

## Democracy Is... Reading Recommendations for Teens

This list is not exhaustive nor completely representative of all of the amazing fiction and nonfiction available for our youth regarding democracy, activism, and an informed public. It is, however, what we hope will be a jumping off point for our middle and high school students, and even adults, to seek out other information and titles about democracy, our government, our history, and our future.

Please note: if a title you are interested in has a wait list, please don't hesitate to place a hold on it; holds lists are reviewed to ensure that items will most likely be available to borrow sooner than the wait time estimate given.



### [1789, edited by Marc Aronson and Susan Campbell Bartoletti](#) -

"The Rights of Man." What does that mean? In 1789 that question rippled all around the world. Do all men have rights—not just nobles and kings? What then of enslaved people, women, the original inhabitants of the Americas? In the new United States a bill of rights was passed, while in France the nation tumbled toward revolution. In the Caribbean preachers brought word of equality, while in the South Pacific sailors mutinied. New knowledge was exploding, with mathematicians and scientists rewriting the history of the planet and the digits of pi. Lauded anthology editors Marc Aronson and Susan Campbell Bartoletti, along with ten

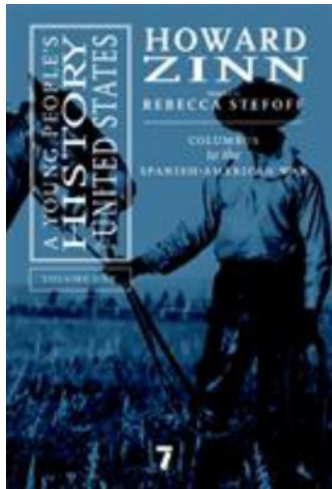
award-winning nonfiction authors, explore a tumultuous year when rights and freedoms collided with enslavement and domination, and the future of humanity seemed to be at stake.



### [1968, edited by Marc Aronson and Susan Campbell Bartoletti](#) -

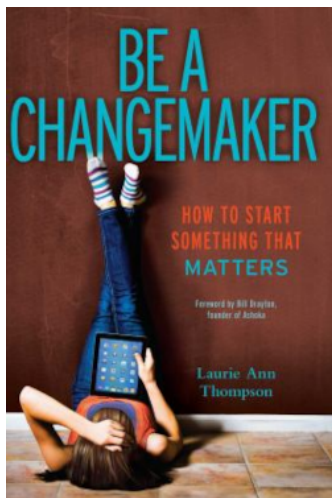
Nineteen sixty-eight was a pivotal year that grew more intense with each day. As thousands of Vietnamese and Americans were killed in war, students across four continents took over colleges and city streets. Assassins murdered Dr. King and Robert F. Kennedy. Demonstrators turned out in Prague and Chicago, and in Mexico City, young people and Olympic athletes protested. In those intense months, generations battled and the world wobbled on the edge of some vast change that was exhilarating one day and terrifying the next. As we face our own moments of crisis and division, 1968

reminds us that we've clashed before and found a way forward - and that looking back can help map a way ahead.



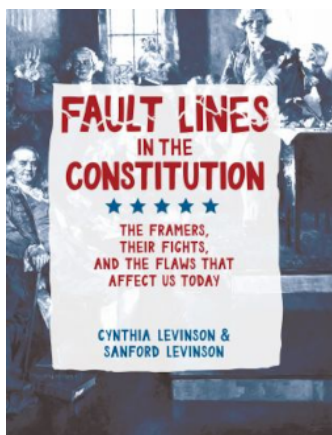
[\*A young people's history of the United States, by Howard Zinn -\*](#)

Howard Zinn's first book for young adults is a retelling of US history from the viewpoints of slaves, workers, immigrants, women and Native Americans with colour images, a glossary and primary sources. Volume one begins with a look at Christopher Columbus' arrival through the eyes of the Arawak Indians and leads the reader through the strikes and rebellions of the industrial ages.



[\*Be a changemaker : how to start something that matters, by\*](#)

[Laurie Ann Thompson](#) - Do you wish you could make a difference in your community or even the world? Are you one of the millions of high school teens with a service-learning requirement? Either way, *Be a Changemaker* will empower you with the confidence and knowledge you need to affect real change. You'll find all the tools you need right here--through engaging youth profiles, step-by-step exercises, and practical tips, you can start making a difference today. This inspiring guide will teach you how to research ideas, build a team, recruit supportive adults, fundraise, host events, work the media, and, most importantly, create lasting positive change.



