Recommended Juvenile Fiction

Theme: Justice and Power

Junior Picture

**Audrey's Big Secret** *(Audrey of the Outback #3)*
Christine Harris, Ann James (Illustrator)

Audrey Barlow has woken up in the dead of night and needs to go to the bathroom. The only problem is, the bathroom is an outhouse and is out yonder down the garden path. And if that isn’t bad enough, Audrey sees what she thinks is a ghost! It’s not such a far-fetched idea, especially as her twin sisters, Esther and Pearl, who tragically died at birth are buried out the back. But Audrey soon discovers that it wasn’t a ghost she spotted at all, but a young aboriginal girl her own age named Janet. Audrey soon learns that Janet has run away from a mission and together they must think of a way to keep Janet from being taken again. Readers will love Audrey and her determination to see that something so wrong must be made right.

**Big Brother**
Robert Kraus

Troubled by the thought of always being smaller than his older brother, little brother’s worries diminish when his mother returns home from the hospital.
Brother Eagle, Sister Sky
Chief Seattle

Nearly 150 years ago, Chief Seattle, a respected and peaceful leader of one of the Northwest Indian Nations, delivered a message to the government in Washington who wanted to buy his people's land. He believed that all life on earth, and the earth itself, is sacred. A moving and compelling plea for an end to man's destruction of nature.

Bully
Laura Vaccaro Seeger

Bully doesn't have a kind word for any of his friends. When the other animals ask him to play, he responds in the way he's been taught:

Chicken! Slow poke! You stink! Laura Vaccaro Seeger's bold, graphic artwork, along with her spare but powerful words, make for a tender, hilarious, and thoughtful tale.

Erika's Story
Ruth Vander Zee, Roberto Innocenti (Illustrations)

A Jewish woman recounts how her mother was able to spare her from the horrors of the Holocaust as an infant.

Flood
Jackie French, Bruce Whatley (Illustrator)

This is a story that shows how strong and devastating flood water can be to homes and livelihoods. It is inspired by the 2011 Queensland floods but it could be about any of the disasters that strike our land, and the events that turn everyday Australians into heroes. Flood depicts water mercilessly ripping through Queensland towns and then receding, leaving destruction and
devastation in its wake. Told from the perspective of a cattle dog who is separated from his family, Flood helps children to understand the affects of a traumatic natural disaster without being too confronting, while the story of the little tugboat that pushes a boardwalk out to sea, staving off further disaster, gives smaller children a hero they can relate to. Flood is a beautiful and timely expression of the strength of the Australian spirit during times of adversity.

Footpath Flowers
JonArno Lawson, Sydney Smith (Illustrator)

In this wordless, beautifully illustrated picture book from award-winning poet JonArno Lawson, a little girl collects wild flowers while her distracted father pays her - and their surroundings - little attention. Each flower the little girl gathers becomes a gift for a person or animal, and whether the gift is noticed or ignored, both giver and recipient are transformed by their encounter. An ode to the importance of small things, small people and small gestures, Footpath Flowers is a quiet but powerful testament to the joy that children can find in ordinary things and the mutual value of giving.

Idjhil: And the Land Cried for Its Lost Soul
Helen Bell

The story of an Aboriginal boy who, at the age of nine, is taken from his family in accordance with official government policy at the time, based on the memories and experiences of people still alive in 1996.

Meet... the Flying Doctors
George Ivanoff, Ben Wood (Illustrations)

A picture book series about the extraordinary men and women who have shaped Australia's history, including Reverend John Flynn and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. In the early 20th century, Reverend John Flynn saw the potential for aeroplanes to bring urgent medical care to people in outback Australia. He campaigned for more than ten years to make his big idea a reality. That big idea became the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Today the RFDS is a not-for-profit organisation that provides emergency and primary health care across Australia. From Ned Kelly to Nellie Melba; Captain Cook to Sidney Nolan, the Meet ... series of picture books tells the exciting stories of the men and women who have shaped Australia's history.
No Difference Between Us: Teach Children Gender Equality, Respect, Choice, Self-Esteem, Empathy, Tolerance, and Acceptance

Jayneen Sanders (Author), Amanda Gulliver (Illustrations)

Jess and Ben are twins. Jess is a girl and Ben is a boy but in all the BIG ways, there is NO difference between them! Explore with the children in your care the important issues of gender equality and respectful relationships. Combining cheerful illustrations and a simple but effective narrative, this book will help children to understand that, fundamentally, there is no difference between us.

