

| No. | Author | Recommended YA Title | Main themes | Summary | Level | Comments |
|-----|--|--|---|---|---------|---|
| 1 | Abdel-Fattah, Randa (Rika Lesser, Trans.) | Where the streets had a name (Macmillan Australia, 2008) | Middle East conflict; borders; family | 13 year old Hayaat and her Palestinian family live on an Israeli-occupied area in the West Bank. When her grandmother falls ill, she thinks that a handful of soil from her grandmother's village may help but the journey involves numerous checkpoints, curfews and borders. | 2, 3, 4 | Supplementary. Provides a detailed account though this may be one-sided. |
| 2 | Alexie, Sherman | The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian (Little, Brown and company, 2009) | American-Indian; discrimination; cultural outsiders | 14 year old boy born with too much cerebral spinal fluid in the brain is picked on by his friends. He loves to draw cartoons and decides to enroll in an all-white neighbourhood even though he is what he calls a "reservation Indian". This book has won numerous awards for its poignant account of growing up and grappling with difference | 1, 2 | Core or supplementary. |
| 3 | Amnesty International | Free? Stories about human rights (Candlewick Press, 2009) | Human rights; politics; freedom | Various short stories related to various articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights e.g. freedom from slavery, right to have an education, fairness, asylum etc. | 1, 2 | Core or supplementary. Stories can be compared and connected to UNDHR articles. |
| 4 | Amnesty International | Freedom: Short stories celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Amnesty International, 2009) | Human rights; transnationalism; globalization | Short stories by well-known writers around the world such as Chimamanda Adichie, Nadine Gordimer, Yann Matel related to each article in the Universal Declaration of Human rights. | 3, 4 | Supplementary. Stories can be compared and connected to UNDHR articles. |
| 5 | Anderson, Laurie | Speak (Macmillan, 1999) | Bullying; overcoming trauma | Melinda is traumatized over an incident that occurred at a party and her friends blame her for disrupting the party and calling the police. She is ostracized by her friends and struggles to come to terms with what she experienced. | 2 | Core or supplementary. Topic of sexual abuse/rape needs to be contextualized. |
| 6 | Anderson, M. T. | Feed (Candlewick Press, 2002) | Dependence on technology; mediated age; dystopian lit | The book describes a world dependent on a constant live feed of games, commercials, music streamed directly into people's brains. When a hacker causes their feeds to malfunction, Titus and his friends are left stranded on the moon and can only rely on their own ability to think. | 2, 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. Some bad language e.g. swear words. |

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| 7 | Boyce, Frank Cottrell | The unforgotten coat (Walker Books, 2011) | Immigration | The story chronicles the life of Julie, who befriends two Mongolian brothers who join her 6 th grade class. Julie becomes their guide and helps them navigate the new environment they are in. | 1, 2 | Core or supplementary. |
| 8 | Carmi, Daniella (Yael Lotan, Trans.) | Samir and Yonatan (Scholastic, 2002) | Middle East conflict; alienation; friendship | Samir, a Palestinian boy finds himself trapped in a Israeli hospital among the people he blames for his brother's death. It is in this environment that he begins to learn about the Israeli children around him. | 1, 2 | Core or supplementary. |
| 9 | Choo, Suzanne S. | Cross-Worlds: Short stories on global themes | Global issues: terrorism, climate change, modern-day slavery, effects of capitalism, immigration, asylum seekers | A collection of ten short stories by internationally acclaimed authors such as Chimamanda Adichie, Margaret Atwood, Peter Carey, Nadine Gordimer, Ha Jin, Wena Poon and others on global issues of the 21 st century. | 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. |
| 10 | Cisneros, Sandra | The house on mango street (Vintage, 1984) | Cross-cultures; Latino communities; migrant & minority communities; poverty; puberty | A Mexican-American young girl of about 12 years of age describes the colourful, complex and harsh realities of growing up in the Latino section of Chicago. | 1, 2 | Core. Well-written, poetic. Can be connected to issues of immigration in one's own country. |
| 11 | Flake, Sharon | The skin I'm in (Sun Paperback, 2000) | Racism; Labelling; Self-acceptance | Maleeka is an African-American teenage girl who is constantly taunted by her classmates and grows to dislike her dark skin until she meets a teacher with a facial birthmark. Through her teacher, Maleeka learns how to love herself. | 1, 2 | Supplementary. |
| 12 | Grisworld, Eliza (Ed. and trans.) | I am the beggar of the world: Landlays from contemporary Afghanistan (Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2014) | Conflict; gender discrimination; family | A collection of poems and photographs providing insights into the lives of Afghan women. The poems reflect the complexities of war and of being caught in-between two sides of the conflict. | 3, 4 | Supplementary. Some themes related to the body and sexuality. |