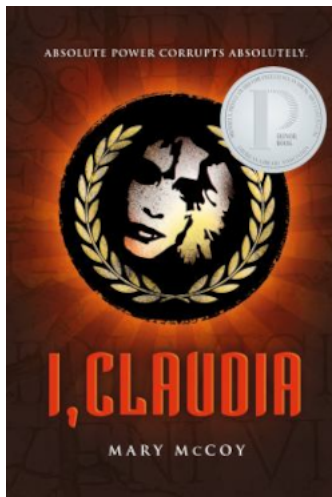
[\*Fault lines in the constitution: the framers, their fights, and the\*](#)

[flaws that affect us today, by Cynthia Levinson and Sanford Levinson](#) - Many of the political issues we struggle with today have their roots in the US Constitution. Husband-and-wife team Cynthia and Sanford Levinson take readers back to the creation of this historic document and discuss how contemporary problems were first introduced--then they offer possible solutions. Think Electoral College, gerrymandering, even the Senate. Many of us take these features in our system for granted. But they came about through haggling in an

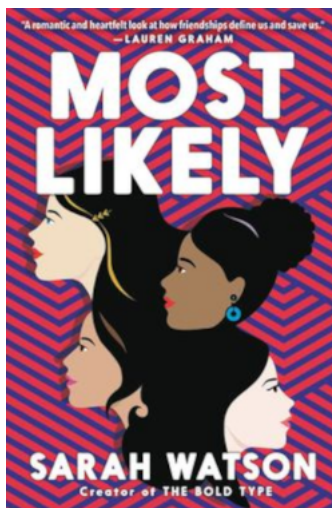
overheated room in 1787, and we're still experiencing the ramifications.



[How I resist : activism and hope for a new generation, edited by Tim Federle and Maureen Johnson](#) - Now, more than ever, young people are motivated to make a difference in a world they're bound to inherit. They're ready to stand up and be heard - but with much to shout about, where do they begin? What can I do? How can I help? How I Resist is the response, and a way to start the conversation. To show readers that they are not helpless, and that anyone can be the change.



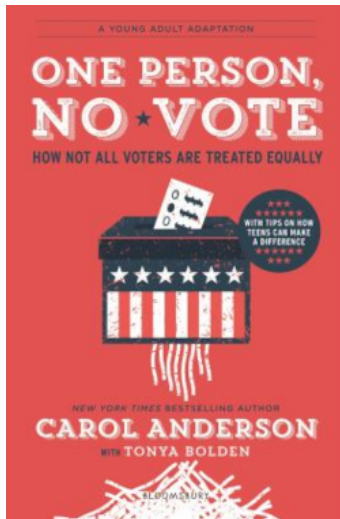
[I, Claudia, by Mary McCoy](#) - Disaffected teen historian Claudia McCarthy never expected to be in charge of Imperial Day Academy, but by accident, design, or scheme, she is pulled into the tumultuous and high-profile world of the Senate and Honor Council. Suddenly, Claudia is wielding power over her fellow students that she never expected to have and isn't sure she wants. Claudia vows to use her power to help the school. But there are forces aligned against her: shocking scandals, tyrants waiting in the wings, and political dilemmas with no easy answers. As Claudia struggles to be a force for good in the universe, she wrestles with the question: does power inevitably corrupt?



[Most likely, by Sarah Watson](#) - Ava, CJ, Jordan, and Martha (listed in alphabetical order out of fairness) have been friends since kindergarten. Now they're in their senior year, facing their biggest fears about growing up and growing apart. But there's more than just college on the horizon. One of these girls is destined to become the president of the United States. The mystery, of course, is which girl gets the gig. Is it Ava, the picture-perfect artist who's secretly struggling to figure out where she belongs? Or could it be CJ, the one who's got everything figured out . . . except how to fix her terrible SAT scores? Maybe it's Jordan, the group's resident journalist, who knows she's ready for more than their small Ohio suburb can offer. And don't overlook Martha, who will have to overcome all



the obstacles that stand in the way of her dreams. This is the story of four best friends who have one another's backs through every new love, breakup, stumble, and success -- proving that great friendships can help young women achieve anything . . . even a seat in the Oval Office.



