Young Adult Biographies

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Young Adult Biographies are interfiled with the adult biographies on the 2nd floor, look for a green dot on the spine label. Students and their parents should choose the books that are most appropriate for them.

Activists

Trans Mission: My Quest to a Beard
by Alex Bertie
A brave firsthand account of author Alex Bertie's life, struggles, and victories as a transgender teen, and a guide for transitioning teens. 296 pages

Cesar Chavez: Civil Rights Activist
by Barbara Cruz
American farmworker, labor leader, and civil rights activist César Chávez cofounded the United Farm Workers labor union and fought to increase immigrants' rights in the United States. 128 pages

Born Criminal
by Angelica Shirley Carpenter
Radical, feminist, writer, suffragist, Matilda Joslyn Gage changed the course of history. She fought for equal rights not dependent on sex, race, class, or creed. Yet her name has faded into obscurity. 272 pages

Nelson Mandela: South African Revolutionary
by Beatrice Gormley
From Nelson Mandela's childhood to his monumental impact on race relations and nonviolent activism, this biography shares his struggles, his triumphs, and the sacrifices along the way. 247 pages

Make Trouble: Standing Up, Speaking Out, and Finding the Courage to Lead
by Cecile Richards
To make change, you have to make trouble. Cecile Richards has been fighting for what she believes in ever since she was taken to the principal's office in seventh grade for wearing an armband in protest of the Vietnam War. 244 pages

Eleanor Roosevelt: Fighter for Justice
by Ilene Cooper
Eleanor Roosevelt grew up to be not only First Lady of the United States, but one of the most influential women in U.S. history. Hers is a remarkable story of doing the thing you think you cannot do in order to better the lives of others. 184 pages

Troublemaker for Justice: The Story of Bayard Rustin, the Man Behind the March on Washington
by Jacqueline Houtman
Recounts the life and accomplishments of Bayard Rustin, focusing on his nonviolent protest methods and his organization of the March on Washington in 1963. 160 pages
The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor
by Sonia Sotomayor
Sonia Sotomayor, the first Hispanic and third woman appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States, was just a young girl when she dared to dream big. Her dream? To become a lawyer and a judge. 343 pages

Artists

This Strange Wilderness
by Nancy Plain
Describes how the writer and naturalist, John James Audubon, set about recording in both word and image the birds of North America, and details the legacy his work has left behind. 112 pages

Etched in Clay
by Andrea Cheng
The life of Dave, an enslaved potter who inscribed his works with sayings and poems in spite of South Carolina's slave anti-literacy laws in the years leading up to the Civil War. 143 pages

Leaving China
by James McMullan
Illustrator James McMullan discusses how his early childhood in China and his wartime journeys with his mother influenced his life and career. 113 pages

Athletes

Becoming Kareem
by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar
An autobiography about Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and his life growing up in New York, becoming the basketball star he's known to be, and getting involved in the world around him as an activist for social change. 289 pages

But Now I See
by Steve Holcomb
The life and athletic career of Steven Holcomb, an Olympic bobsledder who hid his encroaching blindness from his coach, sled mates, and the public until he finally told his coach, who led him to a revolutionary treatment that restored his eyesight to 20/20. 210 pages

Carey Price: How a First Nations Kid Became a Superstar Goaltender
by Catherine Rondina
Twenty years ago, Carey Price was flying 319 kilometers across British Columbia in his father’s plane so he could play on the nearest organized hockey team. Today, he is the highest-paid goalie in the NHL. But he's never forgotten where he started. 150 pages

No Barriers: A Blind Man's Journey to Kayak the Grand Canyon
by Erik Weihenmayer
The first blind person to reach the summit of Mount Everest describes his solo trek kayaking the Colorado River and discusses how a person’s inner light, sometimes snuffed out through injury, disease or tragedy, can be ignited through courage and taking risks. 200 pages