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| 13 | Gwee, Li Sui (Ed.) | Tell-tales: 11 stories (Ethos, 2010) | Death; modernity; Singapore | An anthology of eleven stories by well-known Singapore writers such as Alfian Sa'at, Wena Poon, Jeffrey Lim, Tan Mei Ching, Claire Tham, and Dave Chua. The anthology is accompanied with a study guide by Dennis Yeo (NIE). | 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. |
| 14 | Loh, Chin Ee; Poon, Angelia; and Vincent, Esther (Eds.) | Little things: an anthology of poetry (Ethos, 2013) | Growing up; death; everyday living | Selection of 80 poems from Singapore and around the world. Featuring Singapore poets such as Boey Kim Cheng, Lee Tzu Pheng, Arthur Yap and Cyril Wong as well as international poets such as E. E. Cummings and Derek Walcott. | 1, 2 | Core or supplementary. |
| 15 | Martin, Bill (ed.) | I'm with the bears: Short stories from a damaged planet (Verso, 2011) | Climate change; environmental activism; dystopia | This anthology includes ten short stories by well-known writers such as David Mitchell, TC Boyle, Margaret Atwood. The stories focus on the global climate crisis and the deterioration of the planet. | 2, 3, 4 | Supplementary. Range of genres included. |
| 16 | Mah, Adeline Yen | Chinese Cinderella: The true story of an unwanted daughter (Random House, 1999) | China; Gender discrimination; Chinese history, tradition & culture | The book recounts the author's childhood up to age fourteen as she is discriminated against by her family and regarded as bad luck because her mother dies soon after giving birth to her. It describes her harsh life growing up in Shanghai and Hong Kong. | 1, 2 | Core or supplementary. |
| 17 | McCormick, Patricia | Sold (Hyperion Books, 2006) | Human trafficking; bonded labour | A young 13 year old girl is sold by her uncle to a trafficker who takes her across the border from Nepal to India. | 2, 3 | Core or supplementary. |
| 18 | Mori, Kyoko | Shizuko's daughter (Ballantine Book, 1993) | Japan; growing up; coping with suicide in the family | 12 year old Yuki learns to live with her indifferent father and a stepmother who ill-treats her after her own mother commits suicide. In the course of growing up, she learns to cope and overcome the obstacles of life. | 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. |
| 19 | Morpurgo, Michael | Shadow (HarperCollins, 2010) | Asylum & detention facilities; Taliban; War; Afghanistan; Transnationalism; Family | 14 year old Aman and his mother struggle to survive in Afghanistan and attempt to escape to England. At the checkpoint, their dog, Shadow, runs away and though Aman and his mother make it to England, they continue to hope for Shadow's return. | 1, 2 | Core. Strong insight into plight of asylum seekers. |

