

African American Characters Fiction Picture Books, Board Books, and Beginning Readers

Allie's Basketball Dream · Barber, Barbara

Find It: E BAR

"Determined in her effort to play basketball, a young Afro-American girl gives it one more shot with the support of a special friend."

Amazing Grace · Hoffman, Mary

Find It: E HOF

Although a classmate says that she cannot play Peter Pan in the school play because she is black, Grace discovers that she can do anything she sets her mind to do.

Being Friends · Beaumont, Karen

Find It: E BEA

Two very different girls find the joy of being friends enables them to share their various likes and dislikes.

The Black Snowman · Mendez, Phil

Find It: E MEN

Through the powers of a magical kente, a black snowman comes to life and helps young Jacob discover the beauty of his black heritage as well as his own self-worth.

Chocolate Me! · Diggs, Taye

Find It: E BOARD BOOK DIG

A mother helps her son see how beautiful his hair and skin are.

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut · Barnes, Derrick

Find It: E BAR

"Celebrates the magnificent feeling that comes from walking out of a barber shop with newly-cut hair."

Dancing in the Wings · Allen, Debbie

Find It: E ALL

"Sassy tries out for a summer dance festival in Washington, D.C. despite the other girls' taunts that she is much too tall."

Daniel's Good Day · Archer, Micha

Find It: E ARC

"When his neighbors give a variety of answers to the question, "What is a good day?" Daniel writes a poem about the everyday activities that give them joy."

Don't Touch My Hair · Miller, Sharee

Find It: E MIL

"Aria loves her soft and bouncy hair, but must go to extremes to avoid people who touch it without permission until, finally, she speaks up."

Easter Parade · Greenfield, Eloise

Find It: E HOL EAS GRE

"Although the young cousins live many miles apart, Leanna in Chicago and Elizabeth in Washington, D.C., both prepare for an Easter parade against the backdrop of the Second World War.

Grandma's Purse · Brantley-Newton, Vanessa

Find It: E BRA

"When Grandma Mimi comes to visit, her granddaughter cannot wait to see what treasures she has hidden in her purse."

Grandpa Cacao · Zunon, Elisabeth

Find It: E ZUN

"As a little girl and her father work together to make her birthday cake, he tells the story of the Grandpa Cacao, a farmer from the Ivory Coast."

Grandpa's Face · Greenfield, Eloise

Find It: E GRE

"Seeing her beloved grandfather making a mean face while he rehearses for one of his plays, Tamika becomes afraid that someday she will lose his love and he will make that mean face at her."

Hair Love · Cherry, Matthew

Find It: E CHE

"A little girl's daddy steps in to help her arrange her curly, coiling, wild hair into styles that allow her to be her natural, beautiful self."

Hands Up! · McDaniel, Breanna J.

Find It: E MCD

"A young girl lifts her hands up in a series of everyday moments before finally raising her hands in resistance at a protest march." Provided by publisher.

Honey, I Love · Greenfield, Eloise

Find It: E GRE

"A young girl expresses what she loves about life."

Jamaica's Blue Marker · Havill, Juanita

Find It: E HAV

Jamaica thinks her classmate Russell is a pest who is always getting into trouble, but then she discovers he is moving away.

The King of Kindergarten · Barnes, Derrick

Find It: E BAR

Instilled with confidence by his parents, a young boy has a great first day of kindergarten.

The Library Book · Chapin, Tom

Find It: E CHA

Using the lyrics to Tom Chapin and Michael Mark's "The Library Song," this picture book celebrates the magic of reading and of libraries.

Loose Tooth · Suen, Anastasia

Find It: E BR SUE

"Peter can't decide if he wants his loose tooth to fall out because if it falls out, he will have a gap in his smile for the school pictures, but money from the tooth fairy will help him buy a new basketball."

My Nana and Me · Smalls, Irene

Find It: E SMA

"A young girl and her grandmother enjoy a day filled with tea parties, hide-and-seek, stories, and plenty of love."

