The following list of titles, produced in partnership with Facing History and Ourselves, a non-profit international educational organization dedicated to engaging “students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry,” focuses on topics related to democracy and citizenship, including free speech, religious freedom and tolerance, civil disobedience, and the role of the press.

By SLJ Reviews Editors
Elementary

A Is for Activist by Innosanto Nagara. illus. by author. Seven Stories. 2013. ISBN 9781609805395. NONFICTION.
Gr 4 Up—Not your typical alphabet board book, this one packs a powerful message both visually and verbally. Each spread presents a letter and a bit of social commentary urging children to take a stand against war and violence, develop an awareness of our environment, and promote acceptance and equality for all cultures, races, religions, genders, and walks of life. An unusual offering that may plant the seeds for activism and spark discussions.

We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States by David Catrow. illus. by author. Dial. 2002. ISBN 9780803725539. NONFICTION.
K-Gr 5—The dry, difficult words from the preamble to the constitution are made easy to understand through wild, wacky, full-color art. After a foreword and a page of definitions, Catrow uses his witty style to encourage kids to giggle and then claim ownership of the famous words and the basic concepts they ensure.

Gr 2-4—More than a century before Brown v. Board of Education, there was Roberts v. City of Boston. Benjamin and Adeline Roberts enrolled their four-year-old in the closest neighborhood school. Sarah attended until officials noticed and sent a police escort. In 1855, Massachusetts banned segregation. An important exploration of the struggle for equality and education in this country.

Gr 3-5—This picture book biography of Justice Ginsburg traces her achievements in the field of law back to her girlhood years, emphasizing the importance of dissent in the face of an unequal society. This dynamic offering is an essential purchase that will be useful for completing assignments as well as for pleasure reading.

I Pledge Allegiance by Pat Mora and Libby Martinez. illus. by Patrice Barton. Knopf. 2014. ISBN 9780307931818. FICTION.
Gr 1-4—Libby and her great-aunt Lobo are learning the Pledge of Allegiance at the same time—but for different reasons. Lobo is practicing it in order to become a citizen of the United States. In school, Libby has been chosen to lead her class in saying the pledge. Lobo and Libby practice together and talk about what it means to both of them. Sprinkled with Spanish words, this gentle book explores what it means to be an American from the perspective of both a child and new citizen.

Elizabeth Started All the Trouble by Doreen Rappaport. illus. by Matt Faulkner. Disney-Hyperion. 2016. ISBN 9780786851423. NONFICTION.
Gr 1-4—A brief account of how the women’s suffrage movement in the United States began and developed momentum over the years. Elizabeth Cady Stanton was involved in abolitionism and the women’s rights movement, becoming an outspoken advocate in both realms and leading the way for many other women to take up the banner of equality.

K-Gr 3—A gentle picture book about the legacy of Native American boarding schools told from the perspective of a young girl gardening with her grandmother. The grandmother recounts the injustices she and the other children faced but also how they would steal moments in order to recapture the identities they were forced to leave behind. The child-centered text makes the boarding school experience accessible to a young audience without glossing over its harsh reality.
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Gr 2–5—Americans describe our country as the “land of the free” every time we sing our national anthem, but how often do we take a step back and really consider what that phrase means? Starting with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, this book considers how freedom has been expanded and restricted by governmental, racial, religious, and economic factors. Demonstrating that freedom in practice can be the framework that provides citizens with rights and protections, the author explains the significance of the Bill of Rights, then goes into more detail about slavery, labor laws, immigration policies, and voting expansion.

Gr 2–5—When eight-year-old Sylvia, an American citizen of Latin American heritage, was denied enrollment in her neighborhood school and sent to a much inferior “Mexican school,” her family initiated a lawsuit that ended segregation in California and paved the way for progress nationwide. An important story told with lucid text; expressive, Mixtec-inspired folk art; and in-depth end matter.

Upper Elementary and Middle School

Gr 4–8—Following Pearl Harbor, Fred Korematsu refused to enter the internment camps. His eventual discovery resulted in imprisonment. Nearly 40 years later, Korematsu’s case would be reopened, paving the way for the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. This inspirational work hooks readers through a variety of formats, including dramatic illustrations and direct questions. Primary source documents bring the period vividly to life, while time lines and descriptions of contemporary struggles for equality by Chinese, Mexican, and African Americans, among others, offer meaningful context.

Gr 3–5—Corey begins with biographical information on John F. Kennedy, including his wealthy upbringing in an influential family, his illnesses as a child, his run for Congress, and his eventual election to the presidency. The book then segues into the struggle of African Americans to achieve civil rights, detailing the arduous work of sit-ins, marches, and the Freedom Riders. Finally, the story returns to Kennedy's 1963 speech to Congress. Christie’s impressionistic illustrations are poignant and bring the narrative to life.

Gr 4–7—In this timely and visually appealing set, clear writing delves into the political and historical context of the Bill of Rights and the amendments, clarifying their origins and significance. The inner workings of the U.S. government, especially the judicial system and Supreme Court, are also discussed. The impact of our increasingly digital world and the controversy surrounding certain rights are looked at critically, representing multiple perspectives.

