

Strong Girls Booklist

Chapter Books: Grades 3 – Up

See annotations for recommended grade levels

The Jumbies by Tracey Baptiste (Contemporary horror, trilogy, Caribbean folktales/magical creatures, grades 3 – 7)

Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World by Ashley Herring Blake (Contemporary fiction, USA, surviving a tornado/homelessness, LGBTQIA+, grades 3 – 7)

The Blackbird Girls by Anne Blankman (Historical fiction, Russia in 1986 and 1941, the Chernobyl disaster/living in the Soviet Union/anti-Semitism/Communism/abuse/survival, multiple characters are Jewish, grades 5 – 7)

Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus by Dusti Bowling (Contemporary fiction, new school/new home/peer relations/adoption/family mystery, protagonist born without arms, secondary character with Tourette's Syndrome, grades 3 – 7)

The War that Saved My Life by Kimberley Brubaker Bradley (Historical fiction, WWII England, foster care/war/horses/found family, protagonist with a clubfoot, implied past LGBTQIA+ relationship, grades 4 – up)

Maybe He Just Likes You by Barbara Dee (Contemporary fiction, harassment/consent/school/peer relations/family relationships, grade 5 – up)

Starcrossed by Barbara Dee (Contemporary fiction, Romeo and Juliet, theater/school/family, LGBTQIA+, grades 4 – 8)

Blended by Sharon M. Draper (Contemporary fiction, Cincinnati, blended family/race/class relations, grades 4 – 7)

Out of My Mind by Sharon M. Draper (Contemporary fiction, empathy/quiz team/peer relations/family ties, protagonist has cerebral palsy, uses a wheelchair, and is nonverbal, grades 5 – up)

George by Alex Gino (Contemporary fiction, USA, school/family/personal growth, protagonist is transgender, grades 3 – 7)

Redwood and Ponytail by K.A. Holt (Contemporary novel in verse, self-discovery/cheerleading/volleyball/school/friendship/family issues/social pressure, LGBTQIA+, grades 5 – up)

Fish in a Tree by Lynda Mullaly Hunt (Contemporary fiction, invisible disability/school/labels/peer relations, protagonist has dyslexia, grades 5 – up)

The Parker Inheritance by Varian Johnson (Contemporary fiction/historical mystery, family mystery/puzzles/new community/race relations/bullying/family issues, grades 3 – 7)

Lalani of the Distant Sea by Erin Entrada Kelly (Fantasy, Filipino influences, magical creatures/storytelling/quests/girls finding power, grades 3 – 7)

Evolution of Calpurnia Tate by Jacqueline Kelly (Historical fiction, 1899 Texas, science vs. tradition/family relationships/natural sciences, grades 4 – 7)

Brother's Keeper by Julie Lee (Historical fiction, Korean War, escaping North Korea/survival/Communism/family relationships and expectations, grades 5 – 7)

Dragon Pearl by Yoon Ha Lee (Sci-fi/adventure, Korean mythology, family/friends/action/adventure/quests, grades 3 – 7)

A Ceiling Made of Eggshells by Gail Carson Levine (Historical fiction, late 1400s Spain, family/religion/survival/politics/travel/gender expectations, grades 4 – 7)

Merci Suarez Changes Gears by Meg Medina (Contemporary fiction, class issues/dementia/family dynamics/peer relations, grades 4 – 7)

Breakout by Kate Messner (Contemporary fiction, story told in letters/texts/comics/charts/etc., community issues/prison break/race relations/police/friendships, grades 4 – up)

Planet Earth is Blue by Nicole Panteleakos (Historical fiction, 1986 USA, foster care/new school/new home/peer relations/space!/found family/family mystery, protagonist has Autism Spectrum Disorder, grades 3 – 7)

First Rule of Punk by Celia Pérez (Contemporary fiction, music/zines/Mexican-American identity/new school/new community/family issues, grades 4 – 7)

Prairie Lotus by Linda Sue Park (Historical fiction, Dakota Territory 1880, race relations/family expectations/sewing/assault/making a home, protagonist identifies as biracial Chinese/white-American, grades 5 – 7)

Counting by Sevens by Holly Goldberg Sloan (Contemporary fiction, parental death/foster and found family/homelessness, multi-cultural cast, neurodivergent main character, grades 4 – up)

To Night Owl From Dogfish by Holly Goldberg Sloan and Meg Wolitzer (Contemporary fiction, story told in emails/texts/etc., parent trap/blended families/camp/friendship/anxiety, LGBTQIA+, grades 4 – 7)

Wells and Wong Mysteries by Robin Stevens (Mystery series, 1930s England, boarding school/murder mystery, grades 5 – up)

Lockwood & Co. by Jonathan Stroud (Horror/mystery series, alternate England, ghost hunting, grades 5 – up)

Roll With It by Jamie Sumner (Contemporary fiction, USA, baking/new school/dementia/friends/family, protagonist has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, grades 4 – up)

Other Words for Home by Jasmine Warga (Contemporary novel in verse, Syrian refugees/new country/new school/family, grades 3 – 7)

Gaither Sisters Series (Book 1: One Crazy Summer) by Rita Williams-Garcia (Historical fiction, 1968 – 1970, race relations/Black Panthers/New York City/family relations/school, grades 4 – up)

Wolf Hollow by Lauren Wolk (Historical fiction/psychological thriller, 1940s Pennsylvania, bullying/rural community/veterans/truth and lies, grades 5 – up)

Chapter Books: Grade 3 – Younger

See annotations for recommended independent readers' grade levels. All selections are excellent read-alouds for younger children, as well.

