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# UPDATE

Volume. 43

Issue 6

## Summer Comes with Question Marks

*Stress. COVID-19. Stress. Social distancing. Stress. Racial riots. Stress. Too much screen time. Stress.*

Summer: a time to recharge, rest, plan, and re-energize. This year is different. Facing uncertainty about the future, teachers and students ask, What will next fall look like in the classroom? Will we return to bricks and mortar or continue to have online learning? Now we throw in racial tensions, dealing with a variety of emotions in face-to-face classes and in online situations, and teachers and students are even more confused about how to work with one another, when and what to say and when to stay silent.

### **We start wondering, Will anything be back to normal?**

This *UPDATE* issue will explain how our union, MFPE, is working hard to keep our fall conference going in light of the pandemic. Ditto with NCTE and its fall convention. Our organizations are also helping us make sense of the uprising around the nation and world with resources to help guide us and our students. This issue also has an article on using books to help explain social and racial injustices and promote getting along with others who are different from us.

A resource I really like is the [Resilient Educator](#), a website with many topics, including self-help for teachers and ideas on helping build resiliency in students. This

burn-out or you need some summer inspiration, you are sure to relate to several issues covered on the site.

From online learning to recognizing racial issues, our schools and staffs have a lot on their plates, a lot to prepare, and a lot to learn before the fall school bells ring. We hope the resources below will help you in your preparatory process.

Please take care of yourself.

Your interim editor,  
Katie Kotynski



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## Lead a Protest Through Books: *A Tribute to Black Lives Matter Via Children's, Young Adult Literature*

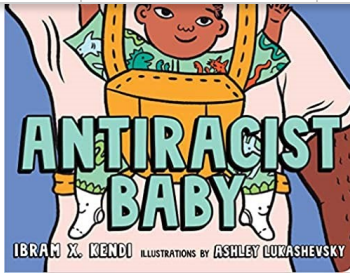
Watching news coverage of the nation-wide response to the death of George Floyd, I felt that I should be out there, lending my voice to the outcry against racism. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I didn't take part in any of the recent protests.

Since I couldn't bring myself to join a large group of people, many not wearing masks, I decided, to try to help in some way, to share a collection of recent titles in children's and young adult literature that relate to Black Lives Matter. The following books are recent publications that focus on the challenge of being Black in America. Hopefully, parents and teachers can share these books with children and young adults to encourage understanding, support, and compassion.

### Books for Young Children

#### ***Antiracist Baby***

By Ibram X. Kendi (board book)

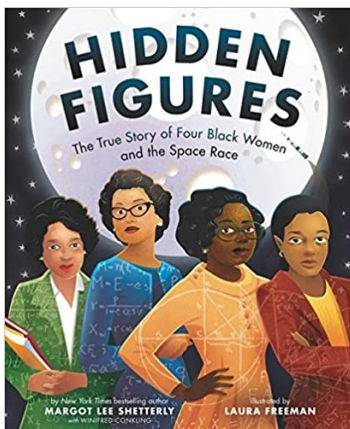


This book will be available starting today. That's right, it is brand new! The author, Ibram X. Kendi, is a National Book Award winner for ***Stamped from the Beginning***. NCTE will be holding a webinar with Kendi about this new book June 22 at 4 pm ET. The invitation for the webinar states, "The new book is a board book, written to introduce the concepts of antiracism to young children. The book's nine concepts, supported by bold illustrations, initiate conversation around antiracist behaviors. While this is a board book for children, this latest book by Kendi can support and interest readers of all ages."

### ***Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race***

By Margot Lee Shetterly

Grades Preschool - 3

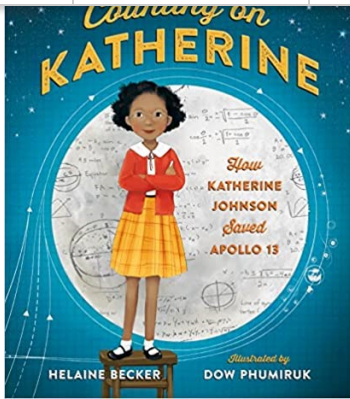


The names Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson, and Christine Darden are not household names, but these four Black women NASA employees were instrumental in putting a man on the moon. Shetterly relates how, in spite of the sexism and racism they faced, their determination and perseverance allowed them to excel.

