What Will Your Community Read Next?

Suggested books to spark important conversations in your community for readers of all ages.

CommonReads.com
Why Common Reads?

Common Reads programs promote literacy, create community, and encourage reflection.

Selecting the right title is only the first step toward making your program a success; publisher support is also essential. Penguin Random House is here to ensure that your program runs smoothly and successfully, and that your needs and requests are handled in a thorough and efficient manner.

Whether you’re looking for First-Year Reading or community and school reads for children, teen, and adults, common reads promote literacy and foster a sense of community as a grade, school, town, or city read the same book and participate in discussions and related activities.

This brochure highlights titles that have editions for both adults and young readers. Choosing a title for a common read that has both editions allows for a true common read experience where all readers, from kids to adults, can read the same book and share in the experience.

For more information about how to host a community read in your school or library, resources, and thematic title recommendations, please visit CommonReads.com.
On a May afternoon in 1943, an American military plane crashed into the Pacific Ocean and disappeared, leaving only a spray of debris and a slick of oil, gasoline, and blood. Then, on the ocean surface, a face appeared. It was that of a young lieutenant, the plane’s bombardier, who was struggling to a life raft and pulling himself aboard. So began one of the most extraordinary sagas of the Second World War.

The lieutenant’s name was Louis Zamperini. As a boy, he had been a clever delinquent, breaking into houses, brawling, and stealing. As a teenager, he had channeled his defiance into running, discovering a supreme talent that carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when war came, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to his doomed flight, a tiny raft, and a drift into the unknown.

Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, a sinking raft, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would respond to desperation with ingenuity, suffering with hope and humor, brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would hang on the fraying wire of his will.

Unbroken
A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption
By Laura Hillenbrand
9780812974492 $16.00 PBK

Why Common Reads? The story of a former Olympian’s courage, cunning, and fortitude following his plane crash in enemy territory is one of history’s most thrilling survival epics that will grab readers of all ages.

Unbroken
(Young Adult Adaptation): An Olympian’s Journey from Airman to Castaway to Captive
by Laura Hillenbrand
9780385742528 $10.99 PBK

This captivating and lavishly illustrated young adult edition of her award-winning #1 New York Times bestseller, features more than one hundred photographs plus an exclusive conversation between Hillenbrand and Zamperini, this breathtaking odyssey—also captured on film by director Angelina Jolie—is a testament to the strength of the human spirit and the ability to endure against the unlikeliest of odds.
Out of the depths of the Depression comes an irresistible story about beating the odds and finding hope in the most desperate of times—the improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant.

It was an unlikely quest from the start. With a team composed of the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington’s eight-oar crew team was never expected to defeat the elite teams of the East Coast and Great Britain, yet they did, going on to shock the world by defeating the German team rowing for Adolf Hitler. The emotional heart of the tale lies with Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, who rows not only to regain his shattered self-regard but also to find a real place for himself in the world. Drawing on the boys’ own journals and vivid memories of a once-in-a-lifetime shared dream, Brown has created an unforgettable portrait of an era, a celebration of a remarkable achievement, and a chronicle of one extraordinary young man’s personal quest.

This deeply emotional yet easily accessible young readers adaptation of the award-winning #1 New York Times bestseller features never-before-seen photographs, highly visual back matter, and an exclusive new introduction.
One Sunday morning before church, when Welles Crowther was a young boy, his father gave him a red handkerchief for his back pocket. Welles kept it with him that day, and just about every day to come; it became a fixture and his signature.

A standout athlete growing up in Upper Nyack, NY, Welles was also a volunteer at the local fire department, along with his father. He cherished the necessity and the camaraderie, the meaning of the role. Fresh from college, he took a Wall Street job on the 104th floor of the South Tower of the World Trade Center, but the dream of becoming a firefighter with the FDNY remained.

When the Twin Towers fell, Welles’s parents had no idea what had happened to him. In the unbearable days that followed, they came to accept that he would never come home. But the mystery of his final hours persisted. Eight months after the attacks, however, Welles’s mother read a news account from several survivors, badly hurt on the 78th floor of the South Tower, who said they and others had been led to safety by a stranger, carrying a woman on his back, down nearly twenty flights of stairs. After leading them down, the young man turned around. "I’m going back up," was all he said.