Authors & Poets

Jump Back, Paul
by Sally Derby
From his childhood in poverty and his early promise as a poet to his immense fame and his untimely death, Dunbar's story is one of triumph and tragedy. 122 pages
Ordinary Hazards
by Nikki Grimes
Growing up in a troubled home, at the age of six Nikki Grimes poured her pain onto a piece of paper late one night, and discovered the magic and impact of writing. In this memoir, Nikki shows how the power of those words helped her conquer the hazard, ordinary and extraordinary, of her life. 325 pages

Looking Back
by Lois Lowry
In this fascinating, moving autobiography, Lois Lowry explores her rich history through personal photographs, memories, and recollections of her childhood. 259 pages

A Girl Called Vincent
by Krystyna Poray Goddu
Tracing Edna St. Vincent Millay's life from her youth in Maine to the bohemian fervor of her early adulthood in Greenwich Village and Paris to the demanding existence of a public personality. 208 pages

The Seuss, the Whole Seuss, and Nothing but the Seuss
by Charles Cohen
Theodor Seuss Geisel, creator of Horton the Elephant, the Grinch, the Cat in the Hat, and a madcap menagerie of the best-loved children's characters of all time, stands alone as the preeminent figure of children's literature. 390 pages

Mary Shelley: The Strange, True Tale of Frankenstein's Creator
by Catherine Reef
On the 200th anniversary of the publication of Frankenstein, comes a riveting biography of its author, Mary Shelley, whose life reads like a dark gothic novel, filled with scandal, death, drama, and one of the strangest love stories in literary history. 212 pages

Noah Webster: Man of Many Words
by Catherine Reef
A biography of Noah Webster, a controversial political activist, the primary shaper of the American language, and author of the Blue-Backed Spellers and the famous dictionary that bears his name. 211 pages

Business

Coco Chanel: Pearls, Perfume, and the Little Black Dress
by Susan Rubin
This book focuses on the obstacles Chanel faced as a financially independent woman in an era when women were expected to marry, and some of her most memorable firsts for the fashion industry, including the little black dress, the quilted purse with gold chain, and the perfume Chanel No. 5. 144 pages

Shoe Dog
by Philip Knight
A rare and revealing look at the notoriously media-shy man behind the swoosh, opening up about how he went from being a track star at an Oregon high school to the founder of a brand and company that changed everything. 273 pages

Ida M. Tarbell: The Woman Who Challenged Big Business—and Won!
by Emily Arnold McCully
Tarbell was the catalyst for exposing the truth behind corruption and unfair business practices. She investigated and published works about the Standard Oil Trust for McClure's Magazine that informed the world of shady business dealings and skyrocketed her into the public eye. 279 pages
Madam C.J. Walker: The Inspiring Life Story of the Hair Care Entrepreneur
by Darlene R. Stille

Madam C.J. Walker worked hard her entire life. The nationally known business leader gave generously of her time and money to further the cause of civil rights. 112 pages

Entertainers

The Great and Only Barnum
by Candace Fleming

A biography about P.T. Barnum, showman and founder of the Barnum & Bailey Circus. 151 pages

Sir Charlie Chaplin: The Funniest Man in the World
by Sid Fleischman

Presents the story of the legendary comic actor and describes how he rose from poverty to become one of Hollywood's wealthiest entertainers. 268 pages

The Magician and the Spirits
by Deborah Noyes

Famed illusionist Harry Houdini embarks on a quest to investigate spiritual phenomena and the possibility of communication with those on the "other side." 152 pages

It's Trevor Noah: Born a Crime: Stories From a South African Childhood
by Trevor Noah

A middle-grade adaptation of The Daily Show host's best-selling adult memoir traces his experiences growing up half black, half white in South Africa under and after apartheid, describing how he used his wits and humor to navigate a harsh life under a racist government. 294 pages

Explorers

Marooned in the Arctic
by Peggy Caravantes

In 1921, four men ventured into the Arctic for a top-secret expedition: an attempt to claim an uninhabited island in Siberia for Great Britain. With the men was a 23-year-old Inuit woman named Ada Blackjack, who had signed on as a seamstress to earn money to care for her sick son. Conditions soon turned dire for the team when they were unable to kill enough game to survive. 194 pages

