kirkus: Born during a storm, Caroline Murphy, a 12-year-old black girl, is convinced that she has been cursed with bad luck....Recent events in her life seem to confirm this...She is bullied by those at her school in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands...the arrival of a new student from Barbados changes Caroline's life significantly. Also bullied, the exuberantly dreadlocked Kalinda becomes Caroline's first and only friend, and soon Caroline's feelings blossom into something more than platonic. This spells problems for Caroline, since feelings like these are considered sinful in Catholic school...Her journey to the answers to her most burning questions finds her discovering much about herself and those around her...Embedding her appealing protagonist in a fully realized Caribbean setting, Callender has readers rooting for Caroline the whole way.



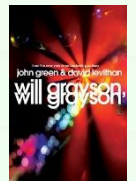
Emezi	Akwaeke	Pet
--------------	----------------	------------

Kirkus: Teenager Jam unwittingly animates her mother's painting, summoning a being through a cross-dimensional portal. When Pet, giant and grotesque, bursts into her life...Jam learns it has emerged to hunt and needs the help of a human who can go places it cannot. Through their telekinetic connection, Jam learns that though all the monsters were thought to have been purged by the angels, one still roams the house of her best friend, Redemption, and Jam must uncover it...Jam's parents strongly affirm...her trans identity, and Redemption's three parents are dedicated and caring...Still, Emezi's timely and critical point, "monsters don't look like anything," encourages our steady vigilance to recognize and identify them even in the most idyllic of settings. This soaring novel shoots for the stars and explodes the sky with its bold brilliance.



Green Levithan	John & David	Will Grayson, Will Grayson
---------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------------

Kirkus: Will Grayson loves indie rock, plays the eye-rolling angry stepchild to his extraordinarily giant, lovable, gay best friend Tiny Cooper and doesn't realize that he yearns for his other indie-rock-loving friend Jane until it's too late. will grayson (he never uses uppercase) hates most everything except sharing an XXL coffee with his best friend Maura each morning and covertly conversing with his Internet boyfriend every night....Green and Levithan craft an intellectually existential, electrically ebullient love story that brilliantly melds the ridiculous with the realistic. In alternating chapters from Will and will, each character comes lovingly to life, especially Tiny Cooper, whose linebacker-sized, heart-on-his-sleeve personality could win over the grouchiest of grouches....heir story, along with the rest of the cast's, will have readers simultaneously laughing, crying and singing at the top of their lungs.



LaCour	Nina	We Are Okay
---------------	-------------	--------------------

Kirkus: "If only lonely were a more accurate word. It should sound much less pretty." It's December in New York, and college freshman Marin is in her dorm room, contemplating a solitary monthlong stay after everyone else has left for winter break. Her single respite will be a brief visit from her best friend, Mabel. Marin is dreading the stay for reasons that are revealed in flashbacks: she fled San Francisco without informing anyone after the sudden death of her beloved Gramps, who raised her. Over the course of three days, secrets about Gramps, Marin's long-dead mother, and the girls' complicated relationship are revealed in short, exquisite sentences...A surprise arrival at story's end leads to a tearful resolution of Marin's sorrow and a heartfelt renewal of her relationship with Mabel and her family...An elegantly crafted paean to the cleansing power of truth.



Middle school & early high school books (page 2 of 3)

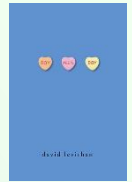
Sorted alphabetically by author last name

✓ Hope in a Box Curriculum Guide available

Last name	First name	Title
-----------	------------	-------

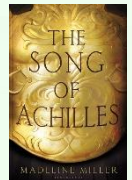
Levithan	David	Boy Meets Boy
-----------------	--------------	----------------------

Winner of the Lambda Literary Award. Kirkus: Somewhere on the eastern coast of the US...is a town where six-foot-five drag queens play high-school football, kindergarten teachers write comments like "Definitely gay and has a very good sense of self" on student report cards, quiz-bowl teams are as important as football teams, and cheerleaders ride Harleys. Paul and his friends go to high school in this town. Paul meets Noah, falls for him, does something dumb, and loses him. The last half of the story is about Paul working to get Noah back. Paul narrates his own story, and he talks and thinks like teens wish they did, much like Buffy the Vampire Slayer and her Scooby squad. Paul learns that love is still scary when boy meets boy even if it's as accepted as mom's apple pie. With wry humor, wickedly quirky and yet real characters, and real situations, this is a must for any library serving teens.



