Best New Young Adult Books
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Grades 4-6

ALL THE ANSWERS by Kate Messner
Ava finds an old blue pencil that can answer the questions she writes with it. The magic pencil is a great device to show the power in knowing – and not knowing – everything going on with one’s family and friends. (Bloomsbury, 2015)

THE GOLLYWHOPPER GAMES: FRIEND OR FOE by Jody Feldman
Zane Bracott uses his brains and brawn to compete in the third Gollywhopper Games. Highly recommended to anyone who likes puzzles, adventure, and characters who are more than meets the eye. (Greenwillow, 2015)

COLONIAL MADNESS by Jo Whittemore
Tori and her mom compete against other family members for great-aunt Muriel's fortune at her colonial manner. The banter between Tori and her mom is hilarious, and the challenges are great fun. (Aladdin, 2015)

RHYME SCHEMER by K.A. Holt
Kevin is a bully, but when one of his victims gets a hold of his poetry notebook, Kevin finds himself blackmailed. So much story and characterization are packed into this slim novel written in free verse. (Chronicle, 2014)

THE TRUTH ABOUT TWINKIE PIE by Kat Yeh
Gigi Barnes plans to reinvent herself at her Long Island school after her big sister moves them from the south. Among new friends, tried recipes, and growing up challenges, Gigi learns secrets about her family that may change everything. (Little, Brown, 2015)

GRACEFULLY GRAYSON by Ami Polonsky
Twelve-year-old Grayson hides his interest in wearing girls' clothes until he auditions for Persephone in the school play and slowly lets his deepest secret out. Readers will want to embrace Grayson for his bravery. (Hyperion, 2014)

SURROUNDED BY SHARKS by Michael Northrop
Davey sneaks out of his Florida hotel and ends up in a riptide that pulls him out to sea. The tension is high and takes the reader not only into Davey's head, but that of his brother, potential rescuers, and the sharks. A quick survival story. (Scholastic, 2014)

MOONPENNY ISLAND by Tricia Springstubb
Flor loves living on Moonpenny Island in Lake Erie until her best friend moves to the mainland, her mother leaves to take care of her ailing grandmother, and her older sister is sneaking around at night. The island setting encompasses drinking, violence, and poverty in a way that remains true to the protagonist's positive disposition. (Balzer & Bray, 2015)
WISH GIRL by Nikki Loftin
After repeated bullying at his old school, Peter's family moves to rural Texas. He discovers a nearby valley that seems to protect him, and meets Annie, a girl with cancer who actually listens to him. (Razorbill, 2015)

MARK OF THE THIEF by Jennifer A. Nielsen
Nic, a mining slave in ancient Rome, is forced to enter the late Cesar's mine to retrieve a gold bulla. He is marked by a griffin and put on a magical path for survival against the Roman empire. This novel is great for fans of Rick Riordan, with ancient Roman history and a witty narrator. (Scholastic, 2015)

THE IRON TRIAL by Holly Black & Cassandra Clare
Master Rufus chooses Callum for training in the Magestarium despite his injured leg and magical shortcomings. Once enrolled Callum learns more about his past and the danger lurking outside the school's walls. Fans of Harry Potter and other "learning magic in school" stories will enjoy this one. (Scholastic, 2014)

TUT: THE STORY OF MY IMMORTAL LIFE by P. J. Hoover
Thousands of years ago, Tut was cursed by his uncle when Horemheb tried to overthrow his reign as king. Now Tut is an immortal reliving eighth grade in Washington, D.C. When he learns Horemheb may still be alive, he vows vengeance. Fans of Rick Riordan will enjoy this tale. (Starscape, 2014)

KUNG POW CHICKEN: HEROES ON THE SIDE by Cyndi Marko
Gordon and his little brother are secret superheroes: Kung Pow Chicken and sidekick Egg Drop. Ticklebeak and his Bad Eggs have escaped from jail, kidnapped other sidekicks, and must be stopped by our heroes. The chicken puns throughout this illustrated chapter book are funny, and the comic book style adds so much to this wonderful series. (Scholastic, 2014)

EL DEAFO by Cece Bell
When she is four, Cece loses her hearing. As she grows and changes schools, teachers, and friends, she figures out how to take her hearing aids from an embarrassment to a superpower. This graphic memoir is full of relatable experiences no matter what one's ability or disability. Worthy of its Newbery Honor win. (Amulet, 2014)

