

Books under 200 Pages

Looking for a quick read? "With realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, poetry, and thrillers included in the list, teens should find plenty to choose from among these slim pickings," Angela Leeper, Director of the Curriculum Materials Center at the University of Richmond.

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Ask Me No Questions. By Marina Budhos. 2006. 176p. Gr. 7–10. (YA BUD)

Nadira, 14, and her family came to the U.S. on a tourist visa from Bangladesh and stayed long after their visa expired. After the events of 9/11 cause tighter immigration regulations and their illegal status is discovered, the family tries to seek asylum in Canada. Then Nadira's father is detained indefinitely, and Nadira struggles to keep the family together as this moving story reaches its suspenseful conclusion.

Black and White. By Paul Volponi. 2005. 192p. Gr. 9–12. (YA VOL)

Basketball stars Marcus and Eddie, known at school as Black and White, have become friends in their inner-city neighborhood. For more spending money, they turn to armed robbery and end up shooting and wounding a victim. Their gritty, alternating first-person narratives highlight their disparate treatment in the justice system and their racial divide.

Blank Confession. By Pete Hautman. 2010. 176p. Gr. 8–12. (YA HAU)

At the start of this taut thriller, 16-year-old Shayne Blank walks into a police station and confesses to Detective Rawls that he has killed someone. Hautman unwinds his mystery through gripping chapters that alternate between Rawls' point of view and backstory from Mickey, an underdog who is bullied by a high school's drug supplier and is rescued by Shayne.

The Boy Who Dared. By Susan Campbell Bartoletti. 2008. 192p. Gr. 6–9. (JF BUR)

As Helmuth Hübener, 17, sits on death row, a series of flashbacks retraces his childhood in Hamburg during Hitler's rise to power. At first enthralled with the Nazi regime, Helmuth begins questioning propaganda messages, secretly listening to BBC radio broadcasts, and writing and distributing pamphlets calling for resistance. A gripping, fictionalized biography.

Chanda's Secrets. By Allan Stratton. 2004. 200p. Gr. 9–12. (YA STR)

In an invented country in sub-Saharan Africa, Chanda's stepfather and baby stepbrother have died from AIDS. Now her mother has fallen ill, and the 16-year-old wonders if she, too, is infected. When her best friend is driven to prostitution and contracts the disease, Chanda contemplates taking her in and breaking the stigma of AIDS. Stratton's realistic, frank novel was named a Printz Honor Book.

Dead Girls Don't Write Letters. By Gail Giles. 2003. 128p. Gr. 7–10. (YA GIL)

In the months following the death of 14-year-old Sunny's older sister, Jazz, who presumably died in a New York City apartment fire, Sunny receives a letter that is signed by Jazz, setting off an ambiguous mystery filled with twists. Giles also turns up the suspense in *Playing in Traffic* (2004).

Fat Kid Rules the World. By K. L. Going. 2003. 192p. Gr. 8–12. (YA GOI)

Troy, who is 300 pounds and calls himself "Fat Kid" in his internal dialogues, contemplates suicide by jumping off a New York City subway platform before he is rescued by a legendary local punk-rock musician, who helps Troy find self-confidence and see himself as a real drummer. A Printz Honor Book.

Invisible. By Pete Hautman. 2005. 160p. Gr. 7–10. (YA HAU)

From their bedroom windows, two very different next-door neighbors talk to each other. Doug is a self-proclaimed nerd who is building a matchstick replica of the Golden Gate Bridge for his model railway town; Andy is a popular football player and actor. As Doug is rejected by his classmates, he is forced to revisit a tragic incident that occurred three years earlier and a secret he shares with Andy.

Jumped. By Rita Williams-Garcia. 2009. 192p. Gr. 9–12. (YA WIL)

After Trina inadvertently brushes against Dominique, who is waiting for any opportunity to start a fight, Leticia overhears Dominique say that she plans to jump Trina at the end of the school day. Told in the alternating voices of the three teens, the tension builds to an inevitable, violent confrontation. A National Book Award finalist and a Coretta Scott King Honor Book.

Knifepoint. By Alex van Tol. 2008. 128p. Gr. 7–12. (YA VAN)

Jill's summer turns from idyllic to deadly when she abandons her safety training as a horseback trail guide and heads off alone with a cute customer. When he pulls a knife, Jill must fight for her life in this Orca Soundings title, written for reluctant readers.

Living Dead Girl. By Elizabeth Scott. 2009. 176p. Gr. 10–12. (YA SCO)

Given the name "Alice" by her abductor, Ray, a 15-year-old describes her life in captivity since her kidnapping five years earlier. Now that she's maturing, Alice knows that Ray plans to kill her. Chilling first-person narration tells this powerful story of long-term abuse.

Masked. By Norah McClintock. 2010. 128p. Gr. 7–10. (Unavailable)

In this quick-paced entry in the Orca Soundings series, a masked teen asks for more than money when he holds up a convenience store. The backstory and tension build as the viewpoints shift from the store owner and his daughter, Rosie, to Rosie's cheating boyfriend, to the gunman, and to a neighborhood teen shopper who may know the robber.