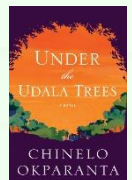
Miller	Madeline	The Song of Achilles
---------------	-----------------	-----------------------------

Goodreads: Greece in the age of heroes. Patroclus, an awkward young prince, has been exiled to the court of King Peleus and his perfect son Achilles. By all rights their paths should never cross, but Achilles takes the shamed prince as his friend, and as they grow into young men skilled in the arts of war and medicine their bond blossoms into something deeper - despite the displeasure of Achilles' mother Thetis, a cruel sea goddess. But then word comes that Helen of Sparta has been kidnapped. Torn between love and fear for his friend, Patroclus journeys with Achilles to Troy, little knowing that the years that follow will test everything they hold dear. Profoundly moving and breathtakingly original, this rendering of the epic Trojan War is a dazzling feat of the imagination, a devastating love story, and an almighty battle between gods and kings, peace and glory, immortal fame and the human heart.



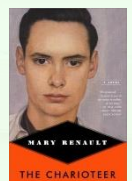
Okparanta	Chinelo	Under the Udala Trees
------------------	----------------	------------------------------

Goodreads: Inspired by Nigeria's folktales and its war, Under the Udala Trees is a deeply searching, powerful debut about the dangers of living and loving openly. Ijeoma comes of age as her nation does; born before independence, she is eleven when civil war breaks out in the young republic of Nigeria. Sent away to safety, she meets another displaced child and they...fall in love. They are from different ethnic communities. They are also both girls. When their love is discovered, Ijeoma learns that she will have to hide this part of herself. But there is a cost to living inside a lie.



Renault	Mary	The Charioteer
----------------	-------------	-----------------------

Goodreads: After enduring an injury at Dunkirk during World War II, Laurie Odell is sent to a rural veterans' hospital in England. There he befriends the young, bright Andrew, a conscientious objector serving as an orderly. As they find solace and companionship together in the idyllic surroundings of the hospital, their friendship blooms into a discreet, chaste romance. Then one day, Ralph Lanyon, a mentor from Laurie's schoolboy days, reappears in Laurie's life and draws him into a tight-knit social circle of world-weary gay men. Laurie must choose between the sweet ideals of innocence and the distinct pleasures of experience.



Middle school & early high school books (page 3 of 3)

Sorted alphabetically by author last name

✓ Hope in a Box Curriculum Guide available

Last name **First name** **Title**

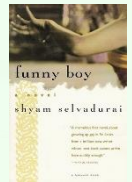
Saenz **Benjamin** **Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe**

Kirkus: A boring summer stretches ahead of Ari, who at 15 feels hemmed in by a life filled with rules and family secrets. He doesn't know why his older brother is in prison...His father also keeps his experience in Vietnam locked up inside. On a whim, Ari heads to the town swimming pool, where a boy he's never met offers to teach him to swim. Ari, a loner who's good in a fight, is caught off guard by the self-assured, artistic Dante. The two develop an easy friendship...discussing life's big questions, and wondering when they'll be old enough to take on the world. An accident near the end of summer complicates their friendship while bringing their families closer...Meticulous pacing and finely nuanced characters underpin the author's gift for affecting prose that illuminates the struggles within relationships



Selvadurai **Shyam** **Funny Boy**

Winner of the Lambda Literary Award. Goodreads: In the world of his large family, affluent Tamils living in Colombo [Sri Lanka], Arjie is an oddity, a 'funny boy' who prefers dressing as a girl to playing cricket with his brother. In Funny Boy we follow the life of the family through Arjie's eyes, as he comes to terms both with his own homosexuality and with the racism of the society in which he lives. In the north of Sri Lanka there is a war going on between the army and the Tamil Tigers, and gradually it begins to encroach on the family's comfortable life. Sporadic acts of violence flare into full scale riots and lead, ultimately, to tragedy. Written in clear, simple prose, Syam Selvadurai's first novel is masterly in its mingling of the personal and political.