ROLLER GIRL by Victoria Jamieson
After her mom takes her to a roller derby, Astrid joins the junior derby summer camp. She struggles to stay on her feet and misses her best friend who attends ballet camp with mean girl Rachel instead. The full color graphic novel nails changing friendships and interests in the tween years with a cool cast of derby characters. A definite winner for fans of SMILE. (Dial, 2015)

FAD MANIA! A HISTORY OF AMERICAN CRAZES by Cynthia Overbeck Bix
From dance marathons to goldfish swallowing to Furbies, a century of fads are presented. Photos, call-outs, and timelines give this glossy non-fiction volume a magazine like look. (Twenty-First Century Books, 2015)

GHOSTLY EVIDENCE: EXPLORING THE PARANORMAL by Kelly Milner Halls
From haunted places to modern ghost hunters to the tools of the trade, this non-fiction volume gives evidence for and against the belief that ghosts walk among us. This book is a good jumping off point for young skeptics. (Millbrook Press, 2014)
Grades 7-9

ALL FALL DOWN by Ally Carter
Three years ago, Grace saw her mother killed by a man with a scar, but no one believes her, even when she sees him again. Grace's unreliable narrative is well-done. The end is satisfying though the last page sets up a sequel. Fans of Ally Carter's previous books will enjoy this one, too. (Scholastic, 2015)

THE CONSPIRACY OF US by Maggie Hall
Avery is abducted from her prom, flown across the Atlantic to Paris, and whisked off to Istanbul, all with the promise that she will meet her father and that she is an important part of a prophecy. Part Dan Brown European thriller, part Ally Carter feisty heroine, this book takes off. Primed for a sequel. (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2015)

KISSING IN AMERICA by Margo Rabb
Eva meets Will, a guy who makes her feel like the romance novels she reads could be real, except Will is moving from NYC to LA, so Eva devises a plan to be with him. The cross-country road-trip, quirky family members along the way, and contrast between Manhattan and small town Texas is well written. (Harper, 2015)

THE KIDNEY HYPOTHETICAL, OR HOW TO RUIN YOUR LIFE IN SEVEN DAYS by Lisa Yee
Higgs Boson Bing is on track to graduate HS in one week and attend Harvard in the fall to become a dentist like his father. Then his girlfriend asks a hypothetical about kidney donation, which spirals him into questions about his future. Hilarious lines in the hero's narrative drive this novel. (Arthur Levine, 2015)

BACKLASH by Sarah Darer Littman
Lara is chatting with Christian online and totally falling for him, so when he suddenly trashes her on FaceBook for all to see, Lara spirals into a suicidal depression, and her family, friends, and neighbors get caught in the backlash. This contemporary YA has a realistic portrayal of how "harmless" online "teasing" can quickly be qualified as bullying and cause unintended consequences. (Scholastic, 2015)

ENDANGERED by Lamar Giles
Lauren is also known as "Gray Scales," the photojournalist who picture blogs her classmates' misdeeds as a type of justice for their bad behavior. An Admirer claims to know who she is, and one of her features is killed, Panda must find the murderer before the Admirer goes after her friends. A solid murder mystery. (HarperTeen, 2015)

THE THIRD TWIN by C.J. Omololu
Lexi and her identical twin Ava sometimes pretend to be Alicia, their nonexistent triplet, to act reckless. When one of the guys Alicia dated is murdered, Lexi ends up on the run from the law and on the hunt for the real killer before someone else dies. A compulsive thriller with twists and turns. (Delacorte, 2015)

VANISHING GIRLS by Lauren Oliver
After a car accident leaves Nicole's sister Dara scarred and no longer speaking to her, Nick attempts to make things right and gets caught up in the case of a missing local 9-year-old girl. Fans of WE WERE LIARS by E. Lockhart will enjoy this drama. (Harper, 2015)

WHAT REMAINS by Helene Dunbar
After a tragic car accident, Cal's best friend Lizzie is dead and his baseball career is over, but with his new heart perhaps he can find some new people and experiences to love. Fans of IF I STAY will enjoy this tearjerker. (Flux, 2015)

CHARISMA by Jeanne Ryan
When a doctor offers Aislyn a trial dose of Charisma to alter her shy genes, she takes the shot. This science thriller feels plausible, and has characters who think they are using science to do the right thing. (Dial, 2015)
FINDING PARIS by Joy Preble
Leo’s sister Paris takes off one night, so Leo sets out to find her. A road-trip story for fans of PAPER TOWNS. (Balzer & Bray, 201)

SAINT ANYTHING by Sarah Dessen
After Sydney’s charismatic older brother is incarcerated, she tries to distance herself from his reputation and meets a family who helps her put life in perspective. Another solid addition to the author’s repertoire. (Viking, 2015) *This author will be at TBF on May 16th!*