This book encourages equality and respect for each other from the earliest of years. In order to reduce gender-based violence we need to teach gender equality and respectful relationships to young children. What better way than through a picture storybook? Children are visual learners and the match between illustration and text in this story will assist them to understand that we are all human -- everyone feels, and everyone has hopes and dreams. Our gender should be and needs to be irrelevant.

The Old Man

Sarah V, Claude K. Dubois (Illustrator), Daniel Hahn (Translator)

Day breaks over the town. Wake up, everybody! It’s time to go to school. It’s time for the old man to get up, too. The night was icy and he’s hungry. His name? He no longer knows...

This is the story of a person with no job, no family, no home—a nobody, who can’t even remember his name. But his day changes when he is noticed by a child.

Drawn in soft, watercolour pencil, this is an important story for our times. This gentle, compelling book will appeal to children’s sense of justice and to every reader’s compassion. For the old man, too, it’s time to get up. Hey, it’s Crocket! Crocket’s hungry, too.
The Red Piano
André LeBlanc, Barroux (Illustrator)

A beautiful and extraordinary account of international concert pianist Zhu Xiao-Mei’s hardships and triumphs while growing up during China’s Cultural Revolution

Stirring and inspiring, this picture book relates the story of a gifted young girl's passion for the piano in a time of historic turmoil. During China’s Cultural Revolution a young girl is taken from her family and sent to a far-off labour camp. Forbidden to play the piano, she nevertheless finds a way of smuggling handwritten music into the camp and sneaking away at night to practice a piano in a secret location—until, one night, she is caught. Inspired by the amazing true story of international concert pianist Zhu Xiao-Mei, this acclaimed picture book poetically relates an astonishing story of perseverance set against a cataclysmic period of history.

Sorry Day
Coral Vass, Dub Leffler

Sorry Day acknowledges the past and shows a willingness to make things right. The story commemorates both the momentous speech made by the Prime Minister of Australia to say sorry to the indigenous people for past abuse and to also recognise the decades of abuse suffered by the Stolen Generation. Told through the eyes of a young girl participating in the ceremony today and, in sepia colours, the eyes of the stolen children in the past.

Stolen Girl
Trina Saffioti

Stolen Girl is a fictionalised account of the now universally known story of the Stolen Generation and tells of an Aboriginal girl taken from her family and sent to a children’s home. Each night she sings, and dreams of her mother and the life they once shared of sitting on the verandah of their corrugated-iron home, cooking damper and hunting goanna. But each morning she is woken by the bell to the harsh reality of the children’s home, until finally one day she puts into action her carefully crafted plan unlocking the door and taking her first step back toward home. Stolen Girl gives young readers an insight into the life of a child taken away from everything they know into an alien world without love. It captures the depth of emotion that was felt by thousands of Australians during this dark chapter in the nation’s history.
Stories for Simon
Lisa Miranda Sarzin

A beautiful story of acknowledging the past and working together for a brighter future

When Simon unwraps a beautiful boomerang wrapped in an old newspaper, he learns of the national apology to the Stolen Generations. Who were the Stolen Generations and how can saying "sorry" help? Through a new friendship and a magnificent collection of stories, Simon gains a deep appreciation of the past and a positive vision for the future.

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge
Mem Fox, Julie Vivas (Illustrator)

Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge lives next door to a nursing home in which several of his good friends reside. Of course, his favourite is Miss Nancy Alison Delacourt Cooper, because she has four names just as he does. The only problem is Miss Nancy, who is 96, has "lost" her memory. Undaunted, Wilfred sets out to "find" Miss Nancy's memory for her.
The Best Day of My Life/No ordinary day (Canadian edition)
Deborah Ellis

'The best day of my life was the day I found out I was all alone in the world.' Even though Valli spends her days picking coal and fighting with her cousins, life in the coal town of Jharia, India, is the only life she knows. The only sight that fills her with terror is the monsters who live on the other side of the train tracks - the lepers. When Valli discovers that that her 'aunt' is a stranger who was paid money to take Valli off her own family's hands, she leaves Jharia and begins a series of adventures that takes her to Kolkata, the city of the gods. Valli finds that she really doesn't need much to live and is very resourceful. But a chance encounter with a doctor reveals that she has leprosy. Unable to bear the thought that she is one of the monsters she has always feared, Valli rejects help and begins an uncertain life on the street.

