The 1999 Young Adults’ Choices list is the 13th that U.S. teenagers (Grades 7–12) have helped create. This project began in 1986, funded by a special grant given to the International Reading Association (IRA) and supervised by the Association’s Literature for Adolescents Committee.

The goals of the project are to encourage young people to read; to make teens, teachers, librarians, and parents aware of new literature for young adults; and to provide middle and secondary school students with an opportunity to voice their opinions about books being written for them.

The 30 books on this year’s list are the result of voting by students in five different regions of the United States. Trade books (books other than textbooks) published in 1997 were submitted by more than 50 publishers. Each book had to have at least two positive reviews from recognized sources such as The Horn Book, School Library Journal, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, Booklist, Language Arts, or Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA). Submitted books were read by students in Grades 7–12 between September 1998 and February 1999 in selected school districts throughout the U.S. More than 11,000 ballots were counted for the books submitted for this year’s project. Students marked, “I liked the book,” “It was okay,” or “I didn’t like the book.” The results were announced in May at the 1999 Annual Convention of the International Reading Association in San Diego, California.
Publishers sent the books to the five team leaders in different regions in the U.S. The team leaders' responsibilities included selecting the school districts and schools in which the project would take place, making sure the books were distributed to the schools, and working with the teachers, librarians, supervisors, and principals to implement the program. They were also responsible for collecting the ballots and mailing them to the International Reading Association headquarters for the final tally.

The following schools participated in the 1999 project:

Team 1: Laura Watson (team leader): Elk Grove, California; Sacramento, California; 2 high schools and 2 middle schools; all urban.

Team 2: Stan Steiner (team leader): Boise, Idaho; Eagle, Idaho; Nampa, Idaho; 2 high schools, 1 middle school, 1 junior high school; 3 rural/suburban schools, 1 urban school.

Team 3: Joy Frerichs (team leader): Dalton, Georgia; Whitfield County, Georgia; 4 middle schools, 2 high schools; 6 rural schools.

Team 4: Carol Reinhard (team leader): West Des Moines, Iowa; Clive, Iowa; Des Moines, Iowa; Fourmile Township, Iowa; 2 high schools, 3 middle/junior high schools; 1 urban, 3 suburban, 1 rural.

Team 5: Eva McGuire (team leader): Bluefield, West Virginia; Mercer County, West Virginia; 4 high schools, 7 middle schools; 4 urban, 2 suburban, 5 rural.

The participating schools represented various types of students, economic levels, cultural groups, and geographic regions. The team leaders were enthusiastic and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this worthwhile and exciting project.

The committee wishes to thank Alida von Krogh Cutts and Mary Cash of the International Reading Association staff for helping to coordinate the project. Thanks are also extended to Natalie Babbitt for her logo design and to the International Reading Association for its continued support of the project. Gratitude and appreciation go to all of the students, teachers, librarians, school district administrators, and team leaders who participated in the project and made it a success.

The members of the Literature for Adolescents Committee, chaired by Virginia Bryg and cochaired by Elizabeth Poe, and the team leaders have written annotations for each title. Annotations written by individual committee members are indicated by their initials. Reviewers include Virginia Bryg, Eileen M. Burke, Sherry Erwin, Joy Frerichs, Louise F. Hammond, Margaret Inman, Nina Little, Eva H. McGuire, Jo-Ann Mullen, Elizabeth A. Poe, Sharron Regan, Carol Reinhard, Stan Steiner, and Laura Watson.

Bibliographic data are supplied for each title including ISBN (International Standard Book Number), number of pages, and price. If a publisher has both a library and trade edition, the ISBN for the library edition is included. Publishers furnished information in May 1999, but prices are subject to change.

Order bulk copies of this annotated 1999 Young Adults’ Choices online at bookstore.reading.org or by phone with a credit card (in the U.S. and Canada only) 1-800-336-READ, ext. 266, or send order to Order Department, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA. The list is available for viewing in PDF format at www.readingonline/reviews/choices/choices_index.html.

Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie: The Oregon Trail Diary of Hattie Campbell, 1847.

Kristiana Gregory.

This fictional diary of 13-year-old Hattie Campbell records the Campbell family’s journey from Boonesville, Missouri, in 1847 to Oregon City. A survival story, this is a realistic portrayal of the problems, obstacles, and life-and-death struggles of pioneers in the western U.S. during the 19th century. Much documentation is provided. Useful in units on diaries, the westward movement, or pioneers. EMB.


The Beasties. William Sleator.

Doug and Colette discover that logging is affecting more than the trees. Sleator’s supernatural “beasties” are borrowing body parts from the loggers and damaging equipment. Ecological and genetic discussion could easily develop in 7th- to 10th-grade classrooms from this story. CR.