Christopher Columbus: Controversial Explorer of the Americas
by Christopher Brink

Few people in history have had as significant an impact on the shaping of multiple cultures as Christopher Columbus, the explorer who sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in 1492 in search of a sea route from Europe to Asia. This book seeks to provide the reader with a balanced perspective of Columbus's personality, achievements, and far-reaching effects on cultures on both sides of the Atlantic. 112 pages

The Stowaway: A Young Man's Extraordinary Adventure to Antarctica
by Laurie Gwen Shapiro

The spectacular, true story of a scrappy teenager from New York's Lower East Side who stowed away on the Roaring Twenties' most remarkable feat of science and daring: an expedition to Antarctica. 239 pages

Polar Explorer
by Jade Hameister

At fourteen-year-old, Hameister had a dream: to complete the Polar Hat Trick: expeditions to the North Pole, across the Greenland ice sheet, and to the North Pole. At sixteen she became the youngest person in history to complete it. 216 pages
Magellan: Over the Edge of the World
by Laurence Bergreen
YA BIO MAGELLAN
A middle grade adaptation of Bergreen's adult title of the same name, about Ferdinand Magellan's historic 16th century voyage around the globe. Chronicles the crew's experiences with mutiny, navigation, death, and Magellan's ruthless leadership. 211 pages

Locked in Ice: Nansen's Daring Quest for the North Pole
by Peter Louie
YA BIO NANSEN
Recounts the life of polar explorer, Fridtjof Nansen, including his early affinity for skiing, his three year arctic expedition primarily spent stuck in the ice, and his return to Norway. 316 pages

Historical Figures

Presenting Buffalo Bill
by Candace Fleming
YA BIO CODY
Everyone knows the name Buffalo Bill, but few these days know what he did or, in some cases, didn't do. Was he a Pony Express rider? Did he serve Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn? Did he scalp countless Native Americans, or did he defend their rights? This biography explains it all. 273 pages

Dissenter on the Bench: Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s Life and Work
by Victoria Ortiz
YA BIO GINSBURG
The life and career of the fiercely principled Supreme Court Justice, now a popular icon, with dramatic accounts of her landmark cases that moved the needle on legal protection of human rights. 199 pages

Alexander Hamilton, Revolutionary
by Martha Brockenbrough
YA BIO HAMILTON
A richly illustrated portrait of the Founding Father and first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury describes his experiences as an illegitimate orphan, soldier, friend, philanderer, political firebrand and financial whiz whose groundbreaking policies continue to shape today's American government. 372 pages

Samurai Rising
by Pamela Turner
YA BIO MINAMOTO
Documents the true story of the legendary samurai who was raised in the household of the enemies who killed his father before being sent to live in a monastery where, against the odds, he learned and perfected his fighting skills. 236 pages

Terrible Typhoid Mary
by Susan Campbell Bartoetti
YA BIO TYPHOID MARY
Illuminates the backstory of "Typhoid Mary" who allegedly infected nearly 50 individuals with the disease. This riveting biography of Mary Mallon looks beyond the tabloid scandal of Mary's controversial life. 229 pages

Victoria: Portrait of a Queen
by Catherine Reef
YA BIO VICTORIA
Her long reign was filled with drama, death, intrigue, and passion, and took place during a time of great transformation, an era that bears the imprint of her personality and values as well as that of her name—the Victorian period. 246 pages

Inspiring Stories

Cyrus Field's Big Dream
by Mary Morton Cowan
YA BIO FIELD
The riveting adventure and drama of Cyrus Field's endeavor to lay the first transatlantic telegraph cable, an unforgettable story of determination and courage. 224 pages
Taking Cover: One Girl's Story of Growing Up During the Iranian Revolution
by Nioucha Homayoonfar
This coming-of-age memoir, set during the Iranian Revolution, tells the true story of a young girl who moves to Tehran from the U.S. and has to adjust to living in a new country, learning a new language, and starting a new school during one of the most turbulent periods in Iran's history. 160 pages