All these books have illustrations. "Illustrated novel/book" means illustrations on every page.

Anna Hibiscus by Atinuke (Contemporary fiction series, set in Africa, family/everyday adventures/school/friendship, grades 2 – up)

Ivy and Bean by Annie Barrows (Contemporary fiction, friendship/pranks/family/everyday adventures, grades 2 – up)

Anna Wang series (Book 1: *Year of the Book*) by Andrea Cheng (Contemporary fiction, Chinese-American family, personal identity/friendship/family/peer relations/school, grades 3 – up)

Yasmin by Saadia Faruqi (Contemporary fiction series, Pakistani-American Muslim family, school/everyday adventures/creative thinking, grades 1 – up)

Jasmine Toguchi by Debbie Michiko Florence (Contemporary fiction, Japanese-American family, everyday adventures, grades 2 – up)

Princess in Black by Shannon and Dean Hale (Fantasy series, illustrated novel, magical creatures/heroes/monsters/princesses, grades 1 – up)

Dory Fantasmagory by Abby Hanlon (Magical Realism series, illustrated novel, humor/imagination/hijinks/ sibling relationships/school/friendship, grades 2 – up)

Bunjitsu Bunny by John Himmelman (Illustrated novel series, martial arts/conflict resolution/problem solving, grades 2 – up)

Calpurnia Tate: Girl Vet by Jacqueline Kelly (Historical Fiction series, 1900 Texas, animals/farm life/family/science, grades 2 – up)

Judy Moody by Megan McDonald (Contemporary fiction series, illustrated novel, individuality/school/change/family/friendships/humor, grades 2 – up)

Juana and Lucas by Juana Medina (Contemporary fiction, Bogota, Colombia, illustrated novel, school/learning English/dogs/family, grades 2 – up)

Clementine by Sara Pennypacker (Contemporary fiction series, trouble at school/peer relationships/family/creative thinking/humor, grades 2 – up)

Anna, Banana by Anica Mrose Rissi (Contemporary fiction series, friendship/personal growth/dogs/school/family, grades 2 – up)

Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa by Erica Silverman (Contemporary Western series, illustrated book, farm life/horses/ranch adventures, grades 1 – up)

A is for Elizabeth by Rachel Vail (Contemporary fiction, illustrated novel, school/creative thinking/problem solving, grades 1 – up)

Hamster Princess by Ursula Vernon (Fantasy series, illustrated novel, fractured fairytales, main characters are animals, humor, grades 3 – up)

Elephant and Piggie by Mo Willems (Humor series, graphic novel format, friendship/everyday adventures, grades K – up)

Fancy Nancy by Jane O'Connor (Contemporary fiction, illustrated book, vocabulary/glitter/school/humor/problem solving, grades 1 – up)

Graphic Novels:

See annotations for recommended grade levels

El Deafo by Cece Bell (Fictionalized memoir, Deaf protagonist, school/family/friends/peer relationships/humor, grades 3 – up)

Zita the Spacegirl by Ben Hatke (Sci-fi/adventure graphic novel, heroes/friends/space exploration/save the galaxy, grades 2 – up)

Roller Girl by Victoria Jamieson (Contemporary fiction, roller derby/growing pains/teamwork/friendship, grades 4 – up)

Amulet by Kazu Kibuishi (Steampunk fantasy/adventure graphic novel series, magical creatures/quests/save the world, grades 3 – 7)

Cleopatra in Space by Mike Maihack (Sci-fi/adventure graphic novel series, ancient Egypt/school/quest/save the galaxy/prophecies, grades 3 – 7)

Babysitters' Club by Ann M. Martin and various artists (Contemporary graphic novel series, families/sibling relations/friendships/school/community/growing up/kid-run business, grades 3 – 7)

Click and Camp and Act by Kayla Miller (Contemporary graphic novel, friend groups/making new friends/fitting in vs. originality, grades 3 – 7)

Smile, Sisters, and Guts by Raina Telgemeier (Graphic novel memoir, orthodontia/family issues/anxiety, grades 3 – 7)

Princeless by Jeremy Whitley (author) and M. Goodwin (artist) (Fantasy graphic novel, fractured fairytales, magical creatures, LGBTIA+, grades 5 – up)

Goldie Vance by various authors (Alternate 1960s mystery/adventure graphic novels, grades 5 – up)

Lumberjanes by various authors and illustrators (Contemporary fantasy/adventure graphic novel series, camp/magical creatures/ mythology, LGBTQIA+, grades 5 – up)

Picture Books:

Mae Among the Stars by Roda Ahmed

Itsy Mitsy Runs Away by Elanna Allen

The Inventioneers series (Ada Twist, Rosie Revere, etc.) by Andrea Beatty

A Dance Like Starlight: One Ballerina's Dream by Kristy Dempsey

A Hat for Mrs. Goldman by Michelle Edwards

The Very Last Castle by Travis Jonker

Shark Lady: The True Story of How Eugenie Clark Became the Ocean's Most Fearless Scientist
by Jess Keating

Betty Bunny series by Michael Kaplan

The Song of Delphine by Kenneth Kraegel

17 Things I'm Not Allowed to Do Anymore by Jenny Offill

The Most Magnificent Thing by Ashley Spires

A Balloon for Isabel by Deborah Underwood

A Map Into the World by Kao Kalia Yang

Matilda and Hans by Yokococo