The survivors didn’t know his name, but despite the smoke and panic, one of them remembered a single detail clearly: the man was wearing a red bandanna.
Luma Mufleh, a young Jordanian woman educated in the United States and working as a coach for private youth soccer teams in Atlanta, was out for a drive one day and ended up in Clarkston, Georgia, where she was amazed and delighted to see young boys, black and brown and white, some barefoot, playing soccer on every flat surface they could find. Luma decided to quit her job, move to Clarkston, and start a soccer team that would soon defy the odds. Despite challenges to locate a practice field, minimal funding for uniforms and equipment, and zero fans on the sidelines, the Fugees practiced hard and demonstrated a team spirit that drew admiration from referees and competitors alike.

*Outcasts United* explores how the community changed with the influx of refugees and how the dedication of Lumah Mufleh and the entire Fugees soccer team inspired an entire community.

**Outcasts United (Young Readers Adaptation):**
*The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team That Changed a Town*

by Warren St. John

9780385741958 $9.99 PBK

Based on the adult bestseller, *Outcasts United: An American Town, a Refugee Team, and One Woman’s Quest to Make a Difference*, this young people’s edition is a complex and inspirational story about the Fugees, a youth soccer team made up of diverse refugees from around the world, and their formidable female coach, Luma Mufleh.
What should we have for dinner? Ten years ago, Michael Pollan confronted us with this seemingly simple question and, with *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, his brilliant and eye-opening exploration of our food choices, demonstrated that how we answer it today may determine not only our health but our survival as a species. In the years since, Pollan’s revolutionary examination has changed the way Americans think about food. Bringing wide attention to the little-known but vitally important dimensions of food and agriculture in America, Pollan launched a national conversation about what we eat and the profound consequences that even the simplest everyday food choices have on both ourselves and the natural world. Ten years later, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* continues to transform the way Americans think about the politics, perils, and pleasures of eating.

In a smart, compelling format with updated facts, plenty of photos, graphs, and visuals, as well as a new afterword and backmatter, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* serves up a bold message to the generation that needs it most: It’s time to take charge of our national eating habits—and it starts with you.
Endurance:  
My Year in Space, 
a Lifetime of Discovery
by Scott Kelly
9780525432432 $16.95 PBK

Endurance (Young Readers Edition): My Year in Space and How I Got There
by Scott Kelly
9781524764241 $17.99 HC

Why Common Reads? A stunning, personal memoir from the astronaut and modern-day hero who spent a record-breaking year aboard the International Space Station—a message of hope for the future that will inspire for generations to come.

The veteran of four spaceflights and the American record holder for consecutive days spent in space, Scott Kelly has experienced things very few have. Now, he takes us inside a sphere utterly hostile to human life. He describes navigating the extreme challenge of long-term spaceflight, both life-threatening and mundane: the devastating effects on the body; the isolation from everyone he loves and the comforts of Earth; the catastrophic risks of colliding with space junk; and the still more haunting threat of being unable to help should tragedy strike at home—an agonizing situation Kelly faced when, on a previous mission, his twin brother’s wife, American Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, was shot while he still had two months in space.

Kelly’s humanity, compassion, humor, and determination resonate throughout, as he recalls his rough-and-tumble New Jersey childhood and the youthful inspiration that sparked his astounding career, and as he makes clear his belief that Mars will be the next, ultimately challenging, step in spaceflight.

In Endurance, we see the triumph of the human imagination, the strength of the human will, and the infinite wonder of the galaxy.

Endurance (Young Readers Edition): My Year in Space and How I Got There
by Scott Kelly
9781524764241 $17.99 HC

Newly adapted for young readers from the New York Times best-seller comes the awe-inspiring memoir from NASA astronaut Scott Kelly, who spent a record-breaking year in space.

How does a boy struggling in school become an American hero and a space pioneer?

Scott Kelly believes, “If you can dream it, you can do it.” This checklist put Scott on a rocket that launched him into space, allowed him to break a record during his inspiring year aboard the International Space Station, and showed human beings the qualities needed to go from Earth to Mars—and beyond.
At least one-third of the people we know are introverts. They are the ones who prefer listening to speaking; who innovate and create but dislike self-promotion; who favor working on their own over working in teams. It is to introverts—Rosa Parks, Chopin, Dr. Seuss, Steve Wozniak—that we owe many of the great contributions to society.