Discovering Wes Moore
by Wes Moore
The author, a Rhodes scholar and combat veteran, analyzes factors that influenced him as well as another man of the same name and from the same neighborhood who was drawn into a life of drugs and crime and ended up serving life in prison. This book focuses on the influence of relatives, mentors, and social expectations that could have led either of them on different paths. 160 pages

Inventors & Scientists

Charles and Emma
by Deborah Heiligman
This biography of Charles Darwin takes a personal look at the man behind evolutionary theory. 268 pages

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind
by William Kamkwamba
This immensely engaging tale relates how an enterprising teenager in Malawi built a windmill from scraps he found around his village and brought electricity—and a future—to his family. 273 pages

Dreaming in Code: Ada Byron Lovelace, Computer Pioneer
by Emily Arnold McCully
An award-winning author presents an illuminating biography of Ada Lovelace, the brilliant daughter of Lord Byron, Britain’s most infamous Romantic poet, who is now recognized as a pioneer and prophet of the information age for her ideas and concepts, formulated in collaboration with inventor Charles Babbage, that presaged computer programming by almost 200 years. 164 pages

Elon Musk and the Quest for a Fantastic Future
by Ashlee Vance
This book spotlights the technology and vision of Elon Musk, the entrepreneur and innovator behind SpaceX, Tesla, and SolarCity, who sold one of his internet companies, PayPal, for $1.5 billion. 280 pages

Performing Artists

Music Was It
by Susan Goldman Rubin
Describes Leonard Bernstein’s childhood and education, his relationship with his family, and his career as a composer and conductor. 178 pages

Life in Motion
by Misty Copeland
The first female African American principal dancer in American Ballet Theatre history recounts her road to stardom, from her first ballet class to her rise through the professional ranks while dealing with a challenging home life. 186 pages

The Maddie Diaries
by Maddie Ziegler
Teen dance prodigy, breakout Dance Moms star, and judge on So You Think You Can Dance: The Next Generation presents her uplifting coming-of-age memoir about following her dreams and working hard to achieve success in both the dance world and in life. 219 pages
Physical and Mental Health

**Obsessed: A Memoir of My Life With OCD**
by Allison Britz
YA BIO BRITZ
A brave teen recounts her debilitating struggle with obsessive-compulsive disorder—and brings readers through every painful step as she finds her way to the other side. 351 pages

**Florence Nightingale: The Courageous Life of the Legendary Nurse**
by Catherine Reef
YA BIO NIGHTING
Florence Nightingale, the pioneering nurse best known for her work during the Crimean War, rectified horrifying conditions and made nightly rounds to check on patients, saving hundreds of lives and sparking worldwide healthcare reform. 184 pages

**All Better Now**
by Emily Wing Smith
YA BIO SMITH
Emily Wing Smith chronicles her childhood struggles with mental and learning disabilities and the car accident when she was 12 that led to the discovery of a brain tumor at the base of her skull. 289 pages

Refugees

**Tasting the Sky**
by Ibtisam Barakat
YA BIO BARAKAT
The author remembers her childhood in Ramallah and as a Palestinian refugee in the late 1960s. 176 pages

**A Hope More Powerful than the Sea: One Teen Refugee’s Incredible Story of Love, Loss, and Survival**
by Melissa Fleming
YA BIO ZAMEL
Describes the struggles of Syrian refugees following the country’s brutal civil war. 290 pages

**I Will Plant You a Lilac Tree**
by Laura Hillman
YA BIO HILLMAN
In 1942 Hannelore Wolff made a difficult decision, one that changed her life forever. She left the comfort and safety of her boarding school in Berlin, Germany, and volunteered to be sent to a Polish ghetto. 243 pages