Silvera **Adam** **They Both Die at the End**

"Kirkus Best Books of 2017 and NYT bestseller. Kirkus: What would you do with one day left to live? In an alternate present, a company named Death-Cast calls Deckers—people who will die within the coming day—to inform them of their impending deaths, though not how they will happen. The End Day call comes for two teenagers living in New York City: Puerto Rican Mateo and bisexual Cuban-American foster kid Rufus. Rufus needs company after a violent act puts cops on his tail and lands his friends in jail; Mateo wants someone to push him past his comfort zone after a lifetime of playing it safe. The two meet through Last Friend, an app that connects lonely Deckers (one of many ways in which Death-Cast influences social media). Mateo and Rufus set out to seize the day together in their final hours, during which their deepening friendship blossoms into something more...Engrossing, contemplative, and as heart-wrenching as the title promises."



Williamson **Lisa** **The Art of Being Normal**

Kirkus: Two British transgender teens try to come to terms with their lives while facing serious bullying in their school. Fourteen-year-old David has always known that she wants to be a girl but has kept it secret from everyone...Fifteen-year-old Leo, on the other hand, was born with a girl's body but has lived as a boy most of his life...An attack at school leads him to transfer to David's much-better one. Leo arrives with a reputation as a tough guy and just wants to remain alone to do his schoolwork, at which he excels, but falls for Alicia and begins dating her—until she learns that he's biologically female. David and Leo initially come together as math tutee and tutor but slowly become friends. The two teens share their secrets, but can closeted David and outwardly, comfortably male Leo really help each other?...A welcome, needed novel.



High school books (page 1 of 6)

Sorted alphabetically by author last name

✓ Hope in a Box Curriculum Guide available

Last name **First name** **Title**

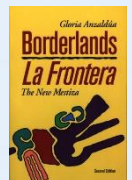
Allison **Dorothy** **Bastard Out of Carolina**

National Book Award Finalist. Amazon: Carolina in the 1950s, and Bone - christened Ruth Anna Boatwright - lives a happy life, in and out of her aunt's houses, playing with her cousins on the porch, sipping ice tea, loving her little sister Reece and her beautiful young mother. But Glen Waddell has been watching them all, wanting her mother too, and when he promises a new life for the family, her mother gratefully accepts. Soon Bone finds herself in a different, terrible world, living in fear, and an exile from everything she knows. *Bastard Out of Carolina* is a raw, poignant tale of fury, power, love and family.



Anzaldúa **Gloria** **Borderlands/La Frontera**

Goodreads: Anzaldua, a Chicana native of Texas, explores in prose and poetry the murky, precarious existence of those living on the frontier between cultures and languages. Writing in a lyrical mixture of Spanish and English that is her unique heritage, she meditates on the condition of Chicanos in Anglo culture, women in Hispanic culture, and lesbians in the straight world. Her essays and poems range over broad territory, moving from the plight of undocumented migrant workers to memories of her grandmother, from Aztec religion to the agony of writing. Anzaldua is a rebellious and willful talent who recognizes that life on the border, "life in the shadows," is vital territory for both literature and civilization.



Baldwin **James** **Giovanni's Room**

Ranked #1 on The Advocate's list of best LGBT novels of all time. Goodreads: Baldwin's haunting and controversial second novel is his most sustained treatment of sexuality, and a classic of gay literature. In a 1950s Paris swarming with expatriates and characterized by dangerous liaisons and hidden violence, an American finds himself unable to repress his impulses, despite his determination to live the conventional life he envisions for himself. After meeting and proposing to a young woman, he falls into a lengthy affair with an Italian bartender and is confounded and tortured by his sexual identity as he oscillates between the two. Examining the mystery of love and passion in an intensely imagined narrative, Baldwin creates a moving and complex story of death and desire that is revelatory in its insight.



Bechdel **Alison** **Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic**

Winner of the Lambda Literary Award and Stonewall Book Award for Non-Fiction. Goodreads: In this graphic memoir, Alison Bechdel charts her fraught relationship with her late father. Distant and exacting, Bruce Bechdel was an English teacher and director of the town funeral home, which Alison and her family referred to as the Fun Home. It was not until college that Alison, who had recently come out as a lesbian, discovered that her father was also gay. A few weeks after this revelation, he was dead, leaving a legacy of mystery for his daughter to resolve.