### ***Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13***

By Helene Becker

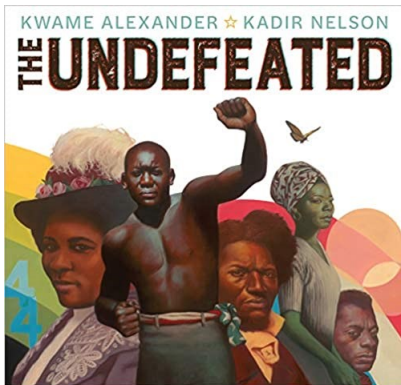
Grades 1 - 2



Katherine Johnson, of *Hidden Figures*, gets her very own book! It received a Kirkus **starred review**. The story of how Katherine figures out how to bring the Apollo 13 astronauts home safely is an exciting story on its own, but it is especially important now.

### ***The Undefeated***

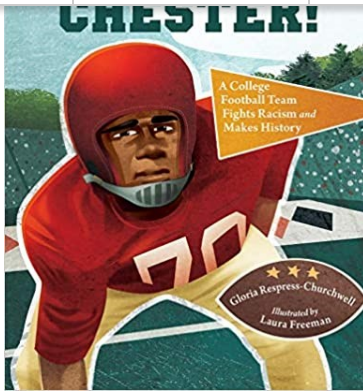
By Kwame Alexander    Illustrated by Kadir Nelson    Grades 1 - 4



This is the Caldecott Award winner for 2020. It has *five* starred reviews, from *Publishers Weekly*, Kirkus, Booklist, *The Horn Book*, and *School Library Journal*. I think this is a keeper! *The Horn Book's* review says it all: "Alexander and Nelson honor the achievements, courage, and perseverance of ordinary black people as well as prominent black artists, athletes, and activists....creating a through-line from past to present."

### ***Follow Chester!: A College Football Team Fights Racism and Makes History***

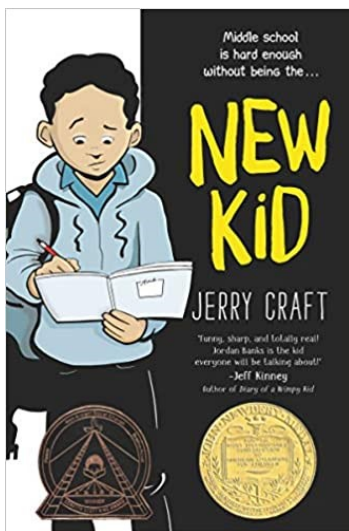
By Gloria Respress-Churchwell    Grades 1 - 4



I love this book! It is the true story of Chester Pierce who grew up in a small town in New York. He was accepted to Harvard, and he played varsity football there. In 1947, the team was scheduled to play at the University of Virginia, where black students were not allowed to play on the football team. The Harvard players decided that they would support Chester by sticking with him during the entire trip. When bathrooms said “White Only,” the team used the woods. When restaurants required black customers to use the back door, the whole team went in the back door. Although Harvard lost the football game to the University of Virginia, they won their fight against racism.

### ***New Kid***

By Jerry Craft    Grades 3-7



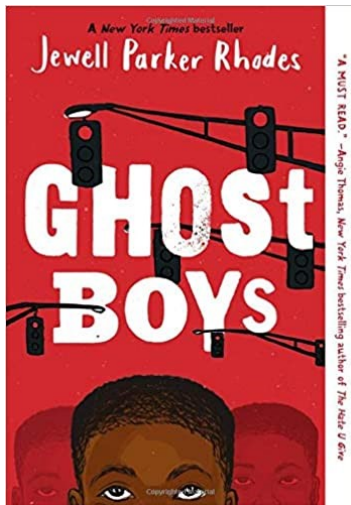
This is the 2020 Newbery Award winner! It's the first graphic novel to ever win a Newbery Award. It received **starred** reviews from Booklist, Kirkus, School Library Journal, and Publishers Weekly. Jordan Banks is starting 7<sup>th</sup> grade at new school

other kids are White. *School Library Journal's* review says, "This is more than a story about being the new kid—it's a complex examination of the micro- and macroaggressions that Jordan endures from classmates and teachers."