Bifocal
Deborah Ellis, Eric Walters

A student arrested on suspicions of terrorism. A high school torn apart by racism. Two boys from two different sets of circumstances forced to choose sides. These are the issues at the heart of Bifocal, a ground-breaking new novel for young adults. The story is told from two different points of view. Haroon is a serious student devoted to his family. His grandparents emigrated from Afghanistan. Jay is a football star devoted to his team. He is white.

One day their high school is put on lockdown, and the police arrest a Muslim student on suspicion of terrorist affiliations. He might be guilty. Or is he singled out because of his race? The entire student body fragments along racial lines and both Haroon and Jay find that their differences initially put them at odds. The Muslim students become targets and a smoke-bomb is set off near their lockers while Jay and his teammates believe they've been set-up to look like racists.

The Disappeared
Gloria Whelan

A riveting tale about love and sacrifice by a National Book Award winner.

The Disappeared. Los desaparecidos. This is the name given to those who opposed Argentina’s dictatorial government and were kidnapped to ensure their silence. With her hometown of Buenos Aires ensconced in the political
nightmare, Silvia devises a plan to save her missing brother. She’ll make Norberto, son of the general who arrests dissenters, fall in love with her, and he’ll have his father set Eduardo free.

Told in alternating chapters, this powerful and poetic story follows Silvia as she spirals into Norberto’s world, and Eduardo as he struggles to endure physical and emotional torture. Will Silvia’s scheme reunite her family? Or will the pursuit of freedom cost these devoted siblings their lives?

**Goodbye, Vietnam**
Gloria Whelan

When Mai’s family discovers that Vietnam government soldiers will soon apprehend her father and grandmother, the family slips away in the night. They trudge through the swamps of the Mekong Delta toward the sea. The gut-wrenching trip to Hong Kong is just another step toward a new life, which the family eventually finds. Whelan’s characters are distinctive, and her story is riveting, haunting, and memorable, reflecting the human virtues of determination, hope, love, and courage in the face of the most devastating of circumstances and injustices.

**The Hate U Give**
Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighbourhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil’s name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

**Hitler's Daughter** *(Hitler Trilogy #1)*
Jackie French

Her name was Heidi, and she was Hitler’s daughter. It began on a rainy morning in Australia, as part of a game played by Mark and his friends. It was a storytelling game, and the four friends took turns weaving tales about fairies and
mermaids and horses. But Anna's story was different this time: it was not a fairy tale or an adventure story. The story was about a young girl who lived during World War II. Her name was Heidi, and she was Hitler's daughter. As Anna's story unfolds, Mark is haunted by the image of Hitler's daughter. He wonders what he would have done in her place if he had known his father was an evil man leading the world into a war that was destroying millions of lives. And if Mark had known, would he have had the power and determination to stop him?

**Homeless Bird**  
Gloria Whelan

Like many girls her age in the India of her time period, thirteen-year-old-Koly is getting married. Full of hope and courage, she leaves home forever. But Koly's story takes a terrible turn when in the wake of the ceremony, she discovers she's been horribly misled about exactly what she is marrying into. Her future, it would seem, is lost. Yet this rare young woman, bewildered and brave, sets out to forge her own exceptional future.

**The Knife of Never Letting Go** *(Chaos Walking Series #1)*  
Patrick Ness

Imagine you can hear everything the town of men say about you. And they can hear everything you think. Imagine you don’t fit into their plans. Todd Hewitt is just one month away from the birthday that will make him a man. But his town has been keeping secrets from him. Secrets that are going to force him to run.

**Lies We Tell Ourselves**  
Robin Talley

In 1959 Virginia, the lives of two girls on opposite sides of the battle for civil rights will be changed forever. Sarah Dunbar is one of the first black students to attend the previously all-white Jefferson High School. An honours student at her old school, she is put into remedial classes, spit on and tormented daily.

Linda Hairston is the daughter of one of the town's most vocal opponents of school integration. She has been taught all her life that the races should be kept
separate but equal.