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| 20 | New Internationalist | Fire in the soul: 100 poems for human rights (New Internationalist, 2009) | Human rights; political freedom; exile | A collection of poems by well-known authors such as Margaret Atwood, Pablo Neruda, Adrienne Rich on human rights themes. | 2, 3, 4 | Supplementary. |
| 21 | New Internationalist | One world: A global anthology of short stories (New Internationalist, 2009) | Human rights; transnationalism; globalization | Short stories by well-known writers around the world such as Chimamanda Adichie, Jumpa Lahiri etc about the human experience and the complexity of the world. | 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. Quite a number of non-western writers. |
| 22 | Nye, Naomi Shihab | Habibi (Simon Pulse, 1997) | Middle East conflict; Family; Borders | 14 year old Liyana and her family are comfortable living in the united States until her father announces that the family will be moving to Jerusalem. Liyana begins to learn about her Arab heritage, the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians but her friendship with a Jewish boy is frowned upon. | 2, 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. Recommended. Attempts to provide Jewish and Palestinian perspectives though more so the latter. |
| 23 | Nye, Naomi Shihab | The space between our footsteps: Poems and paintings from the Middle East | Middle East; Exile; Family; Belonging | Included in the collection are more than 100 poets and artists from 19 Middle Eastern countries. Themes include exile, love, growing up, identity, land etc. | 2, 3 | Supplementary text. |
| 24 | R. J. Palacio | Wonder (Random House, 2012) | Adolescent identity; friendship; fitting in; bullying | A wonderful story about a boy with a facial defect who tries to fit in to a school and the struggles he, his friends and family go through. The story is told from multiple perspectives and also powerfully provides a model for teenagers to think about what it means to go against the flow, go against peer pressure and behind those who don't fit in. | 1, 2 | Core text. |
| 25 | Park, Linda Sue | A long walk to water (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010) | Sudan; Refugees, refugee camp; water; ethnic, religious conflict; | Based on a true story of Salva Dut who, in 1985 at age 11, experiences the devastating consequences of the war in Sudan. He loses his family, finds himself in a refugee camp and gains asylum in America. The book alternates and later connects with his story with an 11 year old girl in Sudan in 2008 who travels long distances each day to fetch water for her home. | 1, 2 | Core or supplementary. Part fictional and partly based on the author's life story. |

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| 26 | Poon, Angelia & Sim, Wai Chew (Eds.) | Island voices: A collection of short stories from Singapore (Scholastic, 2007) | Singapore; progress, modernity | Fifteen well-known Singapore short stories on themes such as family, relationships, challenges of progress and nation-building. The collection features well-known Singapore writers such as Catherine Lim, Alfian Sa'at, Ovidia Yu, Tan Hwee Hwee etc. | 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. |
| 27 | Rushdie, Salman | Haroun and the sea of stories (Penguin, 1990) | Literature; fable; father and son | "What's the use of stories that aren't even true" asks Haroun, a young boy. But when his father, a storyteller, loses his ability and inspiration to tell stories, Haroun embarks on a magical adventure to rediscover the power of stories. | 1, 2 | Core or supplementary. Useful to introduce students to the nature of literature. |
| 28 | Satrapa, Marjane | Persepolis (Vintage, 2008) | Iran; women's rights; political freedom; graphic novel | Autobiographical graphic novel of the author's life from 6 to 14 as she grows up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. She describes various political changes occurring in her country and the consequences on her family and her own life. | 3, 4 | Supplementary. Provides insights into the history of Iran though there tends to be a strong emphasis on individualism or individual rights. |
| 29 | Schami, Rafik | A hand full of stars (Trans. Rika Lesser, Interlink books, 2012) | Syria; political freedom; freedom of speech | A teenage boy records his daily adventures from age 14 to 17 and the complexity of living in modern Damascus, Syria amid a coup and the toppling of the government. His friends begin a subversive underground newspaper and experience various risks and dangers as a result | 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. |
| 30 | Senzai, N. H. | Shooting Kabul (Simon & Schuster, 2010) | Terrorism - Taliban; Transnationalism; Border crossings; family; Afghanistan | As 11 year old Fadi and his family flee the Taliban, his sister is left behind. As his family relocates to the US and adjusts to a post 9/11 climate, Fadi looks for an opportunity to return to Afghanistan to find his sister. | 1, 2 | Core or supplementary. Story offers much room for discussion – terrorism, 9/11, photography /looking, bullying, stereotyping etc. |