## Books for Young Adults

### ***Ghost Boys***

By Jewell Parker Rhodes      Grades 5 and up

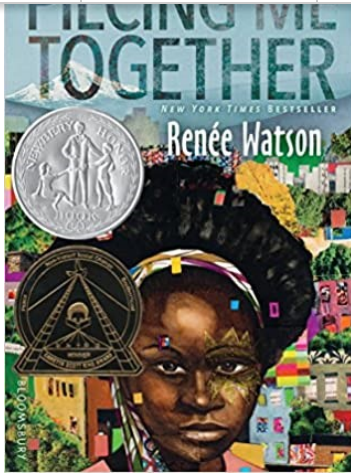


This book puts readers into the reality of police brutality. ***Ghost Boys*** received **starred** reviews from *School Library Journal* and *School Library Connection*. Jerome Rogers, 12 years old, is bullied at school. His friend Carlos brings a toy gun to school to ward off bullies. Jerome stands by Carlos as he points the toy gun at the boys to get them to leave him alone. Carlos lends the gun to Jerome to carry as he walks home. As Jerome takes the toy gun out of his pocket, a police car pulls up. Jerome is shot in the back as he runs. The book alternates chapters of "Alive" and "Dead." There are very powerful exchanges between the "dead" Jerome and Sarah, the daughter of the police officer who shot Jerome. Sarah is one of the only people who can see the dead Jerome and talk to him. This book couldn't be more relevant and current.

### ***Piecing Me Together***

By Renee Watson      Grades 7 - 9



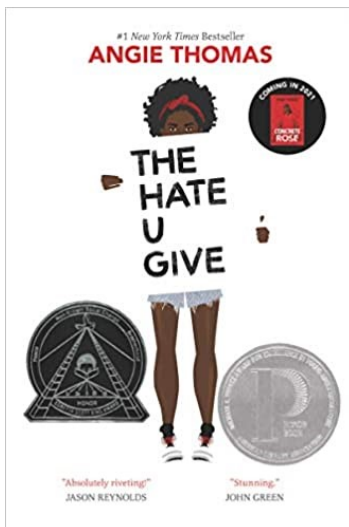


With three starred reviews, from *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus*, and *School Library Journal*, this book is another current story of race relations and privilege. This story takes place in Portland, Oregon. Jade lives on the poor side of town but attends a private school on the other side of Portland. She feels out of place in the mostly white school, but her mother reminds her that she needs to take advantage of every opportunity. Jade's love of art and talent for collage give her focus. *Kirkus Reviews* calls ***Piecing Me Together*** "a timely, nuanced, and unforgettable story about the power of art, community, and friendship."

### ***The Hate U Give***

By Angie Thomas

Grades 7 - 12

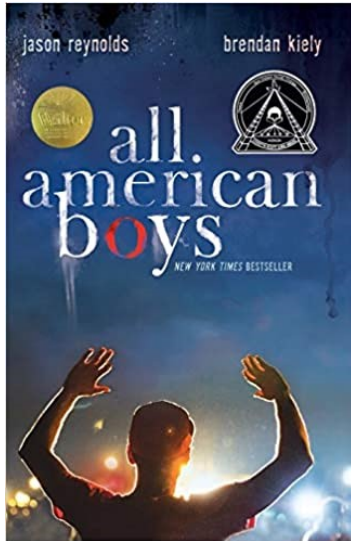


This is another intense story of police brutality. Starr is riding with her friend Khalil in his car when they are pulled over by police. Khalil is unarmed, but he is shot and killed by the police. Starr is the only witness, so she is pulled into the investigation.

Thomas's story is heartbreakingly topical, its greatest strength is in its authentic depiction of a teenage girl, her loving family, and her attempts to reconcile what she knows to be true about their lives with the way those lives are depicted—and completely undervalued—by society at large.”

