

Grades K-5 Racism and Antiracism Reading List
Akron-Summit County Public Library

Picture books and Non-Fiction:

Celano, Marianne. **Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice**, 2018. JE
After discussing the police shooting of a local Black man with their families, Emma and Josh know how to treat a new student who looks and speaks differently than his classmates.

Elliott, Zetta. **A Place Inside of Me**, 2020. JE

Illustrations and easy-to-read text express a child's awareness of being filled with deep emotions, from joy to sorrow and anger to compassion, but above all, love.

Cherry-Paul, Sonja. **Stamped (for Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You**, 2021 JNF 305.8009 C522s

Kids will discover where racist ideas came from, identify how they impact America today, and meet those who have fought racism with antiracism. Along the way, they'll learn how to identify and stamp out racist thoughts in their own lives.

Graphic Novels and Fiction:

Bajaj, Varsha. **Count Me In**, 2019. JFIC

Told from two viewpoints, sixth-graders Karina and Chris use social media to stand up to racism in Houston, Texas, after an attack puts Karina's Indian American grandfather in the hospital.

Binns, Barbara. **Courage**, 2018. JFIC

Ever since T'Shawn's dad died, his mother has been struggling to keep the family afloat. So when he's offered a spot on a prestigious diving team at the local private swim club, he knows that joining would only add another bill to the pile. But T studies hard and never gets into trouble, so he thinks his mom might be willing to bear the cost...until he finds out that his older brother, Lamont, is getting released early from prison. Luckily, T'Shawn is given a scholarship, and he can put all his frustration into diving practices. But when criminal activity increases in the neighborhood and people begin to suspect Lamont, T'Shawn begins to worry that maybe his brother hasn't left his criminal past behind after all. And he struggles to hold on to the hope that they can put the broken pieces of their damaged relationship back together.

Collier, Kristi. **Jericho Walls**, 2007. JFIC

In 1957, when her preacher father accepts a post in Jericho, Alabama, Jo wants to fit in but her growing friendship with a black boy forces her to confront the racism of the South and to reconsider her own values.

Craft, Jerry. **Class Act**, 2020. JGN

Eighth grader Drew Ellis recognizes that he isn't afforded the same opportunities, no matter how hard he works, that his privileged classmates at the Riverdale Academy Day School take for granted, and to

make matters worse, Drew begins to feel as if his good friend Liam might be one of those privileged kids and is finding it hard not to withdraw, even as their mutual friend Jordan tries to keep their group of friends together.

*Feinstein, John. **Game Changers**, 2020. JFIC

A new coach's flagrant racism, a teammate's endless sabotage, and local media interest make it difficult for Andi Carillo and Jeff Michaels to keep both of their basketball teams on track.

Ireland, Justina. **Ophie's Ghosts**, 2021. JFIC

Ophelia Harrison used to live in a small house in the Georgia countryside. But that was before the night in November 1922, and the cruel act that took her home and her father from her. Now Ophie and her mother are living in Pittsburgh with relatives they barely know. In the hopes of earning enough money to get their own place, Mama has gotten Ophie a job as a maid in the same old manor house where she works.

*Jackson, Linda Williams. **A Sky Full of Stars**, 2018. JFIC

In Stillwater, Mississippi, in 1955, thirteen-year-old African American Rose Lee Carter looks to her family and friends to understand her place in the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement. Her friend Shorty wants to change things by meeting violence with violence; her best friend Hallelujah believes in the power of peaceful protests. Can one girl make a difference?

Levine, Kristin. **The Lions of Little Rock**, 2012. JFIC

In 1958 Little Rock, Arkansas, painfully shy twelve-year-old Marlee sees her city and family divided over school integration, but her friendship with Liz, a new student, helps her find her voice and fight against racism.

Maldonado, Torrey. **What Lane?**, 2020. JFIC

Biracial sixth-grader Stephen questions the limitations society puts on him after he notices the way strangers treat him when he hangs out with his white friends and learns about the Black Lives Matter movement.

McKissack, Pat. **Color Me Dark**, 2000. JS (*Dear America* series)

Eleven-year-old Nellie Lee Love records in her diary the events of 1919, when her family moves from Tennessee to Chicago, hoping to leave the racism and hatred of the South behind.

