

Best of the Best

To make the best of the best list, a book has to prove that its power doesn't diminish with time. Years after they were published, all of these books remain classic Young Adult works because they are realistic, beautifully written and engaging without being preachy or providing pat answers to troubling questions.

Like Jerry Renault in Robert Cormier's **The Chocolate War**, many teenagers wonder whether they should follow orders and try to fit in, or follow their own path.

Most of the works are dramas set in the real world, but one is pure **science fiction** (see SLEATOR, William), another is **post-holocaust fiction** (see O'BRIEN, Robert), one is **alternate world fantasy** (see PULLMAN, Philip), a couple are **magic realism** (see ALMOND, David and BLOCK, Francesca Lia) and a couple are more **humorous** than serious (see BAUER, Joan and KORMAN, Gordon).

Both David Almond's **Kit's Wilderness** and Walter Dean Myers' **Monster** won the Michael L. Printz Award for the top Young Adult book of the year (in 2001 and 2000, respectively).

For books by literary luminaries such as Mark Twain, Jane Austen, Harper Lee and George Orwell, check the "Classics" section on the Young Adult paperback spinners.

Y ALM

Kit's Wilderness

by David Almond

After Kit Watson moves to a coal-mining town in northern England, he meets a dangerous boy who, like Kit, can see the ghosts of long-dead miners. (2000)

Y AND

Speak

by Laurie Halse Anderson

Having broken up an end-of-summer party by calling the police, high-school freshman Melinda Sordino begins the school year as a social outcast. Only she knows the real reason behind her call, and she's not speaking. (1999)

Y BAU

Rules of the Road

by Joan Bauer

Sixteen-year-old Jenna Boller doesn't have a mind for school, but she's great at selling shoes. When she accompanies her boss on a business trip, she learns valuable life lessons just in time to use them. Bauer's book is quirky, funny and touching. (1998)

Y BLO

Weetzie Bat

by Francesca Lia Block

Read about punk teens Weetzie Bat, Dirk, Duck and My-Secret-Agent-Lover-Man as they search for love in this modern fairy tale set in Los Angeles. (1989)

Y BLU

Tiger Eyes

by Judy Blume

After Davey's father is killed in a hold-up, she and her family move to New Mexico. While climbing in a canyon, she meets a mysterious young man named Wolf, whose understanding may help Davey overcome her grief. (1981)

Y BRA

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants

by Ann Brashares

Upon learning that they will be spending the summer apart, four best friends decide to stay together -- in spirit -- by sharing a pair of magical jeans (2001). Followed by three sequels.

Y CAR

Up Country

by Alden R. Carter

While his alcoholic mother receives treatment, 16-year-old Carl is sent from his home in the city to live with relatives in upstate Wisconsin. (1989)

Y COR

The Chocolate War

by Robert Cormier

When high school freshman Jerry Renault refuses to sell chocolates for a school fund-raiser, a school gang and a corrupt, manipulative teacher try to force him to change his ways. (1973) In **We All Fall Down**, a witness who calls himself The Avenger searches for the drunken teenagers who trashed a house and threw a young girl down a flight of stairs. (1992)

Y CRU

Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes

by Chris Crutcher

Once an obese outcast, Eric has lost weight as a member of his high school swim team. But he hasn't forgotten his friend Sarah, a badly disfigured girl with a caustic wit. When Sarah is committed to a mental ward, Eric decides he must help her. But her problem is deeper and the stakes are higher than he imagined. (1993)

Y DIC

Eva

by Peter Dickinson

After a terrible accident, Eva wakes up in a hospital only to discover that doctors have transplanted her memory into the body of a chimpanzee. (1989)

Y DUN

Killing Mr. Griffin

by Lois Duncan

Five English students plan to scare their English teacher by kidnapping him, but the plan goes awry when the teacher dies. Now they need to cover their tracks. But how? (1978)

Y FAR

A Girl Named Disaster

by Nancy Farmer

To flee from an unwanted marriage, a young Shona girl risks drowning and starvation, and in so doing comes close to the world of the African spirits. (1996)

Y GAI

Sandman (various)

by Neil Gaiman

Starting with **Preludes and Nocturnes** (1995), Gaiman reinvented modern comics with his mythic characterization of Dream (a.k.a. The Sandman), an immortal being who rules a malleable, mysterious realm composed of human thoughts, hopes, aspirations and fantasy. Containing imagery and ideas that startle and disturb, these comics are for mature readers. *Look for Sandman in the Young Adult graphic novels area.*

Y GRE

Looking for Alaska

by John Green

While adjusting to life at a preparatory school in Alabama, Miles learns about love, friendship and tragedy. (2005)

Y HIN

The Outsiders

by S.E. Hinton

When a member of a rival gang dies, two brothers—Ponyboy and Johnny—are forced to go into hiding. (1967)

Y KLA

Blood and Chocolate

by Annette Curtis Klause

Having fallen for a human boy, a beautiful teenage werewolf must battle both her pack mates and the fear of the townspeople to decide where and with whom she belongs. (1997)

Y KOR

Son of the Mob

by Gordon Korman

After Vince Luca falls for a girl named Kendra, he learns that their families don't move in the same social circles—or legal circles, for that matter. His dad belongs to the mafia, while hers is the FBI agent trying to put him away. (2002)