In *Quiet*, Susan Cain argues that we dramatically undervalue introverts and shows how much we lose in doing so. She charts the rise of the Extrovert Ideal throughout the twentieth century and explores how deeply it has come to permeate our culture. She also introduces us to successful introverts—from a witty, high-octane public speaker who recharges in solitude after his talks, to a record-breaking salesman who quietly taps into the power of questions. Passionately argued, superbly researched, and filled with indelible stories of real people, *Quiet* has the power to permanently change how we see introverts and, equally important, how they see themselves.

Now with Extra Libris material, including a reader’s guide and bonus content.

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The original book focused on the workplace, and Susan realized that a version for and about kids was also badly needed. This book is all about kids’ world—school, extracurriculars, family life, and friendship.

You’ll read about actual kids who have tackled the challenges of not being extroverted and who have made a mark in their own quiet way. You’ll hear Susan Cain’s own story, and you’ll be able to make use of the tips at the end of each chapter. There’s even a guide at the end of the book for parents and teachers.

This insightful, accessible, and empowering book, illustrated with amusing comic-style art, will be eye-opening to extroverts and introverts alike.
Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn’t commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinksmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.

In this young adult adaptation of the acclaimed bestselling Just Mercy, which the New York Times calls “as compelling as To Kill a Mockingbird, and in some ways more so,” Bryan Stevenson delves deep into the broken U.S. justice system, detailing from his personal experience his many challenges and efforts as a lawyer and social advocate, especially on behalf of America’s most rejected and marginalized people. Through the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), an organization Stevenson founded as a young lawyer and for which he currently serves as Executive Director, this important work continues. EJI strives to end mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, working to protect basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society.
In this illustrated history, Steven Johnson explores the history of innovation over centuries, tracing facets of modern life (refrigeration, clocks, and eyeglass lenses, to name a few) from their creation by hobbyists, amateurs, and entrepreneurs to their unintended historical consequences. Filled with surprising stories of accidental genius and brilliant mistakes—from the French publisher who invented the phonograph before Edison but forgot to include playback, to the Hollywood movie star who helped invent the technology behind Wi-Fi and Bluetooth—How We Got to Now investigates the secret history behind the everyday objects of contemporary life.

Accompanied by a major six-part television series on PBS, How We Got to Now is the story of collaborative networks building the modern world, written in the provocative, informative, and engaging style that has earned Johnson fans around the globe.

This adaptation of Johnson’s adult book and popular PBS series explores the interconnected and often surprising stories of important innovations that changed the way people live.

His fascinating account is organized into six topics: glass, cold, sound, clean, time, and light. Johnson’s fresh exploration of these simple, single-syllable concepts creates an endlessly absorbing story that moves from lightning strikes in the prehistoric desert to the herculean effort to literally raise up the city of Chicago to laser labs straight out of a sci-fi movie. Includes additional photos and informational captions.
**Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood**

by Trevor Noah

9780399588174 $28.00 HC

**Why Common Reads?**

A moving and searingly funny portrait of a boy making his way through a damaged world in a dangerous time, armed only with a keen sense of humor and a mother’s unconventional, unconditional love.

Trevor Noah’s unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of *The Daily Show* began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. Living proof of his parents’ indiscretion, Trevor was kept mostly indoors for the earliest years of his life, bound by the extreme and often absurd measures his mother took to hide him from a government that could, at any moment, steal him away. Finally liberated by the end of South Africa’s tyrannical white rule, Trevor and his mother set forth on a grand adventure, living openly and freely and embracing the opportunities won by a centuries-long struggle.

*Born a Crime* is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man’s relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother—his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life.

The stories collected here are by turns hilarious, dramatic, and deeply affecting. Whether subsisting on caterpillars for dinner during hard times, being thrown from a moving car during an attempted kidnapping, or just trying to survive the life-and-death pitfalls of dating in high school, Trevor illuminates his curious world with an incisive wit and unflinching honesty.

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**It’s Trevor Noah:**

*Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood (Adapted for Young Readers)*

by Trevor Noah

9780525582168 $17.99 HC | Available Spring 2019

The *Daily Show* host, Trevor Noah, tells the story of growing up half-black, half-white in South Africa under and after apartheid in this young readers adaptation of his bestselling adult memoir *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood.*

Sure to resonate with young readers who may be looking to overcome their own circumstances or who merely may want to know about South Africa’s racial history and how a young man in difficult circumstances found his way. Includes an overview of the history of apartheid.
The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind
by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer; Illustrated by Anna Hyma

9780147510426 $8.99 PBK

Why Common Reads? Technology and engineering are part of our everyday lives. This exciting memoir shows how, even in a desperate situation, one boy’s brilliant idea can light up the world.