New Shoes · Meyer, Susan

Find It: E MEY

"In this historical fiction picture book, Ella Mae and her cousin Charlotte, both African-American, start their own shoe store when they learn that they cannot try on shoes at the shoe store." Provided by the publisher.

The Other Side · Woodson, Jacqueline

Find It: E WOO

Two girls one white and one black, gradually get to know each other as they sit on the fence that divides their town.

The Patchwork Path · Stround, Bettye

Find It: E STR

"While her father leads her toward Canada and away from the plantation where they have been slaves, a young girl thinks of the quilt her mother used to teach her a code that will help guide them to freedom."

The Patchwork Quilt · Flourney, Valerie

Find It: E ISA

"Using scraps cut from the family's old clothing, Tanya helps her grandmother and mother make a beautiful quilt that tells the story of her family's life."

Princess Grace · Hoffman, Mary

Find It: E HOF

"Grace wants to participate in her community festival's princess float, but first she must decide what sort of princess she wants to be—from an African princess in kente cloth robes to a floaty pink fairy tale princess."

Saturday · Mora, Oge

Find It: E MOR

“When all of their special Saturday plans go awry, Ava and her mother still find a way to appreciate one another and their time together.”

The Secret Olivia Told Me · Joy, N

Find It: E JOY

“Olivia shares a secret with her best friend who then lets it slip to someone else, and soon everyone knows about Olivia’s secret.”

Shades of Black · Pinkney, Sandra

Find It: E PIN

“Photographs and poetic text celebrate the beauty and diversity of African American children.”

Shoe-la-la! · Beaumont, Karen

Find It: E BEA

Four girls go in search of the perfect pair of party shoes.

Somebody’s New Pajamas · Jackson, Isaac

Find It: E JAC

“When two boys from different backgrounds become friends and sleep over at each other’s homes, they exchange ideas about sleepwear as well as about family life.”

Tallulah the Tooth Fairy CEO · Pizzoli, Tamara

Find It: E PIZ

“Tallulah the Tooth Fairy, a black businesswoman who runs one of the most successful tooth collecting organizations in the world, finds herself unexpectedly stumped when six-year-old Ballard Burchell leaves note instead of his tooth under his pillow.”

Tar Beach · Ringold, Faith

Find It: E RIN

“A young girl dreams of flying above her Harlem home, claiming all she sees for herself and her family.”

These Hands · Mason, Margaret

Find It: E MAS

“An African-American man tells his grandson about a time when, despite all the wonderful things his hands could do, they could not touch bread at the Wonder Bread factory. Based on stories of bakery union workers; includes historical notes.”

This Is the Rope: A Story From the Great Migration · Woodson, Jacqueline

Find It: E WOO

“A rope passed down through the generations frames an African American family’s story as they journey north during the time of the Great Migration.”

William and The Good Old Days · Greenfield, Eloise

Find It: E GRE

“A little boy remembers his grandmother before she became ill, and during her long recovery he tries to imagine how things will be when she comes home from the hospital.

Who Will I Be Lord? · Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux

Find It: E NEL

“A young girl recalls the stories she has been told about the members of her family and wonders what kind of person she will become.”

Virgie Goes to School With Us Boys · Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald

Find It: E HOW

“In the post-Civil War South, a young African American girl is determined to prove that she can go to school just like her older brothers.”

Yo, Jo! · Isadora, Rachel

Find It: E ISA

“Jomar greets his neighbors using slang, but his grandfather wants to hear some more traditional words.”

CD Kits

A Letter to Amy · Keats, Ezra Jack

“Peter wants to invite Amy to his birthday party but he wants it to be a surprise.”

Find It: E CD KIT KEA

Peter’s Chair: Keats, Ezra Jack

“When Peter discovers his blue furniture is being painted pink for a new baby sister, he rescues the last unpainted item, a chair, and runs away.”

Find It: E CD KIT KEA

The Snowy Day · Keats, Ezra Jack

“The adventures of a little boy in the city on a very snowy day.”

Find It: E CD KIT KEA

Whistle for Willie · Keats, Ezra Jack

“A little boy wishes for so much that he could whistle.”

Find It: E CD KIT KEA