

Selected Holocaust Literature for Youth

Recommended by the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee of the Association of Jewish Libraries

Compiled by Heidi Rabinowitz & Chava Pinchuck, 2019

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In July 2019, The Palm Beach Post ran [a story](#) about the principal of a Boca Raton, Florida high school who refused to call the Holocaust a historical fact. The story was met with public fury that led to his [removal](#) (though at the time of writing, he has not been fired). In the wake of this event, it seems appropriate to highlight Holocaust resources that can help educators and families raise children who understand this crucial period of history, and ensure their ability to apply the lessons of the Holocaust to our own times.

Here, then, are a few selections from the [200+ Holocaust titles](#) that have been recognized by the Association of Jewish Libraries' Sydney Taylor Book Award committee over the years. There are fiction and nonfiction titles for children and teen readers. Each title's recognition status and age range is provided at the end of the annotation.

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2005. ISBN: 0439353793 This well-researched, large format book describes the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party, and World War II and its aftermath, through the eyes of twelve ordinary young people in Germany including those who participated in the Hitler Youth movement and those who resisted. In *The Boy Who Dared*, a 2009 Notable Book for Older Readers, Bartoletti takes one episode from *Hitler Youth* and turns it into a thought-provoking novel. (Nonfiction, 2006 Notable Book for Older Readers)

Bascomb, Neal. *The Nazi Hunters: How a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the World's Most Notorious Nazi*. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 2013. ISBN: 9780545430999 A stunning account of the mission to capture Adolf Eichmann by an elite team of Israeli spies is dramatically brought to life by Neal Bascomb. (Nonfiction, 2014 Award Winner for Teen Readers)

Bitton-Jackson, Livia. *I Have Lived a Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1997. ISBN: 0689823959 pbk The author describes her experiences during World War II when she and her family were sent to the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. Bitton-Jackson continues her story in *My Bridges of Hope: Searching for Life and Love After Auschwitz*, a 1999 Notable Book for Older Readers, and *Hello, America: A Refugee's Journey from Auschwitz to the New World*. (Nonfiction, 1997 Honor Book for Older Readers)

Dauvillier, Loïc. *Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust*. Illustrated by Marc Lizano. Color by Greg Salsedo. Translated by Alexis Siege. New York: First Second, 2014. ISBN: 9781596438736 In graphic novel format, a grandmother recounts to her granddaughter her experiences as a hidden Jewish child in Nazi-occupied France during the Holocaust. The grey and brown-tinted illustrations portray a dark and scary time. However, the text and images provide a gentle introduction to the Holocaust for elementary grade and middle grade readers. (Fiction, 2015 Award Winner for Older Readers)

Frank, Anne. *Anne Frank's Diary: The Graphic Adaptation*. Adapted by Ari Folman. Illustrated by David Polonsky. New York: Pantheon Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2018. ISBN: 9781101871799 This graphic adaptation brings Anne Frank and the other residents of the Secret Annex to life. Though it makes the fear inherent in their situation clear, it also conveys plenty of ordinary, even humorous moments, reminding readers just how real the people were. (Nonfiction, 2019 Notable Book for Older Readers)

Iturbe, Antonio. *The Librarian of Auschwitz*. Translated by Lilit Thwaites. New York: Godwin Books, an imprint of Henry Holt and Company, 2017. ISBN: 9781627796187 This powerful story is based on the life of Dita Kraus and her protection of a handful of books in the Auschwitz concentration camp. It shows the importance of hope in the darkest of times. (Fiction, 2018 Award Winner for Teen Readers)

Kacer, Kathy with Jordana Lebowitz. *To Look a Nazi in the Eye: A Teen's Account of a War Criminal Trial.* Toronto: Second Story Press, 2017. ISBN: 9781772600407 Lebowitz attended the first week of the trial of Oskar Groening, known as "the bookkeeper of Auschwitz." She blogged about her experience, and as the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, went through a myriad of emotions. Kacer chronicles both her account and the trial testimony. (Nonfiction, 2018 Honor Book for Teen Readers)

Leyson, Leon with Marilyn J. Harran and Elisabeth B. Leyson. *The Boy on the Wooden Box: How the Impossible Became Possible...on Schindler's List.* New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2013. ISBN: 9781442497818 The late Leon Leyson has created an inspiring memoir about his experiences during the Holocaust. He was one of the youngest children on Oskar Schindler's list. (Nonfiction, 2014 Honor Book for Older Readers)

Mazzeo, Tilar J. *Irena's Children: Young Readers Edition: A True Story of Courage.* Adapted by Mary Cronk Farrell. New York, NY: Margaret K. McElderry Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2016. ISBN: 9781481449915 Irena Sendler was a brave Christian Polish woman who rescued thousands of Jewish children during World War II. Her story is also portrayed in two excellent picture books, *Irena Sendler and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto*, a 2012 Notable Book for Older Readers by Susan Goldman Rubin, illustrated by Bill Farnsworth, and *Irena's Jars of Secrets*, a 2012 Honor Book for Older Readers by Marcia Vaughan, illustrated by Ron Mazellan. (Nonfiction, 2017 Notable Book for Older Readers)

Nielsen, Jennifer. *Resistance.* New York: Scholastic, 2018. ISBN: 9781338148473 When her family is upended in Nazi-occupied Poland, teenager Chaya Linder is determined to make a difference. Circumstances send her from being a courier, to raiding Nazi supplies, to finally the biggest mission of all, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. (Fiction, 2019 Notable Book for Teen Readers)

Rappaport, Doreen. *Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust.* Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2012. ISBN: 9780763629762 The authors presents a sampling of actions, efforts, and heroism with the hope that they can play a role in helping to correct the damaging and persistent belief that Jews 'went like sheep to the slaughter.' Five years of research results in an important informational book, with back matter that includes a pronunciation guide, chronology, source notes, detailed bibliography, and an index. (Nonfiction, 2013 Honor Book for Teen Readers)

Roy, Jennifer. *Yellow Star.* Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2006. ISBN 076145277X Told in verse, this is the story of Sylvia Perlmutter, one of twelve surviving children, who hid in the Lodz Ghetto with her family. (Fiction, 2007 Honor Book for Older Readers)

Sharenow, Robert. *The Berlin Boxing Club.* New York: Harper Teen, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2011. ISBN: 9780061579684 Karl Stern, an assimilated fourteen-year-old Jew living in 1930s Berlin, becomes the unlikely student of boxing champion and source of German pride, Max Schmeling. A coming of age novel that entwines Karl's personal struggles with the historical ones of the period including "degenerate" art and the Nazi menace, well-developed characters and a tense plot propel this page turner. (Fiction, Award Winner for Teen Readers)

Stamper, Vesper. *What the Night Sings.* Illustrated by the author. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, 2018. ISBN: 9781524700386 This beautifully illustrated novel tells the story of teen Holocaust survivor Gerta as she struggles to reconcile her identity and desires in the wake of tragedy. (Fiction, 2019 Award Winner for Teen Readers)

Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. ISBN: 0375831002 Death narrates the story of Leisl Meminger, a Lutheran girl in Nazi Germany who sustains herself and those close to her, including the Jewish man hidden in her basement, with her love of books and reading. An engaging story that resonates with the full spectrum of human emotions and experiences. (Fiction, 2007 Award Winner for Teen Readers)

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