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| 31 | Spiegelman, Art | Maus I: A Survivor's Tale (Pantheon, 1986) | Holocaust; father-son relationship; graphic novel | This graphic novel describes a young man's relationship with his father which is interconnected to the father's experience as a Jew during the holocaust. | 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. May be more suitable for older readers. |
| 32 | Staples, Suzanne Fisher | Under the persimmon tree (Macmillan, 2005) | Afghanistan; terrorism; refugees; borders | Najmah's father and brother are taken away by the Taliban and she tries to cross the border into Pakistan. Her fate is intertwined with an American who teaches refugee children in Pakistan and whose own husband is in Afghanistan. | 2, 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. |
| 33 | Santiago, Esmeralda | When I was Puerto Rican (Da Capo Press, 1993) | Immigrant experience; border-crossing; memoir | A memoir about the author's childhood in Puerto Rico and her struggles as a teenager and an immigrant in America. | 2, 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. |
| 34 | Tan, Shaun | The arrival (Scholastic, 2006) | Immigrant experience; border crossing; alienation; graphic novel | A man leaves his family to search for work in a foreign place. This is a graphic novel beautifully depicts the struggles and alienation of the immigrant along with its sense of discovery and adventure. | 1, 2 | Supplementary. Beautiful images can be used as a lead-in to discussing the conditions of migration. |
| 35 | Whitehead, Angus (Ed.) | Noon at five o'clock: The collected short stories of Arthur Yap (NUS Press, 2014) | Singapore society; change; alienation | Featuring stories by one of Singapore's best known writers – Arthur Yap. The stories, told via a minimalist style of writing, provide rich insights into Singapore society as well as universal human emotions of alienation. | 1, 2, 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. |
| 36 | Words Without Borders (Ed.) | Literature from the Axis of Evil: Writing from Iran, Iraq, North Korea and other enemy Nation (Words Without Borders, 2006) | Foreign; discrimination; the state | This anthology features short stories and poems from well-known writers in Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Libya, Sudan and Cuba. It disrupts stereotypes of these nations and provides a glimpse of the lives of individuals and families in these countries. | 3, 4 | Supplementary. |

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| 37 | Yang, Gene Luen | American Born Chinese (Square Fish, 2008) | Racism, stereotyping | The text provides a good opportunity to discuss issues of race and the effects of stereotyping. As you read it, you may think the author references certain stereotypes about Chinese culture and behaviour but this is deliberately employed to great effect at the end. The text touches on themes teenagers will identify with such as identity, belonging and one does not need to be an American born Chinese to appreciate the experiences of the main character given this transnational age we live in. The story offers much literary potential as well such as the use of layering, intertextual references to Chinese mythology, comic devices, and irony. | 1, 2 | Core or supplementary |
| 38 | Zenatti, Valerie (Adriana Hunter, Trans.) | A bottle in the Gaza Sea (Bloomsbury, 2005) | Israeli-Palestinian conflict; terrorism | Israeli teenager decides to throw a bottle with a letter into the Gaza sea. It is picked up by a Palestinian boy who responds to her via email. They begin a conversation as they attempt to understand the turmoil affecting both their communities. | 3, 4 | Core or supplementary. Provides both Jewish and Palestinian perspectives. Historical accounts of are weaved into the dialogue. |

Other sources

- Amnesty International Fiction and human Rights: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/recommended-fiction-teacher-notes-primary-and-secondary-schools>
- Nancy flowers, Fictional literature for teaching human rights: <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/bibliog/literature.htm>
- Young Adult Library Services Association Best fiction for young adults: <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/best-fiction-young-adults>
- Choo, Suzanne S. (2013). *Reading the world, the globe and the cosmos: Approaches to teaching literature for the twenty-first century*. New York: Peter Lang. – The book theorizes various pedagogical approaches to teaching literature in a global age. <http://www.peterlang.com/index.cfm?event=cmp.ccc.seitenstruktur.detailseiten&seitentyp=produkt&pk=77942&cid=448>
- Crocco, Margaret S. (2005). Teaching Shabanu: The challenges of using world literature in the US social studies classroom. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 37(5), 561-582. – An excellent article on some of the challenges with using YA world lit.

Notes

- The column “level” refers to secondary level i.e. level 1 = secondary 1 in Singapore (13 year olds) or equivalent to grade 7 in the US.
- This is my personal list that continues to be updated. If you have suggestions or comments, please email me at tosuzannechoo@gmail.com
- For future updates on this list, please visit my website: <http://thirdspaces.wix.com/literature>