Forced to work together on a school project, Sarah and Linda must confront harsh truths about race, power and how they really feel about one another. Boldly realistic and emotionally compelling, Lies We Tell Ourselves is a brave and stunning novel about finding truth amid the lies, and finding your voice even when others are determined to silence it.

**Martha's Journey**  
Maureen Lee

Liverpool 1915. Martha Rossi lives in a tenement with her husband and their five children. Despite working all the hours she can, the family don't have much to get by on. When Martha's fourteen-year-old son, Joe, proudly enlists to fight for his country just to earn his mother an extra shilling, Martha is horrified. She realises the government is turning a blind eye to the scores of young boys who are joining the army. Despite her pleas and protests, Joe is dispatched to France within weeks. Unbeknownst to them all, Joe's act of selfless heroism will have huge implications for Martha and all the family. As the dreaded telegrams begin to arrive from the front in France, mother's hearts are broken across the country. Spurred on by grief of her own, Martha Rossi begins a quest that will take her right to the doors of No.10 Downing Street. Martha’s journey there will be a tough one, but with courage and the support of her friends and family, it will be the most important undertaking of her life. Deeply moving and utterly irresistible, MARTHA’S JOURNEY shows Maureen Lee at her very best.

**Ophelia: Queen of Denmark** (Shakespeare)  
Jackie French

She is the girl who will be queen: Ophelia, daughter of Denmarks lord chancellor and loved by Prince Hamlet.

But while Hamlets family stab, poison or haunt one another, Ophelia plans a sensible rule, one filled with justice and the making of delicious cheeses. Even if she has to pretend to be mad to make it happen, Ophelia will let nothing, not even howling ghosts, stand in her way.

This is Shakespeares play, but with what might also have happened behind the scenes. And this story has a happy ending.
Rooftoppers
Katherine Rundell

Everyone thinks that Sophie is an orphan. True, there were no other recorded female survivors from the shipwreck which left baby Sophie floating in the English Channel in a cello case, but Sophie remembers seeing her mother wave for help. Her guardian tells her it is almost impossible that her mother is still alive, but that means still possible. You should never ignore a possible. So when the Welfare Agency writes to her guardian threatening to send Sophie to an orphanage, she takes matters into her own hands and flees to Paris to look for her mother, starting with the only clue she has - the address of the cello maker. Evading the French authorities, she meets Matteo and his network of rooftoppers - urchins who live in the sky. Together they scour the city for Sophie's mother before she is caught and sent back to London, and most importantly before she loses hope.

Speak
Laurie Halse Anderson

"Speak up for yourself--we want to know what you have to say." From the first moment of her freshman year at Merryweather High, Melinda knows this is a big fat lie, part of the nonsense of high school. She is friendless, outcast, because she busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, so now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. Only her art class offers any solace, and it is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party: she was raped by an upperclassman, a guy who still attends Merryweather and is still a threat to her. Her healing process has just begun when she has another violent encounter with him. But this time Melinda fights back, refuses to be silent, and thereby achieves a measure of vindication.

In Laurie Halse Anderson's powerful novel, an utterly believable heroine with a bitterly ironic voice delivers a blow to the hypocritical world of high school. She speaks for many a disenfranchised teenager while demonstrating the importance of speaking up for oneself.
Thunderwith
Libby Hathorn

Lara feels completely alone after the death of her mother. She is an intruder in her father’s new family, living far away from all that has been familiar. How can she find acceptance and love in this harsh place? Will the hostile Gladwyn and her kids ever really allow Lara to be part of the family she so longs for?

In the summer of raging storms Lara Ritchie must fight the storm within herself. It is through the unexpected friendship with a kindred spirit that Lara discovers the strength to face up to her ordeals. But where did he come from? Has he been sent to her for a reason? Who will explain his mystery to her?

Wolf Hollow
Lauren Wolk

Growing up in the shadows cast by two world wars, Annabelle has lived a mostly quiet, steady life in her small Pennsylvania town. Until the day new student Betty Glengarry walks into her class. Betty quickly reveals herself to be cruel and manipulative, and while her bullying seems isolated at first, things quickly escalate, and reclusive World War I veteran Toby becomes a target of her attacks. While others have always seen Toby’s strangeness, Annabelle knows only kindness. She will soon need to find the courage to stand as a lone voice of justice as tensions mount.