**Americanized: Rebel Without a Green Card**
by Sara Saedi
YA BIO SAEDI
At 13, bright-eyed, straight-A student Sara Saedi uncovered a terrible family secret: she was breaking the law simply by living in the United States. 280 pages

Social Experiments

**The Pregnancy Project**
by Gaby Rodriguez
YA BIO RODRIGUE
Rodriguez shares her experience growing up in the shadow of low expectations, reveals how she was able to fake her own pregnancy, and reveals all that she learned from the experience, stereotypes, and how one girl found the strength to come out from the shadow of low expectations to forge a bright future for herself. 218 pages

**Popular: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek**
by Maya Van Wagenen
YA BIO WAGENEN
Documents a high school student's year-long attempt to change her social status from that of a misfit to a member of the "in" crowd by following advice in a 1950s popularity guide, an experiment that triggered embarrassment, humor and unexpected surprises. 259 pages
Survivors

A Cave in the Clouds
by Badeehah Hassan Ahmed
Recounts the author’s harrowing experiences as a survivor of the 2014 genocide of the Ezidi minority culture by ISIS, describing how she was among hundreds enslaved within a brutal human trafficking network. 234 pages

Lion: A Long Way Home
by Saroo Brierley
Describes how the author was accidentally separated from his family and home in India as a child, how he survived as an orphan in Kolkata, his adoption by an Australian family, and his search for his biological family as an adult. 239 pages

A Light in the Darkness: Janusz Korczak, His Orphans, and the Holocaust
by Albert Marrin
Story of a Polish Jewish doctor who, during World War II, turned down multiple opportunities for escape, standing by the children in his orphanage as they became confined to the Warsaw Ghetto. Dressing them in their Sabbath finest, he led their march to the trains and ultimately perished with his children in Treblinka. 388 pages

Every Falling Star
by Lee Sungju
Sungju is forced at age 12 to live on the streets and fend for himself. To survive, he creates a gang and lives by thieving, fighting, begging, and stealing rides on cargo trains. 314 pages

How Dare the Sun Rise
by Sandra Uwiringiyimana
The author shares the story of her survival during the Gatumba massacre, despite losing her mother and sister, and how after moving to America she found healing through art and activism. 288 pages

Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor’s Story
by Caren Barzelay Stelson
Tells the story of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki through the eyes of Sachiko Yasui, who was six when the devastation was wrought, describing her experiences in the aftermath of the attack as well as her long journey to find peace. 144 pages

War and Military

The Plot to Kill Hitler
by Patricia McCormick
Traces the life of the German theologian and pacifist, whose faith led him to speak out against the Nazis and participate in an assassination plot that targeted Adolf Hitler. 174 pages

Warhead: The True Story of One Teen Who Almost Saved the World
by Jeff Henigson
Chronicles the author’s formidable battle with brain cancer as a teenager and his 1986 Starlight Children’s Foundation wish to meet Mikhail Gorbachev in Russia to plead for nuclear disarmament and world peace. 347 pages

Unlikely Warrior
by Georg Rauch
A YA memoir of an 18-year old part-Jewish youth who, despite his heritage, is drafted into Hitler’s army and sent to serve on the Russian front. 324 pages
Irena’s Children
by Tilar Mazzeo
YA BIO SENDLER
A gripping account of Irena Sendler, who took staggering risks to save 2,500 children from death and deportation in Nazi-occupied Poland during World War II. 257 pages

I am a SEAL Team Six Warrior
by Howard E. Wasdin
YA BIO WASDIN
Recounts the story of how the author overcame a tough and abusive childhood to fulfill his dream of joining the exciting and dangerous world of the Navy SEALs by becoming a Special Forces sniper. 182 pages

When I Was a Soldier
by Valeri Zenatti
YA BIO ZENATTI
Like all young Israelis, Valérie Zenatti enlisted in the national defense service on her 18th birthday, where for the next two years she endured rigorous training and harsh living conditions, ultimately participating in top-secret missions with the Secret Service. 235 pages