[\*One person, no vote : how not all voters are treated equally, by Carol Anderson and Tonya Bolden\*](#) - This young adult

adaptation brings to light the shocking truth about how not every voter is treated equally. After the election of Barack Obama, a rollback of voting rights occurred, punctuated by a 2013 Supreme Court decision that undid the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Known as the Shelby ruling, this decision allowed districts with a history of racial discrimination to change voting requirements without approval from the Department of Justice. This book follows the stunning aftermath of that ruling and explains how voter suppression works, from photo ID requirements to gerrymandering to poll closures. It also explores the resistance: the organizing, activism, and court

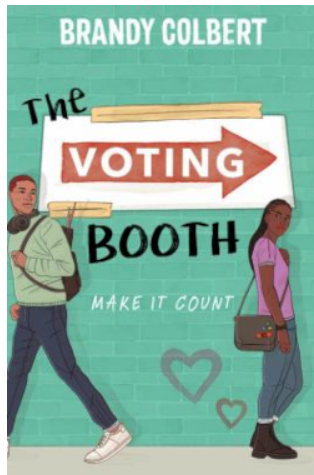
battles to restore the basic right to vote to all Americans.



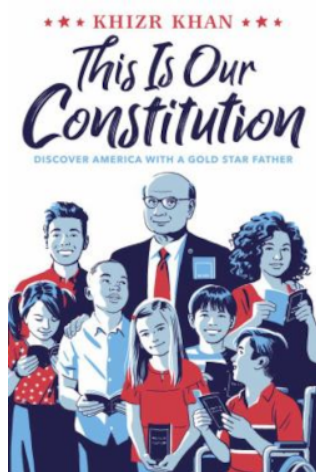
[\*The suffragist playbook: your guide to changing the world, by Lucinda Robb and Rebecca Boggs Roberts\*](#) - The women's

suffrage movement was decades in the making and came with many harsh setbacks. But it resulted in a permanent victory: women's right to vote. How did the suffragists do it? One hundred years later, an eye-opening look at their playbook shows that some of their strategies seem oddly familiar. Women's marches at inauguration time? Check. Publicity stunts, optics, and influencers? They practically invented them. Petitions, lobbying, speeches, raising money, and writing articles? All of that, too. From moments of inspiration to some of the movement's darker aspects--including the racism of

some suffragist leaders, violence against picketers, and hunger strikes in jail--this clear-eyed view takes in the role of key figures: Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frances Willard, Ida B. Wells, Alice Paul, and many more.

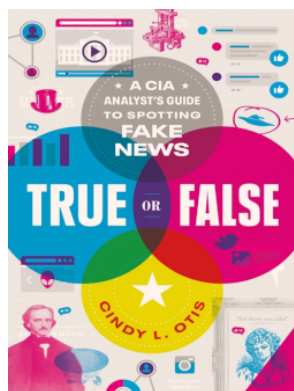


[\*The voting booth, by Brandy Colbert\*](#) - Marva was born ready for this day. She's always been driven to make a difference in the world, and what better way than to vote in her first election? Duke is so done with this election. He just wants to get voting over with so he can prepare for his band's first paying gig tonight. Only problem? Duke can't vote. When Marva sees Duke turned away from their polling place, she takes it upon herself to make sure his vote is counted. Romantic and triumphant, *The Voting Booth* is proof that you can't sit around waiting for the world to change... but some things are just meant to be.



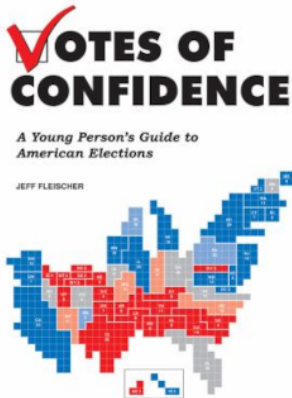
[\*This is our Constitution: discover America with a Gold Star father, by Khizr Khan w/ Anne Quirk\*](#) - Our Founding Fathers created the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights as a blueprint for American government and the rights of American citizens. This document is not merely a piece of parchment but a living, breathing promise of our deepest democratic values.