Cunningham **Michael** **The Hours**

1999 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Goodreads: In 1920s London, Virginia Woolf is fighting against her rebellious spirit as she attempts to make a start on her new novel. A young wife and mother, broiling in a suburb of 1940s Los Angeles, yearns to escape and read her precious copy of Mrs. Dalloway. And Clarissa Vaughan steps out of her smart Greenwich village apartment in 1990s New York to buy flowers for a party she is hosting for a dying friend... *The Hours* recasts the classic story of Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway in a startling new light.



High school books (page 2 of 6)

Sorted alphabetically by author last name

✓ Hope in a Box Curriculum Guide available

Last name **First name** **Title**

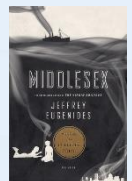
Danforth **Emily** **The Miseducation of Cameron Post**

Amazon: The acclaimed book behind the 2018 Sundance Grand Jury Prize-winning movie...When Cameron Post's parents die suddenly in a car crash, her shocking first thought is relief. Relief they'll never know that, hours earlier, she had been kissing a girl...But that relief doesn't last, and Cam is forced to move in with her conservative aunt Ruth and her well-intentioned but hopelessly old-fashioned grandmother...Then Coley Talor moves to town...She and Cam forge an unexpected and intense friendship, one that seems to leave room for something more to emerge. But...Aunt Ruth takes drastic action to "fix" her niece, bringing Cam face-to-face with the cost of denying her true self—even if she's not quite sure who that is.



Eugenides **Jeffrey** **Middlesex**

2003 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Amazon: A dazzling triumph...the astonishing tale of a gene that passes down through three generations of a Greek-American family and flowers in the body of a teenage girl...Spanning eight decades—and one unusually awkward adolescence- Jeffrey Eugenides's long-awaited second novel is a grand, utterly original fable of crossed bloodlines, the intricacies of gender, and the deep, untidy promptings of desire.



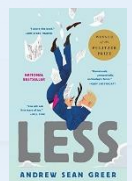
Fu **Kim** **For Today I Am A Boy**

Kirkus: Growing up in exurban Ontario, Peter was always the outlier, preferring his three sisters' girlish behavior over that of his rough-and-tumble male classmates. But his attempts to push his boyishness aside—cooking while wearing a much-loved apron, for instance—incur the wrath of his father, a conservative Chinese immigrant. As his sisters move away, Peter fend for himself in Montreal...Peter's gender anxiety inevitably leads him down frustrating paths...Yet Fu is skilled at capturing feelings of rootlessness that go beyond gender, encompassing Peter's immigrant-son status and distance from his family....Peter's search for a sense of normalcy—to finally become his female self—has a redemptive trajectory that feels fully earned.



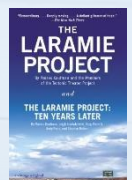
Greer **Andrew** **Less**

2018 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Kirkus: Facing his erstwhile boyfriend's wedding to another man, his 50th birthday, and his publisher's rejection of his latest manuscript, a miserable midlist novelist heads for the airport....rather than stay in San Francisco and be humiliated when his younger man of nine years' standing marries someone else...he puts together a patchwork busman's holiday that will take him to Paris, Morocco, Berlin, Southern India, and Japan. Of course, anything that can go wrong does—from falling out a window to having his favorite suit eaten by a stray dog, and as far as Less runs, he will not escape the fact that he really did lose the love of his life...[T]he story is told by a mysterious narrator whose identity and role in Less' future is not revealed until the final pages.



Kaufman **Moisés** **The Laramie Project and The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later**

Goodreads: For a year and a half following the murder of Matthew Shepard, Moisés Kaufman and his Tectonic Theater Project...conducted hundreds of interviews with the citizens of Laramie, Wyoming, to create this portrait of a town struggling with a horrific event. The savage killing of Shepard, a young gay man, has become a national symbol of the struggle against intolerance. But for the people of Laramie—both the friends of Matthew and those who hated him without knowing him—the tragedy was personal. In a chorus of voices that brings to mind Thornton Wilder's Our Town, The Laramie Project allows those most deeply affected to speak, and the result is a brilliantly moving theatrical creation.