THE BOY IN THE BLACK SUIT by Jason Reynolds
Matt’s mother died of cancer and now his dad is in the hospital, but somehow he works through his grief while employed at a funeral home where he finds Love. The dialog and voice are authentic, the story is realistic, and the characters are lovable. (Atheneum, 2015) *This author will be at TBF on May 16th!*

REBORN by Jennifer Rush
Nick begins to recall a time before he met Anna in ALTERED and pictures a girl who he saved...but was he also the one to put her in danger? With a similar formula of fist fights, chase scenes, deceptions, and repressed memories, REBORN delivers BOURNE IDENTITY like action and sensibilities to an upper-YA audience. (Little, Brown, 2015)

HOW IT WENT DOWN by Kekla Magoon
Tariq, a black teen, is shot and killed on the street by a white man...but what really happened? Tariq’s friends, family, and bystanders each have a different version of the events. This realistic novel could’ve been taken from the headlines today and gives readers a lot to think about in who is impacted by the loss of a life. (Henry Holt, 2014)

WRITTEN IN THE STARS by Aisha Saeed
Naila looks forward to college so she can escape her super conservative parents, but when they catch her at prom, trick her into an arranged marriage in Pakistan that she longs to escape. The reader will be outraged for Naila and crossing their fingers for freedom. (Nancy Paulsen, 2015)

I LOVE, I HATE, I MISS MY SISTER by Amelie Sarn
Sohane wears a head scarf to school and is expelled; meanwhile, her younger sister Djelila begins dating and is killed for not following Islam. The ideas that are raised about French laws, freedom of expression of religion, and religious intolerance are many. (Delacorte, 2014)

THE SECRET SKY by Atia Abawi
Fatima and Sami fall in love despite their Hazara and Pashtun backgrounds, and when Sami’s angry cousin catches them together, they all must run for their lives. A highly recommended novel about Afghanistan, a country still in the midst of a 35-year war. (Philomel, 2014)

REMAKING THE JOHN: THE INVENTION AND REINVENTION OF THE TOILET by Francesca Davis DiPiazza
From ancient times to present day, the question has always been asked: where to put human waste? This slim, photo-heavy non-fiction volume discusses the good and bad places where excrement has been deposited, the illnesses caused by improper treatment of tainted water, and what the future may bring. (Twenty-First Century Books, 2015)
CHERNOBYL'S WILD KINGDOM: LIFE IN THE DEAD ZONE by Rebecca L. Johnson
In the Ukraine in 1986, hundreds of thousands of millisiverts of radiation spread throughout the region in a matter of hours. Nearly 30 years later, scientists are studying plants and wildlife there to learn how radiation affects the planet. A quick read that may inspire readers to do more reading research on their own. (Twenty-First Century Books, 2015)

FDR AND THE AMERICAN CRISIS by Albert Marrin
From his harried birth to his early death, Franklin Delano Roosevelt led a full life with his children and wife, and then as the President of the United States, a position he was elected to four times despite critics and the tough times of World War II. A high-quality, full-color non-fiction volume that is recommended to fans of WWII history and the presidents. (Knopf, 2015)

POPULAR: VINTAGE WISDOM FOR A MODERN GEEK by Maya Van Wagenen
When Maya's father finds an old copy of Betty Cornell's 1950's Teenage Popularity Guide, she decides to follow the advice throughout her eighth grade year to overcome her social awkwardness. Maya's brave year spent standing out instead of hiding in her diverse Texas border town school is entertaining and thoughtful. (Dutton, 2014)

TOMBOY by Liz Prince
Liz never liked dressing up or acting like a "typical" girl, and as she made friends and put up with bullies throughout her education, she embraced the woman she was in the end of high school, whether society agreed with her or not. A great look at the challenge all of us face in growing up and embracing ourselves. (Zest, 2014)

BROWN GIRL DREAMING by Jacqueline Woodson
From her birth in 1963 through her childhood years, the author tells the story of her life growing up in Ohio, South Carolina, and Brooklyn during the Civil Rights Movement. This story in verse is well-deserved winner of the National Book Award. (Nancy Paulsen Books, 2014)

Grades 10-12

NONE OF THE ABOVE by I.W. Gregorio
Kristin has a track scholarship, great boyfriend, and two best friends, and soon after becoming Homecoming Queen she learns she is intersex, a diagnosis that shifts her world and makes her rethink her identity and what really matters. This novel doesn't shy away from talk of sex, and in doing so it brings many important topics to light such as the biological sex and gender identity continuums. (Balzer & Bray, 2015)