Fannie Never Flinched: One Woman's Courage in the Struggle for American Labor Union Rights by Mary Cronk Farrell. Abrams. 2016. ISBN. 9781419718847. NONFICTION.
Gr 4–6—Beginning with the murder of Fannie Sellins by deputies in Natrona, PA, in 1919, Farrell goes back 20 years to Sellins’s early days as a garment factory worker and rising labor rights
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activist. The text is matter-of-fact in tone, with captioned black-and-white photos and newsprint ads. A top choice for those interested in workers’ rights and social justice.

Amina’s Voice by Hena Khan. S. & S./Salaam Reads. 2017. ISBN 9781481492065. FICTION. Gr 4-6–In a quiet Milwaukee suburb, Amina and her best friend Soojin grapple with their own ethnic identities and the pressure to “Americanize.” Soojin is Korean American and on the pathway to citizenship. She’s contemplating changing her name to solidify her American identity, while Amina, who’s Pakistani American, must reconcile her love of singing Motown with her Muslim faith. When the neighborhood mosque is burned and vandalized, the greater community comes together.

The Lions of Little Rock by Kristin Levine. Putnam. 2012. ISBN 9780399256448. FICTION. Gr 5-8–Levine sheds light on the little-known period immediately following the Little Rock Nine’s integration of Central High School in 1957. Twelve-year-old Marlee Nisbett, who is painfully shy, befriends Liz, a new girl unafraid of speaking her mind. When Liz disappears and rumors swirl that she is a black girl “passing as white,” Marlee is determined to uphold their friendship. Readers will be moved by Marlee and Liz’s strong bonds and inspired by Marlee’s unwavering tenacity in the face of what seems like insurmountable adversity.

Sitting Bull: Lakota Warrior and Defender of His People by S.D. Nelson. illus. by author. Abrams. 2015. ISBN 9781419707315. NONFICTION. Gr 4-6–Nelson, an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in the Dakotas, presents Sitting Bull’s life as an entry point into 19th-century America. Told in the first person from Sitting Bull’s point of view, the narrative concentrates on what happened to the Hunkpapa people and other Sioux groups and the pivotal battles of Killdeer Mountain, Rosebud Creek, and Little Bighorn. This portrait of a committed leader provides a unique perspective on Lakota and U.S. history.

Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down by Andrea Pinkney. illus. by Brian Pinkney. Little, Brown. 2010. ISBN 9780316070164. NONFICTION. Gr 3-6–Through effectively chosen words, Pinkney brings understanding and meaning to what four black college students accomplished on February 1, 1960, by sitting down at a Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, NC. Her repeated phrase, “Their order was simple. A doughnut and coffee with cream on the side,” along with other food metaphors, emphasizes the men’s determination to undo the injustices of segregation in a peaceful protest, which eventually led up to the 1966 Supreme Court ruling against racial discrimination.

Saints and Misfits by S.K. Ali. 336p. S. & S./Salaam Reads. 2017. ISBN 9781481499248. FICTION. Gr 9 Up–Dividing the people in her world into three categories (saints, misfits, and monsters), Janna, a hijabi, navigates regular teenager life (family, friends, school) with the added pressure of how to speak out about an attempted rape by a respected member of her community. Janna thoughtfully considers her faith and how it is received by both her Muslim community and her non-Muslim peers, including willfully ignorant schoolteachers.

Eyes of the World: Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, and the Invention of Modern Photojournalism by Marc Aronson & Marina Budhos. Holt. 2017. ISBN 9780805098558. NONFICTION. Gr 7 Up–Robert Capa and Gerda Taro carved out careers as photojournalists, capturing the plight of the anti-Fascist freedom fighters during the Spanish Civil War. Their action-packed photos were instrumental in bringing the war’s horrors to the world and in firmly establishing a new kind of news reporting. Chock-full of archival photos,
Aronson and Budhos's title is essential reading for teens interested in journalism.

**The March Against Fear: The Last Great Walk of the Civil Rights Movement and the Emergence of Black Power** by Ann Bausum. National Geographic. 2017. ISBN 9781426326653. NONFICTION. Gr 9 Up—Bausum's clear language and smart use of archival photos document how James Meredith's single-man walk transformed into a larger endeavor to register and unify black voters and to alleviate the fear felt by African Americans living in a racist society. Readers become a part of the march as Bausum begins each chapter with the date, the distance traveled by the marchers, and their next destination. A must-have volume on Meredith, the March Against Fear, and life in the South for African Americans in the 1960s.

**Racial Profiling: Everyday Inequality** by Alison Behnke. Twenty-First Century. 2017. ISBN 9781512402681. NONFICTION. Gr 6 Up—An in-depth analysis of the inequalities that people of color experience at different levels of U.S. society, from housing and education to criminal justice and poverty. The author foregrounds her examination with relevant historical context, extensive data from studies, and testimonials to draw evidence-based conclusions while still recognizing other perspectives. Well researched and written, this is an ideal resource for reports and discussions with teens.