**Blood and Chocolate.** Annette Curtis Klause.
Supernatural werewolves and teenage angst weave together to symbolize the desire to belong and the desire to be unique that war in the hearts of most teens. Although sex and violence play an important part in the plot resolutions, this novel touches on the universals of teen human experience. Appropriate for older teens. CR.

**Chasing Redbird.** Sharon Creech.
Set in Bybanks, Kentucky, familiar to the many readers of Walk Two Moons, Chasing Redbird is about Zinnia Taylor and her fascination with clearing an old trail. This realistic fiction story interweaves emotional topics such as aging and death of relatives, “seeing those who have died,” one’s place in a large family, and coming of age. A mild romance rounds out the story. JM.

**Curses, Inc. and Other Stories.** Vivian Vande Velde.
This collection of 10 supernatural tales provides something for everyone, from curses over the Internet to a fable about censorship. The reader will laugh, be angry, and definitely want to discuss the themes in each story. Great storytelling material. More sophisticated than the usual “horror” stories. For the mature reader. LW.

**Ella Enchanted.** Gail Carson Levine.
This Cinderella variant introduces a plucky heroine who is cursed at birth with having to be obedient whenever a direct command is given to her. She fights to free herself from this constraint and is aided and hindered by all sorts of folklore creatures. Ella Enchanted is an enchanting fantasy. EMB.

**Gallows Hill.** Lois Duncan.
While posing as a fortune teller, Sarah realizes she can actually see the future, which leads to accusations that she is a witch. Sarah and the other kids in her school turn out to be reincarnations of people from the 17th-century Salem witch trials. Readers interested in reincarnation or the witch trials may enjoy this suspenseful novel. MI.

**Honus and Me.** Dan Gutman.
The chore of cleaning out old Ms. Young’s attic becomes the baseball adventure of all time. Joe finds the world’s most valuable baseball card, which allows him to travel through time with one of the greatest ballplayers ever. This unique blend of fiction, fantasy, and baseball provides life lessons along the way. SR.
**I Can’t Believe I Have to Do This.** Jan Alford.

Twelve-year-old Dean Matthews receives a journal as a birthday present from his mother who requires him to record in it at least weekly in order to teach him some discipline. There are many lessons to be learned by the teen reader. This book is a good model for introducing the concept of journal writing to students. VB.


**I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly: The Diary of Patsy, A Freed Girl.** Joyce Hansen.

Patsy’s insatiable desire to learn and teach makes her an inspirational character. The wealth of information she records about her life in Mars Bluff, South Carolina, in 1865 will enhance students’ understanding of the Reconstruction period. Dear America fans will savor this fine addition to that historical fiction series. EAP.


**Jaguar.** Roland Smith.

High adventure follows 14-year-old Jake as he helps his father establish a jaguar reserve in Brazil. This fictional novel is a great supplement to studies of the rain forest and the history, culture, and geography of Brazil. The relationships of a grandfather, father, and son are skillfully intertwined in the story. SE.


**Journey to Nowhere.** Mary Jane Auch.

This book engages the reader’s attention as a family makes a journey filled with realistic adventures to the U.S. frontier in the early 18th century. The story culminates with the “coming home” of the members of the family both physically and mentally. A journey that the student has made to reach a goal would make an excellent composition assignment. JF.


**Julie’s Wolf Pack.** Jean Craighead George.

This is an exciting, informational, fictionalized account of a wolf pack in the Arctic tundra. It is the third of a must-read series detailing the relationship of a human girl saved as a baby and raised for a time by wolves. It could be used with studies on wolves, animal societies, or the tundra. SE.


**The Koufax Dilemma.** Steven Schnur.

Baseball is 11-year-old Danny’s life until it comes into conflict with his religion and the celebration of Passover. A fine novel to use in a unit dealing with dilemmas real young adults encounter that must be faced and resolved on their journey to becoming adults. NL.

**Michelle Kwan: Heart of a Champion.** As told to Laura James.

Peggy Fleming introduces this ice skater's autobiography. Included are a 16-page color photo insert and a glossary of skating terms. Small silhouettes of a skater on the bottom corner of each page give a flip-book effect. VB.


**Momentos Magicos/Magic Moments.**

Olga Loya.

This is a collection of 15 tales from Latin America told in English and Spanish. Included are tales of animals and tricksters, scary stories, myths, and stories of strong women. For storyteller Olga Loya, magic happens every time an ancient story is passed from teller to listener. The stories could add a new dimension to multicultural studies, the art of storytelling, and to readers' lives. VB.