High school books (page 3 of 6)

Sorted alphabetically by author last name

✓ Hope in a Box Curriculum Guide available

Last name **First name** **Title**

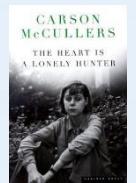
Kramer **Larry** **The Normal Heart**

Goodreads: [T]he explosive drama about our most terrifying and troubling medical crisis...the AIDS epidemic. It tells the story of very private lives caught up in the heartrendering ordeal of suffering and doom - an ordeal that was largely ignored for reasons of politics and majority morality. Filled with power, anger, and intelligence, Larry Kramer's riveting play dramatizes what actually happened from the time of the disease's discovery to the present, and points a moral j'accuse in many directions. His passionate indictment of government, the media, and the public for refusing to deal with a national plague is electrifying theater - a play that finally breaks through the conspiracy of silence with a shout of stunning impact.



McCullers **Carson** **The Heart is a Lonely Hunter**

Goodreads: Set in a small town in the middle of the deep South, it is the story of John Singer, a lonely deaf-mute, and a disparate group of people drawn towards his kind, sympathetic nature. The owner of the café, a young girl desperate to grow up, an angry drunkard, a frustrated black doctor: each pours their heart out to their silent confidant. With its profound sense of moral isolation and its compassionate glimpses into its characters' inner lives, the novel is considered McCullers' finest work, an enduring masterpiece.



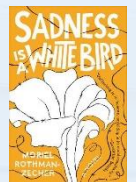
Nazemian **Abdi** **Like a Love Story**

Kirkus: At the height of the 1980s AIDS crisis, three teens grapple with love and friendship. Raised in Tehran, then Toronto, Reza is living in New York City with his mother and new stepfather and stepbrother. Though he is attracted to men, he is paralyzingly afraid of AIDS, equating being gay with death. Judy, who loves fashion, is best friends with Art, the only out student at their school, and both are bullied...United in their love for Judy's uncle Stephen, who is gay and has AIDS—and whom Art sees as a father figure—they become involved in AIDS advocacy. After meeting Reza, the duo find that they are both attracted to him, their friendship strained when Reza and Judy start dating—despite Art and Reza's undeniable chemistry. In a tribute to gay culture icons, the book depicts the social and political climate of the time in vivid detail, capturing the dichotomy between fear and love and, finally, acceptance.



Rothman-Zecher **Moriel** **Sadness is a White Bird**

Kirkus: A very young Israeli soldier whose best friends are Palestinian twins is driven to the breaking point by conflicting loyalties. [The novel] begins in the "fluorescent glow of a jail cell" just days after its narrator's 19th birthday...Two years earlier...Jonathan's family returned to Israel after a long stint in Pennsylvania. The family's history...has given Jonathan a profound sense of the importance of the Jewish state. Thus he was eagerly awaiting the beginning of his military service when he met Laith and his sister, Nimreen...Palestinian twins...Over a long series of adventures...Jonathan begins to see the occupation through the eyes of his friends and grasps that their family history is no less tragic than his own. Then his draft date arrives, and...his unit is sent as a police presence to a demonstration in the Territories...What happens that day is the reason Jonathan is in jail...A passionate, poetic coming-of-age story set in a mine field, brilliantly capturing the intensity of feeling on both sides of the conflict.



High school books (page 4 of 6)

Sorted alphabetically by author last name

Last name	First name	Title
-----------	------------	-------

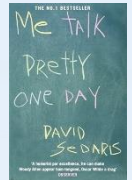
Russo	Meredith	If I Was Your Girl
--------------	-----------------	---------------------------

Stonewall Book Award. Goodreads: A new kind of big-hearted novel about being seen for who you really are. Amanda Hardy is the new girl in school. Like anyone else, all she wants is to make friends and fit in. But Amanda is keeping a secret, and she's determined not to get too close to anyone. But when she meets sweet, easygoing Grant, Amanda can't help but start to let him into her life. As they spend more time together, she realizes just how much she is losing by guarding her heart. She finds herself yearning to share with Grant everything about herself, including her past. But Amanda's terrified that once she tells him the truth, he won't be able to see past it. Because the secret that Amanda's been keeping? It's that at her old school, she used to be Andrew. Will the truth cost Amanda her new life, and her new love?