Khizr Khan grew up in Pakistan, with few of the fundamental rights that are enshrined in the Constitution. He immigrated to America and became a citizen, raising his family to appreciate and honor all our nation has to offer. He is deeply passionate about the Constitution- the guarantees and protections it provides for each and every person and the beacon of light it shines throughout the world. *This Is Our Constitution* is a personal journey that Khizr Khan is taking with our nation's young people. This is a book about why the Constitution matters to you, and us all.

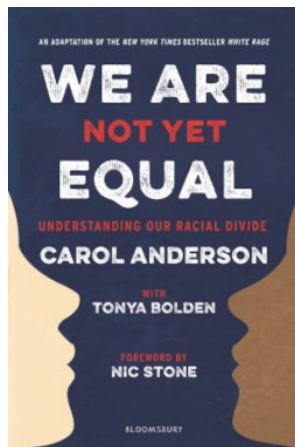


[\*True or False: a CIA Analyst's Guide to Identifying and Fighting Fake News, by Cindy L. Otis\*](#) - "Fake news" is a term you've probably heard a lot in the last few years, but it's not a new phenomenon. From the ancient Egyptians to the French Revolution to Jack the Ripper and the founding fathers, fake news has been around as long as human civilization. But that doesn't mean that we should just give up on the idea of finding the truth. In *True or False*, former CIA analyst Cindy Otis will take readers through the history and impact of misinformation over the centuries, sharing stories from the past and insights that readers

today can gain from them. Then, she shares lessons learned in over a decade working for the CIA, including actionable tips on how to spot fake news, how to make sense of the information we receive each day, and, perhaps most importantly, how to understand and see past our own information biases, so that we can think critically about important issues and put events happening around us into context.

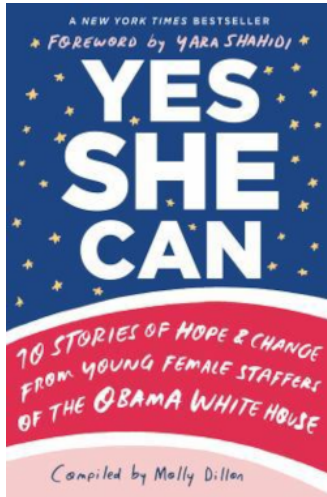


[\*Votes of confidence: a young person's guide to American elections, by Jeff Fleischer\*](#) - Every two years, media coverage of American elections turns into a horse-race story about who's leading the polls and who said what when. Give young adult readers clear explanations about how our election process actually works, why it matters, and how they can become involved. Using real-world examples and anecdotes, this book provides readers with thorough, nonpartisan explanations about primaries, the electoral college, checks and balances, polls, fundraising, and more.



[\*We are not yet equal: understanding our racial divide, by Carol Anderson\*](#) - History texts often teach that the United States has made a straight line of progress toward Black equality. The reality is more complex: milestones like the end of slavery, school integration, and equal voting rights have all been met with racist legal and political maneuverings meant to limit that progress. *We Are Not Yet Equal* examines five of these moments: The end of the Civil War and Reconstruction was greeted with Jim Crow laws; the promise of new opportunities in the North during the Great Migration was limited when blacks were physically blocked from moving away from the South; the Supreme Court's landmark

1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was met with the shutting down of public schools throughout the South; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 led to laws that disenfranchised millions of African American voters and a War on Drugs that disproportionately targeted blacks; and the election of President Obama led to an outburst of violence including the death of Black teen Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri as well as the election of Donald Trump.



[Yes she can: 10 stories of hope & change from young female staffers of the Obama White House, compiled by Molly Dillon](#) -

They were teens when Barack Obama announced he was running for president. They came of age in the Obama Era. And then they joined his White House. Smart, motivated, ambitious--and ready to change the world. Kalisha Dessources planned one of the biggest summits held by the Obama White House--The United State of Women. Andrea Flores fought for the president's immigration bill on the Hill. Nita Contreras traveled the globe and owned up to a rookie mistake on Air Force One (in front of the leader of the free world!). Here are ten inspiring, never-before-told stories from diverse young women who got. Stuff. Done. They recall--fondly and with humor and a dose of humility--what it was like to literally help run the world. And they did it in heels... but also often in sensible flats, too. YES SHE CAN is an intimate look at Obama's presidency through the eyes of some of the most successful, and completely relatable, young women who were there. Full of wisdom they wish they could impart to their younger selves and a message about the need for more girls in government, these recollections are about stepping out into the spotlight and up to the challenge--something every girl can do.