### ***All American Boys***

By Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely    Grades 7 – 12



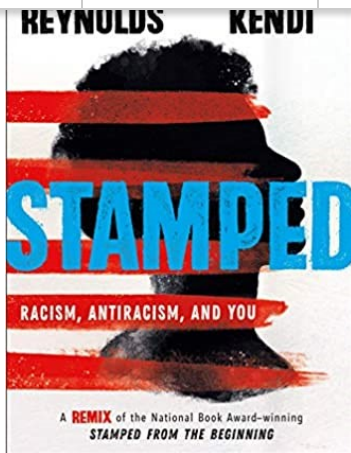
This book uses two independent narrators, Rashad (Black) and Quinn (White), in alternating chapters. Both characters are involved in an incident of police brutality but, of course, have differing perspectives. Readers learn of the incident from totally opposite viewpoints, having the opportunity to hear all voices.

***All American Boys*** received **starred** reviews from *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, and *Publishers Weekly*.

### ***Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning***

By Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi    Grades 7 – 12





Jason Reynolds has teamed up with the award-winning historian Ibram X. Kendi to write a book directly aimed at racism. What could be more timely? With **starred** reviews from *School Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Booklist*, this is sure to be an excellent resource. *Publishers Weekly* describes it as "told impressively economically, loaded with historical details that connect clearly to current experiences, and bolstered with suggested reading and listening selected specifically for young readers."

Recently published books can be ways to start the conversation about racism and police brutality. Racial disparity and the Black Lives Matter movement need to be topics in every classroom this fall. Teachers have the unique opportunity to “touch the future” and to make it more appreciative of diversity. The least we can do is to create an inviting and supportive atmosphere in our own classroom by discussing these important topics through quality literature. Happy reading!

Submitted by Joyce Herbeck, *MSU-Bozeman Representative*

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**NEA Article:** [Student Trauma Won't Just Disappear In the Fall, Counselors Warn](#)

Whether school doors reopen or remote learning continues, student progress will depend on how we support their emotional and mental health. “School provides a routine and a sense of normalcy. The current situation is anything but routine and normal,” says Kathy Reamy, a school counselor in La Plata, Maryland. “In the absence of seeing our students at school in person, it’s really difficult to get a sense of how they are doing.” [Read More](#)

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[Sign up here](#)

## MOVE TO Online Format

### *Session proposals, including new topics, due June 30*

The Oct. 15-16 Montana Educator Conference, previously scheduled for Great Falls will be moved to an online format. This provides teachers with the opportunity to gather virtually during the annual professional development days and allows teachers across the state to access the conference.

Presentations will be in video format, and all presenters will need to resubmit proposals along with a 50-minute video.

The presenter portal has been re-opened, and a new speaker agreement is available. Presentations will be in video format although the keynotes will be live streamed. Presenters are asked to review the new agreement and sign (or decline) by June 30. New proposals are also being accepted.

MFPE will send out acceptance emails and days/times of sessions on July 31.

Presenters of accepted sessions will upload a 50-minute video and any handouts by Sept. 1 and must be available during their scheduled session to answer questions in the live chat. The video will only be available during the scheduled time, and MFPE will provide renewal units to the presenter(s) and all attendees, as well as offer a \$30 stipend to the lead presenter.

Please consider submitting a proposal for the virtual conference and sharing your ideas and expertise with educators throughout our state. [Sign up here](#) to present or read more information.

*Submitted by Donna Bulatowicz, MATELA President*

# 2020 NCTE Annual Convention Goes Virtual

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In response to the Colorado Convention Center using its facility as a hospital through December 31, 2020, the [2020 Annual Convention](#) will transition to a virtual environment this November. Please email your questions to [annual2020@ncte.org](mailto:annual2020@ncte.org).



## **NCTE Statement on Solidarity with Demonstrators Against Systemic Racism**

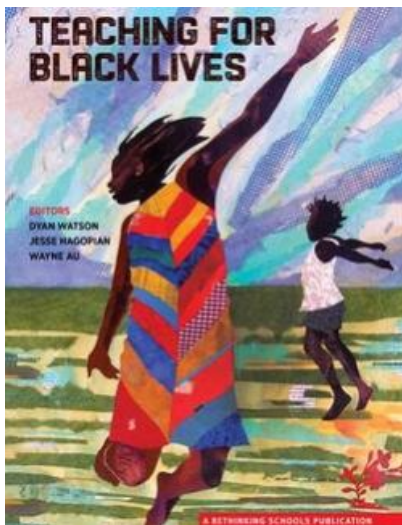
The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) denounces all forms of racial violence and brutality. We grieve with the family and friends of George Floyd and with all who are suffering during these devastating times. As we seek justice, we stand in solidarity with demonstrations and protests that raise