When a terrible drought struck William Kamkwamba’s tiny village in Malawi, his family lost all of the season’s crops, leaving them with nothing to eat and nothing to sell. William began to explore science books in his village library, looking for a solution. There, he came up with the idea that would change his family’s life forever. He could build a windmill. Made out of scrap metal and old bicycle parts, William’s windmill brought electricity to his home and helped his family pump the water they needed to farm the land. Based on the bestselling adult book.

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind (Picture Book Edition)
by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer; Illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon

9780803735118 $17.99 HC

Lyrically told and gloriously illustrated, this story will inspire many as it shows how—even in the worst of times—a great idea and a lot of hard work can still rock the world.
In the chaotic last days of the war, a small troop of battle-weary American soldiers captures a German spy and makes an astonishing find—his briefcase is empty but for photos of beautiful white horses that have been stolen and kept on a secret farm behind enemy lines. Hitler has stockpiled the world’s finest purebreds in order to breed the perfect military machine—an equine master race. But with the starving Russian army closing in, the animals are in imminent danger of being slaughtered for food.

With only hours to spare, one of the U.S. Army’s last great cavalrymen, Colonel Hank Reed, makes a bold decision—with General George Patton’s blessing—to mount a covert rescue operation. Racing against time, Reed’s small but determined force of soldiers, aided by several turncoat Germans, steals across enemy lines in a last-ditch effort to save the horses.

Pulling together this multistranded story, Elizabeth Letts introduces us to an unforgettable cast of characters: Alois Podhajsky, director of the famed Spanish Riding School of Vienna, a former Olympic medalist who is forced to flee the bomb-ravaged Austrian capital with his entire stable in tow; Gustav Rau, Hitler’s imperious chief of horse breeding, a proponent of eugenics who dreams of genetically engineering the perfect warhorse for Germany; and Tom Stewart, a senator’s son who makes a daring moonlight ride on a white stallion to secure the farm’s surrender.

From the author of The Eighty-Dollar Champion, the remarkable story of the heroic rescue of priceless horses in the closing days of World War II.

In this thrilling young readers’ edition of her New York Times bestselling book, Elizabeth Letts details the terrifying truth of Hitler’s eugenics program during World War II and shares the story of the courageous American troop dedicated to stopping it.
My Beloved World
by Sonia Sotomayor

9780345804839 $15.95 PBK

The inspiring story the first Hispanic and third woman appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States will show readers of all ages that dreams can come true.

The first Hispanic and third woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court, Sonia Sotomayor has become an instant American icon. Now, with a candor and intimacy never undertaken by a sitting Justice, she recounts her life from a Bronx housing project to the federal bench, a journey that offers an inspiring testament to her own extraordinary determination and the power of believing in oneself.

The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor
by Sonia Sotomayor

9781524771140 $17.99 HC

In this adaptation for middle graders based on her bestselling adult memoir, My Beloved World, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Sonia Sotomayor’s extraordinary life inspires. Her achievement serves as a true testament to the fact that no matter the obstacles, dreams can come true. Includes a brief history of the Supreme Court and an 8-page photo insert.

Turning Pages: My life story
by Sonia Sotomayor
Illustrated by Lulu Delacre

9780525514084 $17.99 HC

This picture book biography tells the story of Justice Sotomayor’s life through the books and stories that inspired her on her journey to the Supreme Court. She challenges readers to imagine where their own journeys will lead. Also available in Spanish.
Why Common Reads? A story of two fatherless boys from Baltimore, both named Wes Moore. One is in prison, serving a life sentence for murder. The other is a Rhodes Scholar, an army veteran, and an author whose book is being turned into a movie produced by Oprah Winfrey.

Two kids named Wes Moore were born blocks apart within a year of each other. Both grew up fatherless in similar Baltimore neighborhoods and had difficult childhoods; both hung out on street corners with their crews; both ran into trouble with the police. How, then, did one grow up to be a Rhodes Scholar, decorated veteran, White House Fellow, and business leader, while the other ended up a convicted murderer serving a life sentence? Wes Moore, the author of this fascinating book, sets out to answer this profound question. In alternating narratives that take readers from heart-wrenching losses to moments of surprising redemption, *The Other Wes Moore* tells the story of a generation of boys trying to find their way in a hostile world.

