

Reading Resource Library Guide: Historical Fiction

The following high-interest books were selected to support an exploration of Historical Fiction books. Each book has a summary and additional information, such as book trailers and links to reviews, in a separate slide deck. Visit [this link](#) to access the books.

Suggestions for using the text sets and slide deck:

- ▶ Choose one of the following four topics from the quarter three slide deck to explore with your class: Historical Fiction, Diverse America, Family and Community, and Collections/Series.
- ▶ Books in the collection span different reading levels. Also included is a separate collection, “Engaging Books for Children and Families,” which offers a selection of books that can be used with children, families, and adults.
- ▶ Explore the slides for your topic in the provided link. Each book listed in the table below has a summary and additional information with links to websites that offer supplemental material. Consider selecting one book to read aloud to learners while they read their own text.
- ▶ Share the slide deck with learners and explore the books and websites. Allow learners individual time to explore the slide deck and choose a book or excerpts from several books to read.
- ▶ Decide how you will interact with these topics and texts. This information guide has suggestions for activities for the classroom, tools for teachers, and activities for families, which are starting points for larger units or creative activities to engage with topics and texts.
- ▶ The “Activities for Families” section may be copied into another document and sent home with families for engagement suggestions while reading the books.
- ▶ Use this tool to help develop and foster a reading life for your learners!

Book Title	Author	Lexile Reading Level
<i>Towers Falling</i>	Jewell Parker Rhodes	410
<i>Lifeboat 12</i>	Susan Hood	610
<i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i>	Patricia MacLachlan	650
<i>Ground Zero</i>	Alan Gratz	690
<i>The Book Thief</i>	Markus Zusak	730

<i>Two Roads</i>	Joseph Bruchac	740
<i>Uprising</i>	Margaret Peterson Haddix	790
<i>Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two</i>	Joseph Bruchac	910
<i>Chasing King's Killer: The Hunt for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Assassin</i>	James L. Swanson	1010
Engaging Books for Adults and Children		
<i>Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad</i>	Ellen Levine and Kadir Nelson	AD 490
<i>When Stars Are Scattered</i>	Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed	GN 530
<i>Peppe the Lamplighter</i>	Elisa Bartone	AD 510
<i>Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam</i>	Walter Dean Myers	560
<i>The Gardener</i>	Sarah Stewart	AD 570
<i>Hello Lighthouse</i>	Sophie Blackall	AD 510
<i>Show Way</i>	Jacqueline Woodson	AD 650
<i>Home in the Woods</i>	Eliza Wheeler	690

Activities for the Classroom

- ▶ At the start of this unit, ensure that learners understand the complexities of reading the historical fiction genre. The keys to learner success with historical fiction come from: building background knowledge and connecting to current events.
- ▶ You may consider using [this lesson](#) from NCTE to launch your unit and to get your learners excited and engaged in this genre.
- ▶ After learners have chosen a historical fiction text to read, consider having them use a T-chart like [this one](#) from Sadlier to track their thinking across the text. For example, learners may write a historical event on the left side of the chart, and analyze it further relating to both the book and research, on the right. They may discuss how this event impacted their character and the country based on their reading and research. See [this site](#) for an example of different ways students can track their thinking across text, including an historical fiction example.
- ▶ As learners make their way through historical fiction texts, consider having them complete research about the era their historical fiction texts take place in. You could put together a Padlet like [this one](#) based on the eras your learners are reading about. If this asks you for a password, type in "Historical Fiction" exactly as shown.

- ▶ After you have come to the end of your unit, consider having learners complete a presentation using the questions in [this lesson](#) to show their knowledge and learning from the unit!

Helpful Links for Teachers

The Atlantic:

[This article](#), “Using Historical Fiction to Connect Past and Present,” offers information for teachers reflecting on how historical fiction can help learners with critical thinking skills and synthesis between their historical fiction worlds to current events.

How and Why I Teach With Historical Fiction (Scholastic):

[This article](#) from Scholastic offers teachers resources, teaching strategies, and lesson ideas for teaching the historical fiction genre. It can be adapted for learners of various ages, grade levels, or abilities.

Achieve the Core:

[This website](#) is full of, “free, ready-to-use classroom resources that support excellent, standards-aligned instruction, for all students.” Teachers can access a plethora of lessons, units, and activities around the genre of mystery by searching the term, “historical fiction” on the website’s main page, or by clicking [here](#).

Common Lit:

This website is full of text, text sets, and passages of all genres, including historical fiction. Choose by genre, grade level, Lexile range, or standard! It does require a free account and links with Google Classroom. Access this great resource [here](#).

Activities for Families

- ▶ Choose a book to explore from the “Engaging Books for Adults and Children” section in the table above.
- ▶ Look at the front cover with your child. Ask them, “What do you notice?” Explore the pictures and text. Have your child guess at what the story may be about using the picture on the front cover. This is called making a prediction.
- ▶ Read and discuss the book. Make connections to the Historical Fiction books that you are reading. Explore words that your child does not understand.
- ▶ Explain that historical fiction is a story that takes place in the past. As a reader of historical fiction, it will be important to pay close attention to what the problem(s) in the story are and how the problem(s) affect the character(s). With that in mind, ask your child:
 - What year does this story take place in?
 - How do the problems in this book seem similar, and different, to those happening in our world today?
 - What would it be like to live in the year this book is taking place in?
 - Can you tell me about a place you visited a long time ago? What city? What year? What time of year? Why did you visit?

- Would you read other historical fiction books? What do you like most about reading stories from the past? What is interesting about these stories?

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