Because we treasure our First Amendment rights, we also denounce the arrest and mistreatment of journalists, especially journalists of Color, who work tirelessly to keep the world informed about what is happening in our various communities. [Read more.](#)

*Provided as part of the NCTE Affiliate Exchange*

## Talking About Race: Teaching for Black Lives

Check out resources to help facilitate conversations about race, including classroom appropriate lesson plans, guides on how to have tough conversations with peers and students, [and more](#)



***Resources from NEA for teaching Racial Justice***

[Read more](#)

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**As I thought about how to implement autonomy in assigned summer reading, I wondered about the role of book covers in the reading process before the book ever opened:  
How do people pick out books?  
What happens when we see the cover of a novel?  
Is the cover artwork the first thing that draws our attention to the next favorite book?**

## **Rethinking Summer Reading Cover to Cover**

[Read article](#)

*This post was written by NCTE member Shelby Boehm.*

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**Teaching is vital work, and I have been amazed as I have watched colleagues, preservice teachers, and teachers I know well working additional hours to maintain connections, test settings, and find ways to connect with the wider community.**

## **A Renewed Passion for Teaching in the Coronavirus Pandemic**

[Read more](#)

*This post was written by NCTE member Jason D. DeHart.*

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## OPI Offers Teacher Learning Hub, Other PD in Summer

OPI's list of [2019-2020 calendar of facilitated courses](#) on the Teacher Learning Hub is available, along with the [2020-20201 calendar](#). We started offering registration reminders for the 2020-2021 school year that may be beneficial.

**"Additionally, the course 'Preparing Young Writers for College, Career, and Community' may be of particular interest to MATELA members."**

The [self-paced courses](#) are offered year-round and offer many topics to choose from. Also, OPI added Introduction to Online Course Design as soon as officials were informed that schools were closing due to COVID-19.

In addition, the [OPI Learning Opportunities Portal](#) as a one-stop location for professional learning opportunities across the state. OPI updates the site daily and shares events from any approved professional development providers. While a number of the opportunities have been canceled, some providers have chosen to do webinars or other online professional development during this time.

OPI is continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation and is looking at the needs of teachers as they close out this school year and envision what the next school year will look like. [The Remote Learning Sharing Sessions](#) have been particularly helpful to gauge needs. OPI staff members have meetings this week to determine what next steps will be, and we will have a communication plan that goes along with the continued professional development work we are doing regarding remote learning.

Finally, you may find the [Professional Learning website](#) beneficial. If interested, please sign up for the Professional Learning Provider newsletter that is linked in the Administrators and Providers section of the Professional Learning website. You can view past editions of the newsletter on the website, as well.

[Carli.Cockrell@mt.gov](mailto:Carli.Cockrell@mt.gov)

**By Carli Cockrell**, Professional Learning Coordinator

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National Council of  
Teachers of English®

## News from NCTE

### 2019 Affiliate Awards

Please join us in celebrating the 2019 Affiliates of Excellence!

- Georgia Council of Teachers of English
- New Jersey Council of Teachers of English
- Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts
- Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts
- Virginia Association of Teachers of English
- West Virginia Council of Teachers of English

A complete list of all NCTE Affiliate Awards and 2019 winners is available [here](#).

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jan.clinard@umhelena.edu
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beverly.chin@umontana.edu
- **Joyce Herbeck** - Montana State University-Bozeman Representative -  
jherbeck@montana.edu
- **Cindy Osland** - NCTE Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary  
Magazines State Coordinator - Retired Sidney Public Schools -  
cosland12@gmail.com
- **Heather Parrish** - Publications Editor - Helena Public Schools -  
mrs.parrish.edu@gmail.com
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katiekotynski@gmail.com

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**Our mailing address is:**

Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts  
PO Box 1288  
Columbia Falls, MT 59912-1288

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