Discovering Wes Moore
by Wes Moore
9780385741682 $8.99 PBK

Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World
by Tracy Kidder

9780812973013 $17.00 PBK

Why Common Reads? This powerful and inspiring new book shows how one person can make a difference, as Kidder tells the true story of a gifted man who is in love with the world and has set out to do all he can to cure it.

From Tracy Kidder, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of A Truck Full of Money, and adapted by Michael French comes this captivating and critically acclaimed young adult adaptation of the nonfiction edition of Kidder’s Mountains Beyond Mountains, which tells the inspiring story of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Harvard-educated doctor with a self-proclaimed mission to transform healthcare on a global scale.

Farmer focuses his attention on some of the world’s most impoverished people and uses unconventional ways in which to provide healthcare, to achieve real results and save lives. From his humble beginnings and atypical childhood to his education at Harvard Medical School and on to Haiti, Peru, Cuba, and Russia, Farmer dedicated himself to the philosophy that “the only real nation is humanity.” He sets an example of a life based on hope and understanding of the Haitian proverb “Beyond mountains there are mountains”—as you solve one problem, another problem presents itself, and so you go on and try to solve that one too.

Mountains Beyond Mountains (Adapted for Young People):
The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World
by Tracy Kidder and Michael French

9780385743198 $9.99 PBK

“An important story that feels like it breathes a dose of virtuous oxygen right into readers’ heads.”
—Kirkus Reviews, starred review
Why Common Reads? An astonishing story that puts a human face on the ongoing debate about immigration reform in the United States, now updated with a new epilogue and afterword, photos of Enrique and his family, an author interview, and more—the definitive edition of a classic of contemporary America.

Based on the Los Angeles Times newspaper series that won two Pulitzer Prizes, one for feature writing and another for feature photography, this page-turner about the power of family is a popular text in classrooms and a touchstone for communities across the country to engage in meaningful discussions about this essential American subject.

Enrique’s Journey recounts the unforgettable quest of a Honduran boy looking for his mother, eleven years after she is forced to leave her starving family to find work in the United States. Braving unimaginable peril, often clinging to the sides and tops of freight trains, Enrique travels through hostile worlds full of thugs, bandits, and corrupt cops. But he pushes forward, relying on his wit, courage, hope, and the kindness of strangers. As Isabel Allende writes: “This is a twenty-first-century Odyssey. If you are going to read only one nonfiction book this year, it has to be this one.”

Enrique’s Journey (Young Adult Adaptation): The True Story of a Boy Determined to Reunite with His Mother

Adapted for young people, this edition of Enrique’s Journey is written by Sonia Nazario and based on the adult book of the same name. It is the true story of Enrique, a teenager from Honduras, who sets out on a journey, braving hardship and peril, to find his mother, who had no choice but to leave him when he was a child and go to the United States in search of work. The issues seamlessly interwoven into this gripping nonfiction work for young people are perfect for common core discussion. Includes an 8-page photo insert, as well as an epilogue that describes what has happened to Enrique and his family since the adult edition was published.

“A heartwrenching account. Provides a human face, both beautiful and scarred, for the undocumented. A must read.” —Kirkus Reviews, starred review
George Washington’s Secret Six: the Spy Ring that Saved the American Revolution
by Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger
9781595231109 $16.00 PBK

Why Common Reads? Who doesn’t love a good spy thriller? This gripping tale of George Washington’s top-secret spy ring that helped defeat the British will appeal to readers of all ages.

When George Washington beat a hasty retreat from New York City in August 1776, many thought the American Revolution might soon be over. Instead, Washington rallied—thanks in large part to a little-known, top-secret group called the Culper Spy Ring. He realized that he couldn’t defeat the British with military might, so he recruited a sophisticated and deeply secretive intelligence network to infiltrate New York.

Drawing on extensive research, Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger have offered fascinating portraits of these spies: a reserved Quaker merchant, a tavern keeper, a brash young longshoreman, a curmudgeonly Long Island bachelor, a coffeehouse owner, and a mysterious woman. Long unrecognized, the secret six are finally receiving their due among the pantheon of American heroes.

George Washington’s Secret Six (Young Readers Adaptation): The Spies Who Saved America
by Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger
9780425288986 $17.99 HC

This vivid and accessible young reader’s adaptation of the New York Times bestseller features an exclusive new introduction, extensive back matter, and eye-catching art throughout. Chronicling a crucial moment in American history, this historical thriller will excite and inspire the next generation of patriots.
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