Y MCN

Zippered

by Laura and Tom McNeal

When he opens the wrong e-mail by mistake, 15-year-old Mick Nichols learns his stepmother is having an affair. And that's not his only problem in this novel full of realistic sub-plots, problems and confrontations. Isn't life as a teenager ever easy? (2003)

Y MIL

Batman : The Dark Knight Returns

by Frank Miller

Now in his 50s, Batman returns—after a long absence—to see if he can bring order to the chaotic streets of Gotham. He soon comes face to face with the dreaded Mutant Gang, Two-Face, the Joker and his former ally, Superman. Very dark and at times disturbing, **Batman : The Dark Knight Returns** is written for mature teens and adults. (1996) Miller also wrote **Batman : Year One**. *Look for these books in the graphic novels area.*

Y MOO

Watchmen

by Alan Moore

Someone is killing members of a once-mighty superhero group. Moore deftly explores human – and superhuman – frailty in this moody, disturbing graphic novel for mature readers. (1987)

Y MYE

Monster

by Walter Dean Myers

Arrested and charged with murder, 16-year-old Steve Harmon writes a screenplay about his ordeal. (1999)

Y NAM

Ties that Bind, Ties that Break

by Lensey Namioka

In China in 1911, Ailin enjoys a privileged childhood, but as a girl she is denied what she wants most, a voice in her future. (1999)

Y OBR

Z for Zachariah

by Robert O'Brian

A young girl, the only survivor of a nuclear holocaust, spots a light coming closer and closer each night. (1975)

Y PAT

PATERSON, Katherine

Bridge to Terabithia

Best friends Jess and Leslie begin meeting in a rural sanctuary called Terabithia to escape the worries of everyday life. Then tragedy strikes. (1977)

Y PAU

Hatchet

By Gary Paulsen

When the small plane taking him to his divorced father crashes in the Canadian wilderness, Brian must struggle to survive in his harsh surroundings. (1987)

Y PUL

The Golden Compass

by Philip Pullman

Friends, witches and an armoured polar bear help Lyra fight the evil forces that are stealing children for horrible experiments. (1996) Book one of the **His Dark Materials** trilogy, followed by **The Subtle Knife** and **The Amber Spyglass**.

Y SLE

Interstellar Pig

by William Sleator

Barney's strange new neighbours invite him to play a bizarre board game called Interstellar Pig. Over time, he begins to suspect that the "game" may be placing other living beings – even entire planets – at risk. (1991)

Y WES

Uglies

by Scott Westerfeld

Tally and Shay live in a world where everyone has cosmetic surgery at age 16 to turn them from an "ugly" into a "pretty." Eschewing the vacuous life set out for her, Shay flees society to join a group of objectors and rebels. When she goes missing, the government sends Tally on an undercover mission to locate her – and the rebel camp. (2005) The first of a four-book sequence that includes **Pretties** (2005), **Specials** (2006) and **Extras** (2007).

Y WIT

Hard Love

by Ellen Wittlinger

Sixteen-year-old John meets Marisol, a funny, intelligent girl who – like him – discusses her hopes, yearnings and troubles in self-published zines. Problems arise when he begins to fall for her, though, because Marisol is a lesbian. (1999)

Y WOO

If You Come Softly

by Jacqueline Woodson

A black boy and a white girl face disapproval from their families and society at large when they fall in love. (1998)

Y ZIN

The Pigman

by Paul Zindel

Two high school sophomores tell of their friendship with a lonely old man. (1968)

Y ZUS

The Book Thief

by Marcus Zusak

Death narrates this story of a girl named Liesel, a German girl who steals books and tells stories to her family – and the Jewish man they are hiding – during the darkest days of World War Two. (2006)

A note on finding books ...

Young Adult fiction is filed from A to Z under the first three letters of the author's LAST NAME. To find Paul Zindel's **Night of the Bat**, you would need to look for the letters ZIN, near the end of the fiction area.

All fiction books (and a few non-fiction books) that are less than a year old go in the **new books** area, which is marked by a sign. At Poirier Library, **graphic novels** are on a shelving unit in the corner of the Young Adult area. At City Centre Library, the graphic novels are underneath the teen magazines, just to the left of the new books.

Collections of **short stories**—themed around a certain topic (ghost stories) or by a particular author—are filed just after the Z authors.

If a Young Adult book you want ISN'T ON THE SHELF, try looking on the **paperback spinners** in the Young Adult area. Most of the paperbacks are filed under the first letter of the author's LAST NAME. For Tamora Pierce books, you would look among the books with P stickers at the bottom of their spines. Signs on top of the paperback racks tell you which letters are in each spinner.

Books on the paperback spinners DO NOT APPEAR in the online library catalogue. In other words, you cannot find them on computer. So when the computer says a book is out, it means just the copies it knows about. You might still find it on the paperback spinners.

Note that the paperback spinners include special categories, such as **series books** (Sweet Valley High, Dragonlance, Cirque Du Freak), **mysteries**, **science fiction** and **classics** by authors such as Jane Austen and Charles Dickens. Look for the headings above each spinner to make sure you're looking in the right place.

If you have any trouble finding a book, please consult a librarian at the reference desk. They are happy to help you.

Updated January 2009