**Being Jazz: My Life As a (Transgender) Teen** by Jazz Jennings. Crown. 2016. Tr $17.99. ISBN 9780399554643. NONFICTION. Gr 6 Up—In this memoir, Jennings shares experiences from her life as an openly trans girl. Battles to get her on the girls’ soccer team, to allow her access to the girls’ restroom at school, and to educate the public at large dominate Jennings’s story alongside anecdotes on navigating family, friend, and romantic relationships. Jennings’s self-confidence and energy will lure readers right in.

**Alexander Hamilton: The Making of America** by Teri Kanefield. Abrams. 2017. ISBN 9781419725784. NONFICTION. Gr 5–8—An informative yet accessible biography of the famed Founding Father for a middle school audience. Kanefield succeeds in revealing the often contentious differences among the various political and economic philosophies during the early decades of the American Republic, including the distinction between Hamilton’s mercantilism and Thomas Jefferson’s agrarianism. Key concepts, like the Articles of Confederation and mercantilism, are explained in sidebars.

**March Trilogy** by John Lewis & Andrew Aydin. illus. by Nate Powell. Top Shelf. 2016. ISBN 9781603093958. NONFICTION. Gr 8 Up—In this epic, three-volume, and masterful graphic novel memoir, Congressman Lewis recounts his young years in rural Alabama, his life-changing introduction to Martin Luther King, Jr., and evolving role within the civil rights movement. Through images of steely-eyed police, motion lines, and the use of stark black backgrounds for particularly painful moments, Powell’s black-and-white visuals soar, conveying expressions of hope, scorn, and devastation. A definitive record of key eyewitness to and leader of social change.

**Ida M. Tarbell: The Woman Who Challenged Big Business—and Won!** by Emily Arnold McCully. Clarion. 2014. ISBN 9780547290928. NONFICTION. Gr 7 Up—McCully places investigative reporter Tarbell’s story into historical context, detailing the rise of the oil giants and the resulting corruption. Readers will not only learn about for Tarbell’s trailblazing tenacity, they’ll also get a sense of the changing world she inhabited.

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of American immigration from the early colonization of the continent to the present. The author conveys the often negative attitudes toward new waves of immigration throughout U.S. history while distinctly demonstrating the undeniable contributions these very same populations have brought to this country.

Gr 8 Up—In fictional small-town Americus, Neil Barton—a quiet, bookish boy who has never fit in—finds solace in the fantasy series “Ravenchilde.” Unfortunately, his beloved series has been challenged by a radical group of community members. With the support of the librarian, he takes a public stand in favor of the series and speaks before the governing board, offering an impassioned plea for inclusion of the “Ravenchilde” books on the library’s shelves. Simple black-line drawings on a stark white background introduce readers to the town of Americus, while the narrative deftly emphasizes the importance of including controversial titles in library collections.

Gr 8 Up—Rashad Butler is a quiet, artistic teen who heads to Jerry’s corner store on a Friday night to buy chips and ends up the victim of unwarranted arrest and police brutality: an event his white schoolmate Quinn Collins witnesses in horrified disbelief. Reynolds and Kiely’s collaborative effort is a deft exploration of the aftermath of police brutality, addressing the fear, confusion, and anger that affects entire communities.

Gr 7 Up—Ellsberg famously leaked the Pentagon Papers, a lengthy document written by military insiders about the Vietnam War, to various members of the press in 1971. He was quickly labeled an enemy of the state and a traitor to his country, aka the most dangerous man in America. With access to many of the key players in this real-life drama, as well as mountains of source material, Sheinkin builds a brilliant narrative that is at once accessible and suspenseful.

Gr 8 Up—When Starr and her childhood friend Khalil, both black, leave a party together, they are soon pulled over by a white police officer, who kills Khalil. The sole witness to the homicide, Starr must testify before a grand jury that will decide whether to indict the cop. The first-person, present-tense narrative is immediate and intense, and the pacing is strong, with Thomas balancing dramatic scenes of violence and protest with moments of reflection. By turns frightened, discouraged, enraged, and impassioned, Starr is a character teens will not soon forget.

SEE ALSO:

A Voting Rights Bookshelf by Caitlin Augusta
(http://ow.ly/PETU30c0Inc)

Celebrating African American History by Joy Fleishhacker
(http://ow.ly/6dr230c0Ive)

25 Kid and YA Books That Lift Up Immigrant Voices by Ruth E. Quiroa
(http://ow.ly/6of30c0yK)

9 Refugee Stories for Kids and Teens by Shelley Diaz
(http://ow.ly/y1WH30c0IBJ)

A Kaleidoscope of Cultures | New Books on Immigration by Joy Fleishhacker
(http://ow.ly/Cbzk30c0IjG)

From Refugees to Voting Rights, Books To Inspire a Just, Inclusive Society by Bank Street College of Education
(http://ow.ly/WuJE30c0IP2)