

Reading Resource Library Guide: Realistic Fiction

The following high-interest books were selected to support an exploration of Realistic Fiction. Each book has a summary and additional information, such as book trailers and links to reviews, in a separate slide deck. Visit [this link](#) to access the books.

Suggestions for using the text sets and slide deck:

- ▶ Choose one of the following four topics from the quarter four slide deck to explore with your class: Supernatural/Suspense, Realistic Fiction, All Stories Tell a Story, and Action/Adventure.
- ▶ Books in the collection span different reading levels. Also included is a separate collection, “Engaging Books for Children and Families,” which offers a selection of books that can be used with children, families, and adults.
- ▶ Explore the slides for your topic in the provided link. Each book listed in the table below has a summary and additional information with links to websites that offer supplemental material. Consider selecting one book to read aloud to learners while they read their own text.
- ▶ Share the slide deck with learners and explore the books and websites. Allow learners individual time to explore the slide deck and choose a book or excerpts from several books to read.
- ▶ Decide how you will interact with these topics and texts. This information guide has suggestions for activities for the classroom, tools for teachers, and activities for families, which are starting points for larger units or creative activities to engage with topics and texts.
- ▶ The “Activities for Families” section may be copied into another document and sent home with families for engagement suggestions while reading the books.
- ▶ Use this tool to help develop and foster a reading life for your learners!

Book Title	Author	Lexile Reading Level
<i>How It Went Down</i>	Kekla Magoon	HL 560
<i>In From the Cold</i>	Deborah Ellis	630

<i>Genesis Begins Again</i>	Alicia D. Williams	670
<i>Walk Two Moons</i>	Sharon Creech	770
<i>Clap When You Land</i>	Elizabeth Acevedo	HL 800
<i>The Final Four</i>	Paul Volponi	870
<i>The House on Mango Street</i>	Sandra Cisneros	870
<i>Punching the Air</i>	Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam	NP0L
<i>Before the Ever After</i>	Jacqueline Woodson	N/A
Engaging Books for Adults and Children		
<i>A Different Pond</i>	Bao Phi	0620
<i>The Other Half of Happy</i>	Rebecca Balcarcel	HL 570
<i>One Morning in Maine</i>	Robert McCloskey	AD 610
<i>Evelyn Del Rey is Moving Away</i>	Meg Medina	AD 700
<i>Because</i>	Mo Willems	AD 820
<i>Windows</i>	Julia Denos	N/A (preschool to 2)

Activities for the Classroom

- ▶ As you start this unit, ensure that learners understand the definition of realistic fiction (stories that are believable and/or could happen in “real life”). Consider showing [this video](#) if you think it would be helpful to your learners.
- ▶ To get learners excited about book possibilities to read within this unit, set the room up in stations for a gallery walk. Give each learner a clipboard, or a Google Doc, Post-Its, etc. (anything used to record information). Make sure you have each of the following stations within your area with the following tasks:
 - **Artistry and Imagery:** Ask learners to look at the images that may be within the text, or on the front or back covers. Ask them to list their thoughts about what the text may be about based on those images only (and why).
 - **Author Connections:** Ask learners to read about the author from the author’s page within the text. Ask them to reflect on several of these questions: Are they familiar with this author? Have they read anything else by the author? What seems interesting (or not) about the author and the story that he or she has chosen to tell?
 - **Setting/Publication-Prediction:** Ask learners to identify what year the book was published and the impact they think it may have (or not) on the story’s

themes and plot lines. Does the setting of the book seem to take place during the same time frame the book was written? How might the characters in the book be impacted by the setting?

- Personal Connections: Ask learners to list some thoughts about how they may personally connect with the text, based on what they have gathered from the imagery, book information, author information, etc. Be sure to encourage them to explain “why” they felt a certain connection as they are writing down their thoughts, or during a group discussion you may want to facilitate.
- ▶ After learners have become more familiar with the realistic fiction genre through the reading of their own texts, consider having them keep two column notes as they read to make deep connections to the text through text, self, and world connections. Consider adapting [this lesson](#) from The Classroom Nook to help them with deep and reflective connections. You can also use the following three graphic organizers with your learners to record their connections to the story <https://www.readwritethink.org/sites/default/files/ConnectionWeb.pdf> <https://www.readwritethink.org/sites/default/files/connection-stems.pdf> or <https://www.readwritethink.org/sites/default/files/MakingConnections.pdf>.
- ▶ As a culminating activity, consider asking learners to participate in a “reading fair” – similar to a science fair, but about books rather than science experiments! Ask learners to present in a mode of their choosing (podcast, Google Slides, Prezi, Canva, poster board(s), etc.) about their book. Ask them to include information such as the following:
 - Author/Summary: Ask learners to identify the author of the text and a little “bio” about them. Then, ask them to also include a quick synopsis of the text (without any spoilers).
 - Awards/Accolades: Ask learners to include any awards the author or the text may have received, along with any praise the author or the text may have been given. (Award examples: New York Times Bestseller or Coretta Scott King Award Winner)
 - Connections: Ask learners to include what connections their text had to other texts, themselves, and the world –both of their characters, and “real life” society. Suggest to your learners that they may want to use some of the graphic organizers as visuals.
 - Recommendations: Ask learners to make recommendations for other readers – who should read this book and why? What were their favorite parts? What could the author have done better?

This is a celebration of learning, so invite other learners, family members, school communities, etc. to come to your reading fair.

Helpful Links for Teachers

Buffer Blog:

This site is full of podcasts, news, resources, and other types of publications about society, culture, the workplace, technology, and education. In the search bar, look for terms such as teacher, reading, writing, or education to find a plethora of information about that topic. [Here](#) is one about the benefits of reading realistic fiction.

Bookshare:

This organization is committed to breaking reading barriers and helping everyone, regardless of age, learning style, or educational background, read easier. Signup is free and offers audio and digital books, including current titles, as well as braille and large font formats. You can access the site and get additional signup information by clicking [here](#).

Resilient Educator:

This website is full of toolkits, professional development resources, and webinars for educators. They explore topics in reading, writing, technology, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), summer learning, and more. You can access their main page by clicking [here](#).

Activities for Families

- ▶ Choose a book to explore from the “Engaging Books for Adults and Children” section in the table above.
- ▶ Look at the front cover with your child. Ask them, “What do you notice?” Explore the pictures and text. Have your child guess at what the story may be about using the picture on the front cover. This is called making a prediction.
- ▶ Read and discuss the book. Make connections to the realistic fiction books that you are reading. Explore words that your child does not understand.
- ▶ Explain that Realistic Fiction is “something that is make believe but could happen in real life.” With that in mind, discuss the following with your child:
 - What in the story seems believable – it could happen in real life?
 - Have you been in a similar situation as the character of this story? What was the same for both of you? What was different?
 - What did you like most about the story? Why?
 - Would you have done things in a different way than the character in the story did? If so, what would you have done differently?

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