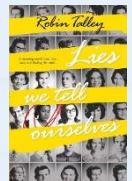
Sedaris	David	Me Talk Pretty One Day
----------------	--------------	-------------------------------

Amazon: A hilarious collection of essays from 'the premier observer of our world and its weirdnesses'...including 'Me Talk Pretty One Day', about his attempts to learn French from a sadistic teacher who declares that 'every day spent with you is like having a caesarean section'...His family is another inspiration. 'You Can't Kill the Rooster' is a portrait of his brother, who talks incessant hip-hop slang to his bewildered father. And no one hones a finer fury in response to such modern annoyances as restaurant meals presented in ludicrous towers of food and cashiers with six-inch fingernails.



Talley	Robin	Lies We Tell Ourselves
---------------	--------------	-------------------------------

Carnegie Medal nominee and NYT bestseller. Goodreads: In 1959 Virginia, the lives of two girls on opposite sides of the battle for civil rights will be changed forever. Sarah Dunbar is one of the first black students to attend the previously all-white Jefferson High School. An honors student at her old school, she is put into remedial classes, spit on and tormented daily. Linda Hairston is the daughter of one of the town's most vocal opponents of school integration. She has been taught all her life that the races should be kept separate but equal. Forced to work together on a school project, Sarah and Linda must confront harsh truths about race, power and how they really feel about one another. Boldly realistic and emotionally compelling, Lies We Tell Ourselves is a brave and stunning novel about finding truth amid the lies, and finding your voice even when others are determined to silence it.



Torres	Justin	We the Animals
---------------	---------------	-----------------------

Kirkus: An exquisitely crafted debut novel—subtle, shimmering and emotionally devastating...The narrator is the youngest of three sons of a white, Brooklyn mother and a Puerto Rican father, who became parents in their teens. Like the title suggests, the first-person narration initially might as well be plural, for the narrator and his older brothers Manny and Leon resemble “a three-torsoed beast,” scrounging for sustenance and meaning amid the tumultuous relationship of their parents...Their bond provides what little defense they have against their mother’s emotional instability and their father’s unsteady employment and fidelity...[T]he narrative voice is a marvel of control—one that reflects the perceptions and limitations of a 7-year-old in language that suggests someone older is channeling his younger perspective...[T]he narrator comes to terms with his brothers, his family and his sexuality, separating the “I” from the “we” and suffering the consequences...Upon finishing, readers might be tempted to start again, not wanting to let it go.



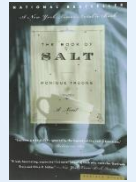
High school books (page 5 of 6)

Sorted alphabetically by author last name

✓ Hope in a Box Curriculum Guide available

Last name	First name	Title
Truong	Monique	The Book of Salt

A NYT Best Book of the Year. Amazon: A novel of Paris in the 1930s from the eyes of the Vietnamese cook employed by Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas...Viewing his famous mesdames and their entourage from the kitchen of their rue de Fleurus home, Binh observes their domestic entanglements while seeking his own place in the world. In a mesmerizing tale of yearning and betrayal, Monique Truong explores Paris from the salons of its artists to the dark nightlife of its outsiders and exiles. She takes us back to Binh's youthful servitude in Saigon under colonial rule, to his life as a galley hand at sea, to his brief, fateful encounters in Paris with Paul Robeson and the young Ho Chi Minh.



Walker	Alice	The Color Purple
---------------	--------------	-------------------------

1983 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Goodreads: A powerful cultural touchstone of modern American literature, *The Color Purple* depicts the lives of African American women in early twentieth-century rural Georgia. Separated as girls, sisters Celie and Nettie sustain their loyalty to and hope in each other across time, distance and silence. Through a series of letters spanning twenty years, first from Celie to God, then the sisters to each other despite the unknown, the novel draws readers into its rich and memorable portrayals of Celie, Nettie, Shug Avery and Sofia and their experience...Deeply compassionate and beautifully imagined, Alice Walker's epic carries readers on a spirit-affirming journey towards redemption and love.



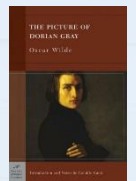
Whaley	John Corey	Highly Illogical Behavior
---------------	-------------------	----------------------------------

Kirkus: A teen with her sights set on a scholarship for a psychology undergraduate program befriends a boy with agoraphobia in order to write an essay about the experience...Sixteen-year-old Solomon last left his house back in seventh grade, when, one day during a particularly horrible anxiety attack, he shed his clothing and climbed into a fountain at school. His former classmate Lisa, ambitious to a fault...has long wondered what became of him and angles her way into his life...Readers will easily come to care about these bright, wonderfully nerdy, flawed characters.