**Painting the Black.** Carl Deuker.

After a severe ankle injury, Ryan Ward gives up sports until his senior year, when charismatic and gifted fastball pitcher Josh Daniels moves across the street. Immediately prior to the league championship game Ryan is faced with a difficult dilemma—choosing his love for baseball and friendship or what is morally right. Deuker is adept at capturing the thrill of the game as well as the heartbreak of life. EHM.


**River Thunder.** Will Hobbs.

Jesse and the former Hoods-in-the-Woods from Downriver return to the Grand Canyon for another exciting white-water rafting adventure on the Colorado River. But the flooding of the Colorado tests their river skills, fortitude, and ability to work as a team—even when they would rather not. EAP.


**Roughnecks.** Thomas Cochran.

Senior Travis Cody takes the reader through his last high school football game, which is also the state championship game. Into the rituals of the day, he weaves memories of his father's death, his grandfather's love, his mentors' advice, and his relationship with football. More intellectual than physical, this book is a good model for reflection and insight. LW.


**Sarny, A Life Remembered.** Gary Paulsen.

The story of Sarny, the slave girl who learned to read in Paulsen's *Nightjohn*, continues as Sarny matures, marries, and has children during the transitional period for freed slaves after the U.S. Civil War. Not as graphically disturbing as *Nightjohn*, this historical view of racial cruelties...
still, nonetheless, conveys the mean-spiritedness of bigotry. JM.

Screen Test. David Klass.
Sixteen-year-old Liz Wheaton is spotted by Hollywood producers after appearing in a student film and is asked to star in their upcoming movie. This story will appeal to girls caught up in the glitz, glamour, and romance of show biz. VB.

The Seven Songs of Merlin. T.A. Barron.
Thirteen-year-old Merlin must defeat the dark powers on the island of Finlaya by discovering the secret of seeing with his heart rather than his eyes. Fantasy fans will like this book that, although the second in The Lost Years of Merlin series, can stand on its own. They will also enjoy comparing it with other books about Merlin and other legendary characters. NL.

This 1847 fictional diary is rich in Irish history and reflects the prejudice and hardships that faced immigrants in America. This volume of the Dear America series contains an intimate examination of child labor in the mills. The inspiring story challenges young readers to keep hoping under difficult circumstances. MI.

Soldier Boy. Brian Burks.
In this compelling story set in the 1870s, Johnny “The Kid” McBane enlists in the United States Cavalry, not realizing that he will be riding with General George Custer. A great historical fiction novel for reluctant readers. SS.

Someone To Love. Francois Lantz.
This first-person narrative is written in the form of letters addressed to an unborn sibling-to-be. Sara pours out her feelings and emotions about an open adoption of an unwed teen’s baby by her 40-something parents. This realistic fictional story is on a timely subject that will hook readers. SR.

The Storyteller’s Daughter. Jean Thesman.
Quinn keeps her increasing awareness of her father’s dangerous and illegal employment a secret from family and friends in town. Thesman uses period details to create a homey tone of a family that is kept from despair during the Depression by the optimism of Beau John,
Quinn’s father. The open-ended conclusion hints at a brighter future. LFH.

**Stranded In Harmony.** Barbara Shoup.
A young man seeks answers to questions concerning his life and goals. Venturing out into the world requires taking risks and leaving the certainty of small-town life. This realistic book set in modern times is appropriate for 11th- and 12th-grade students. Comparing and contrasting other coming-of-age stories would be an effective activity. JF.

**Tangerine.** Edward Bloor.
Legally blind, Paul Fisher wants to play soccer in spite of his handicap. Through a series of unexpected twists and turns, Bloor uses journal entries to tell the story of an adolescent who has to adjust to a new school, make new friends, and confront the horrible truth about his family and community. EHM.

**Willie and the Rattlesnake King.** Clara Gillow Clark.
In this coming-of-age novel, 13-year-old adventure-seeking Willie Bishop joins a traveling medicine show. Readers can compare the plight of runaways today with that of the 1880s in this work of historical fiction. SS.

**The Woman in the Wall.** Patrice Kindl.
So shy she is almost invisible, Anna literally disappears into the walls of her house by creating a world of hidden rooms. A mysterious note pushed through a crack in the wall 7 years later forces the 14-year-old out of hiding to be reunited with her family. Though you’ll have to suspend your disbelief for this metaphor of teenage angst, you’ll be pulled in by Kindl’s craft. LFH.
The International Reading Association (IRA) is a nonprofit, professional organization of classroom teachers, reading specialists, administrators, teacher/educators, reading researchers, parents, librarians, psychologists, and others interested in improving reading instruction and promoting literacy worldwide. The Association encourages the study of the reading process, research, and better teacher education. It promotes the development of reading proficiency to the limit of each person's ability and an awareness of the need for and importance of reading.

International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA • www.reading.org