Oh, Ellen. **Finding Junie Kim**, 2021. JFIC

Junie Kim just wants to fit in. So she keeps her head down and tries not to draw attention to herself. But when racist graffiti appears at her middle school, Junie must decide between staying silent or speaking out. Then Junie's history teacher assigns a project and Junie decides to interview her grandparents, learning about their unbelievable experiences as kids during the Korean War. Junie comes to admire her grandma's fierce determination to overcome impossible odds, and her grandpa's unwavering compassion during wartime. And as racism becomes more pervasive at school, Junie taps into the strength of her ancestors and finds the courage to do what is right.

Otfinoski, Steven. **The Story of Juneteenth: An Interactive History Adventure**, 2015. JS

In You Choose format, explore the history of Juneteenth Day, including the Emancipation Proclamation, the post-Civil War South, and efforts to end racism. (*You Choose: History* series)

Park, Linda Sue. **Prairie Lotus**, 2020. JFIC

Prairie Lotus is a book about a girl determined to fit in and realize her dreams: getting an education, becoming a dressmaker in her father's shop, and making at least one friend. Hanna, a half-Asian girl in a small town in America's heartland, lives in 1880. Hanna's adjustment to her new surroundings, and the townspeople's prejudice against Asians, is at the heart of the story.

Petruck, Rebecca. **Boy Bites Bug**, 2018. JFIC

To defuse a situation between his best friend and a new student, Nolan eats a live stink bug, gaining popularity and a class project idea but, perhaps, losing a friend.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. **With the Might of Angels**, 2019. JS (*Dear America* series)

Twelve-year-old Dawnie Rae Johnson's life turns upside down after the Supreme Court rules in favor of desegregation in the landmark case Brown v. Board of Education. Her parents decide that Dawnie will attend Prettyman Coburn, a previously all-white school -- but she'll be the only one of her friends to enroll in this new school. As she starts school, Dawnie encounters the harsh realities of racism. But the backlash against her arrival at Prettyman Coburn is more than she's prepared for, and she begins to wonder if the hardship is worth it. Will Dawnie be able to hold on to the true meaning of justice and remain faithful to her own sense of integrity?

Rhodes, Jewell Parker. **Black Brother, Black Brother**, 2020. JFIC

Suspended unjustly from elite Middlefield Prep, Donte Ellison studies fencing with a former champion, hoping to put the racist fencing team captain in his place.

Rhodes, Jewell Parker. **Ghost Boys**, 2018. JFIC

After seventh-grader Jerome is shot by a white police officer, he observes the aftermath of his death and meets the ghosts of other fallen black boys including historical figure Emmett Till.

Shabazz, Ilyasah. **Betty Before X**, 2018. JFIC

Raised by her aunt until she is six, Betty, who will later marry Malcolm X, joins her mother and stepfamily in 1940s Detroit, where she learns about the civil rights movement.

Shen, E. L. **The Comback**, 2021. JFIC

Twelve-year-old Maxine Chen dreams of being a figure skating champion, but a remarkably talented new girl at the arena and a racist classmate at school test her resolve.

Stone, Nic. **Clean Getaway**, 2020. JFIC

For the life of him, William "Scoob" Lamar can't seem to stay out of trouble--and now the run-ins at school have led to lockdown at home. So when G'ma, Scoob's favorite person on Earth, asks him to go on an impromptu road trip, he's in the RV faster than he can say FREEDOM. With G'ma's old maps and a strange pamphlet called the 'Travelers' Green Book' at their side, the pair takes off on a journey down

G'ma's memory lane. But adventure quickly turns to uncertainty: G'ma keeps changing the license plate, dodging Scoob's questions, and refusing to check Dad's voice mails. And the farther they go, the more Scoob realizes that the world hasn't always been a welcoming place for kids like him, and things aren't always what they seem--G'ma included.

Weaver, Lila. **My Year in the Middle**, 2018. JFIC

It is 1970 in Red Grove, Alabama, and at Lu Olivera's school the white kids and black kids sit on different sides of the classroom. Six-grader Lu just wants to get along with everyone, but growing racial tensions will not let Lu stay neutral about the racial divide in school. Her old friends have been changing lately--acting boy crazy and making snide remarks about Lu's newfound talent for running track. Lu's secret hope for a new friend is fellow runner Belinda Gresham, but blacks and whites don't mix. Will Lu find the gumption to stand up for what's right? And find friends who will stand with her?

*Yang, Kelly. **Three Keys**, 2020. JFIC

Mia Tang thinks she's going to have the best year ever. She and her parents are the proud owners of the Calivista Motel, Mia gets to run the front desk with her best friend, Lupe, and she's finally getting somewhere with her writing! But as it turns out, sixth grade is no picnic.

*= part of a series.

June 2021