Wilde	Oscar	The Picture of Dorian Gray
--------------	--------------	-----------------------------------

Amazon: In this celebrated work, his only novel, Wilde forged a devastating portrait of the effects of evil and debauchery on a young aesthete in late-19th-century England. Combining elements of the Gothic horror novel and decadent French fiction, the book centers on a striking premise: As Dorian Gray sinks into a life of crime and gross sensuality, his body retains perfect youth and vigor while his recently painted portrait grows day by day into a hideous record of evil, which he must keep hidden from the world.



High school books (page 6 of 6)

Sorted alphabetically by author last name

✓ Hope in a Box Curriculum Guide available

Last name	First name	Title
-----------	------------	-------

Wilson	Martin	What They Always Tell Us
---------------	---------------	---------------------------------

Goodreads: James and Alex have barely anything in common anymore—least of all their experiences in high school, where James is a popular senior and Alex is suddenly an outcast. But at home, there is Henry, the precocious 10-year-old across the street, who eagerly befriends them both. And when Alex takes up running, there is James's friend Nathen, who unites the brothers in moving and unexpected ways.



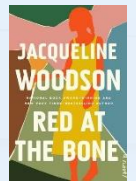
Womack	Craig	Drowning in Fire
---------------	--------------	-------------------------

Goodreads: Josh Henneha has always been a traveler, drowning in dreams, burning with desires. As a young boy growing up within the Muskogee Creek Nation in rural Oklahoma, Josh experiences a yearning for something he cannot tame. Quiet and skinny and shy, he feels out of place, at once inflamed and ashamed by his attraction to other boys....Josh struggles to reconcile the conflicting voices he hears—from the messages of...the non-Indian Christian churches his parents attend in order to assimilate, to the powerful stories of his older Creek relatives...In his...dreams...Josh learns to fly back through time...and uncover a hidden legacy of triumphs and betrayals, ceremonies and secrets he can forge into a new sense of himself....Interweaving past and present, history and story, explicit realism and dreamlike visions...Drowning in Fire explores a young man's journey to understand his cultural and sexual identity within a framework drawn from the community of his origins.



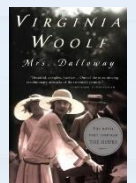
Woodson	Jacqueline	Red at the Bone
----------------	-------------------	------------------------

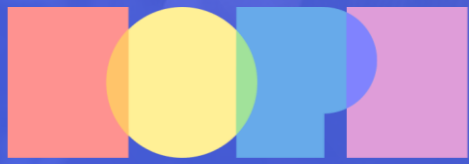
Goodreads: An unexpected teenage pregnancy pulls together two families from different social classes, and exposes the private hopes, disappointments, and longings that can bind or divide us from each other...Moving forward and backward in time, Jacqueline Woodson's taut and powerful new novel uncovers the role that history and community have played in the experiences, decisions, and relationships of these families, and in the life of the new child. As it explores sexual desire and identity, ambition, gentrification, education, class and status, and the life-altering facts of parenthood, Red at the Bone most strikingly looks at the ways in which young people must so often make long-lasting decisions about their lives—even before they have begun to figure out who they are and what they want to be.



Woolf	Virginia	Mrs. Dalloway
--------------	-----------------	----------------------

Goodreads: Heralded as Virginia Woolf's greatest novel, this is a vivid portrait of a single day in a woman's life. When we meet her, Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway is preoccupied with the last-minute details of party preparation while in her mind she is something much more than a perfect society hostess. As she readies her house, she is flooded with remembrances of faraway times. And, met with the realities of the present, Clarissa reexamines the choices that brought her there, hesitantly looking ahead to the unfamiliar work of growing old. According to Michael Cunningham, author of The Hours, "Mrs. Dalloway...contains some of the most beautiful, complex, incisive and idiosyncratic sentences ever written in English, and that alone would be reason enough to read it. It is one of the most moving, revolutionary artworks of the twentieth century."





hope in a box

www.hopeinabox.org
[@HopeinaBoxInc](https://www.instagram.com/HopeinaBoxInc)

© 2020 Hope in a Box, Inc.