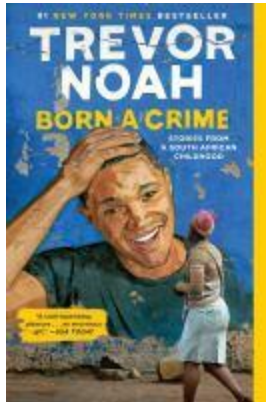


Grade 11



[Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood by Trevor Noah](#)

Lexile: HL770

Trevor Noah's unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of The Daily Show began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. Living proof of his parents' indiscretion, Trevor was kept mostly indoors for the earliest years of his life, bound by the extreme and often absurd measures his mother took to hide him from a government that could, at any moment, steal him away. Finally liberated by the end of South Africa's tyrannical white rule, Trevor and his mother set forth on a grand adventure, living openly and freely and embracing the opportunities won by a centuries-long struggle. It is also the story of that young man's relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother – his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life.



[Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult](#)

Lexile: 800L

Ruth Jefferson is a labor and delivery nurse at a Connecticut hospital with more than twenty years' experience. During her shift, Ruth begins a routine checkup on a newborn, only to be told a few minutes later that she's been reassigned to another patient. The parents are white supremacists and don't want Ruth, who is African American, to touch their child. The hospital complies with their request, but the next day, the baby goes into cardiac distress while Ruth is alone in the nursery. Does she obey orders or does she intervene?

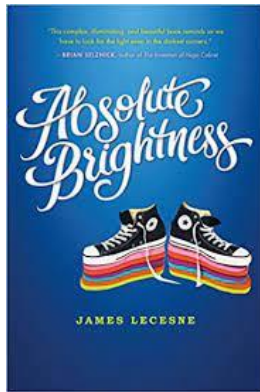
Ruth hesitates before performing CPR and, as a result, is charged with a serious crime. Kennedy McQuarrie, a white public defender, takes her case but gives unexpected advice: Kennedy insists that mentioning race in the courtroom is not a winning strategy. Conflicted by Kennedy's counsel, Ruth tries to keep life as normal as possible for her family—especially her teenage son—as the case becomes a media sensation. As the trial moves forward, Ruth and Kennedy must gain each other's trust, and come to see that what they've been taught their whole lives about others—and themselves—might be wrong.



[The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas](#)

Lexile: HL590

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood 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.



[Absolute Brightness by James Lecesne](#)

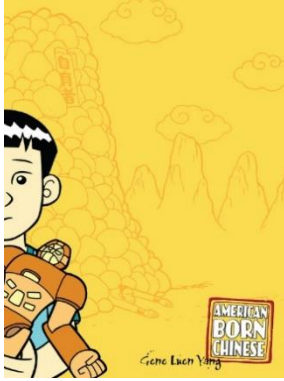
Lexile: 930L

Darkness: Where light is not. Light: Brightness or illumination from a particular source. Absolute brightness: The mystery of Leonard Pelkey. This is the story of a luminous force of nature: a boy who encounters evil and whose magic isn't truly felt until he disappears.

Phoebe's life in Neptune, New Jersey, is somewhat unremarkable. She helps her mom out with her hair salon, she goes to school, and she envies her perfect older sister. But everything changes when Leonard arrives.

Leonard is an orphan; a cousin who Phoebe never knew she had. When he comes to live with Phoebe's family, he upsets the delicate balance of their lives. He's gay and confident about who he is. He inspires the people around him. He sees people not as they are, but as they hope to be.

One day, Leonard goes missing. Phoebe, her family, and her community fight to understand what happened, and to make sense of why someone might want to extinguish the beautiful absolute brightness that was Leonard Pelkey.



American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang (*graphic novel*)

Lexile: GN530L

In addition to hard copy, this text can also be accessed on the **Open ebooks app**. Email Dr. Golobski Twomey (lagolobski@methuen.k12.ma.us) for login credentials.

All Jin Wang wants is to fit in. When his family moves to a new neighborhood, he suddenly finds that he's the only Chinese American student at his school. Jocks and bullies pick on him constantly, and he has hardly any friends. Then, to make matters worse, he falls in love with an all-American girl...

Born to rule over all the monkeys in the world, the story of the Monkey King is one of the oldest and greatest Chinese fables. Adored by his subjects, master of the arts of kung-fu, he is the most powerful monkey on earth. But the Monkey King doesn't want to be a monkey. He wants to be hailed as a god...

Chin-Kee is the ultimate negative Chinese stereotype, and he's ruining his cousin Danny's life. Danny's a popular kid at school, but every year Chin-Kee comes to visit, and every year Danny has to transfer to a new school to escape the shame. This year, though, things quickly go from bad to worse...

These three apparently unrelated tales come together with an unexpected twist, in a modern fable that is hilarious, poignant and action-packed. *American Born Chinese* is an amazing ride, all the way up to the astonishing climax--and confirms what a growing number of readers already know: Gene Yang is a major talent.

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All book descriptions adapted from the publisher or goodreads.com.