PAINLESS by S.A. Harazin
David has CIPA, a rare genetic condition which means he cannot feel pain, and as a homeschooled high school graduate he decides to create a bucket list which includes finding his parents, living on his own, and asking out Luna. This novel has depth and heart, a road trip and a hurricane, and two young characters living their lives regardless of the danger. (Albert Whitman, 2015)

THE ALEX CROW by Andrew Smith
Ariel, an orphan from a war torn country; his adopted brother Max; and their new friend Cobie are sent to Camp Merrie Seymour for Boys, while the trickle-down effect of an Ice Man discovered in 1880 impacts their lives. In true Smith form, it is difficult to summarize the threads of his novel in a way that makes sense. This is a super unique science thriller with funny banter between teen guys, and an ending that somehow ties it all together. (Dutton, 2015)
UNLOVELY by Celeste Conway
When Harley returns to his small town and house boat the summer after his freshman year of college, he finds Cassandra among the local ballerinas who attend school up on the hill. As they fall for each other, Harley learns more about the dancers' dark sides. Harley is smart, his dad is supportive, and the setting is fantastic. (Merit Press, 2015)

THE WALLS AROUND US by Nova Ren Suma
Three years ago, two ballerinas were murdered and Ori was accused and sent to a juvenile detention center where something horrific occurred. Now Ori's best friend Violet goes to the abandoned JDC and experiences a presence she cannot explain. Creepy atmosphere, dual story lines/timelines, and dark pasts make this intriguing and readable. (Algonquin, 2015)

BONE GAP by Laura Ruby
Finn wants to find the stranger who kidnapped Roza, connect with beekeeper Petey, and keep his brother Sean close by. This unique, captivating novel involves magical realism, lovable characters, mysterious pasts, and superb atmosphere. (Balzer & Bray, 2015)

I WAS HERE by Gayle Forman
When Cody learns that her best friend Meg committed suicide at college, Cody sets out to discover why. This look at depression and suicide is honest, real, and frightening at times. A novel that IF I STAY and 13 REASONS WHY fans will enjoy. (Viking, 2015) *This author will be at TBF on May 16th!*

GABI, A GIRL IN PIECES by Isabel Quintero
Gabi deals with her dysfunctional family, dramatic friends, and her own body image issues in journal format. Fans of the problem novel will love this Morris Award winner. (Cinquo Puntos Press, 2014)

THERE WILL BE LIES by Nick Lake
Shelby Cooper is deaf, homeschooled, super smart, and lives a sheltered life with her mom in Arizona until the day she is hit by a car, and two lies and a truth are revealed, just as the Coyote in her dream predicted. The novel blends magical realism, crime thriller, and coming-of-age genres. (Bloomsbury, 2015)

VANGO: BETWEEN EARTH AND SKY by Timothee de Fombelle
It's the 1930s, Hitler is in power, and more than one person seems to want Vango dead even though Vango himself doesn't know his entire history. Translated from French, this YA novel is sophisticated and has definitely adult cross-over appeal. (Candlewick, 2014)

THE MARTIAN by Andy Weir
After a dust storm leaves Mark Watney stranded on Mars, he uses his engineering and biology backgrounds to create his own rescue mission and get back in touch with NASA. The technical, science heavy aspects give credence to this novel. Watney's sense of humor keeps the story moving. (Crown, 2014)

ANNIHILATION, AUTHORITY, and ACCEPTANCE (The SOUTHERN REACH TROLOGY) by Jeff Vandermeer
Area X is a coastal area where a mysterious event took place, and most people who enter never come out. Southern Reach investigates Area X and slowly discovers strange things. Part WOOL, part 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, this trilogy will appeal to fans of Arthur C. Clarke and Stephen King. (FSG, 2014)
SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED by Arin Andrews
Arin recounts his story from birth to present, transitioning from the female body he was born into to the male body and gender he always knew was on his inside. Arin's frank, thoughtful prose that documents his depression and challenges with family and friends also offers hope and encouragement to teens questioning their gender identity, sexual orientation, or other self-esteem struggles. (Simon & Schuster, 2014)

LAUGHING AT MY NIGHTMARE by Shane Burcaw
Born with spinal muscular atrophy, 22-year-old Shane Burcaw recounts major turning points in his life while living in a wheelchair. This irreverent memoir is a solid addition to non-fiction shelves and offers hope and perspective to anyone going through a tough time. A tolerance for bathroom humor a must. (Roaring Brook Press, 2014)