Memento Nora. By Angie Smibert. 2011. 192p. Gr. 8–12. (YA SMI)

In this dystopian novel, preppy Nora and artists Micah and Winter, all Homeland Inc. Senior High students, describe the events leading up to their Detention capture. Amid fear-inducing bombings in their DC neighborhood and the corruption of Therapeutic Forgetting Clinics and Homeland Inc., the teens cope with their environment by creating an underground comic.

Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist. By Rachel Cohn and David Levithan. 2006. 192p. Gr. 10–12. (YA COH)

Trying to make his ex-girlfriend jealous, Nick, the nonqueer bassist in a queer-core band, asks a girl he has never met if she would mind being his girlfriend for five minutes. Norah, also heartbroken, agrees. Their next 24 hours, told in alternating voices, is a romp through Manhattan that turns into a sexy romance as the teens listen to bands and exchange witty repartee.

The Orange Houses. By Paul Griffin. 2009. 160p. Gr. 10–12. (YA GRI)

Three inner-city Bronx teens form an unlikely friendship in this moving urban story: 15-year-old hearing-impaired Tamika; 16-year-old illegal alien Fatima, who fled the violence and poverty of her African country; and Jimmy, an 18-year-old street poet and junkie who has just been discharged from the army.

The Other Side of Dark. By Joan Lowery Nixon. 2010. 192p. Gr. 7–10. (YA NIX)

Stacy has been in a coma since she was shot and her mother was murdered four years earlier. When she wakes at age 17, she struggles to remember the face of the killer, who has begun stalking her. Originally published in 1986, this classic YA thriller has been updated with contemporary details. Lois Duncan's *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, originally published in 1973, has also been modernized.

Shakespeare Bats Cleanup. By Ronald Koertge. 2003. 128p. Gr. 6–9. (YA KOE)

As 14-year-old baseball star Kevin recuperates at home from a bout of mono, he begins writing poems using his father's books to guide him. Experimenting with forms such as free verse, haiku, sonnets, ballads, and sestinas, Kevin writes both funny and serious poems about baseball, girls, and the recent death of his mother. *Shakespeare Makes the Playoffs* (2010), also written in verse, continues the story.

Stargirl. By Jerry Spinelli. 2000. 192p. Gr. 6–9. (YA SPI)

Sixteen-year-old Leo reflects on his junior year of high school when eclectic and naive Stargirl arrives, wearing hippie clothes, strumming a ukulele, and gaining popularity and Leo's attention. When she falls from grace, Leo faces a difficult choice between siding with his peers or with his first love.

Stoner and Spaz. By Ronald Koertge. 2002. 176p. Gr. 8–12. (YA KOE)

Benjamin, a 16-year-old orphan with cerebral palsy, an overprotective grandmother, and aspirations to become a documentary filmmaker, forges a surprising friendship with druggie Colleen that gradually builds to a nurturing romance in this realistic story with razor-sharp humor.

The Whole Sky Full of Stars. By René Saldaña Jr. 2007. Gr. 8–12. (Unavailable)

After high-school senior Alby Alonzo amasses a sizeable gambling debt, he asks his close friend, Barry Esquivel, a teen boxer, to enter the shady "Man o' Mite" competition. As the event nears, it's the Latino teens' friendship that ends up on the line.

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Girl, Stolen. By April Henry. 2010. 224p. Gr. 7–10. (YA HEN)

While her mother runs into a pharmacy, Cheyenne, sick with pneumonia, is resting in the backseat when the car is stolen. Suspense soars after the thief, Griffin, learns that Cheyenne is blind and that her family is wealthy. Told through alternating points of view, the teens' constant push and pull, including an unlikely connection, drive this thriller.

If I Stay. By Gayle Forman. 2009. 208p. Gr. 10–12. (YA FOR)

After surviving the car crash that killed her parents and younger brother, 17-year-old Mia lies in a coma. Alternating chapters between her past and present re-create the unimaginable choice the cellist prodigy must make between dying or trying to realize her life's goals. Readers engrossed by Mia's story will want to continue with the sequel, *Where She Went* (2011).

The Knife That Killed Me. By Anthony McGowan. 2010. 224p. Gr. 10–12. (YA MCG)

Just as brutal bully Roth coerces nobody Paul into delivering a package to a rival gang leader, Paul is befriended by his high school's outsiders. In this clever, intense portrayal of a teen struggling to fit in, Paul's morality is tested by his role in an upcoming gang fight.

Story of a Girl. By Sara Zarr. 2007. 208p. Gr. 10–12. (YA ZAR)

Deanna was 13 when her father caught her having sex with 17-year-old Tommy. Now, three years later, her father still refuses to look at her, and she lives with a reputation as the school slut, even though she's never kissed another boy. Then she discovers that she and Tommy will work together during the summer. Acceptance and forgiveness slowly emerge in this thoughtful National Book Award finalist.

Wake. By Lisa McMann. 2008. 224p. Gr. 8–10. (YA MCM)

Janie, 17, keeps getting sucked into other people's dreams against her will. When she meets another "dream catcher," she learns the extent of her abilities and even begins to use her skills for crime solving. After she enters the violent dreams of handsome ex-stoner Cabel, this supernatural thriller heats up. Janie's story continues in Fade (2010) and Gone (2011).