



THE MAY BOOK PROJECT

A Very Asian American Youth Literature Guide For All Readers

ABOUT: In celebration of AANHPI Heritage Month, the Very Asian Foundation, in partnership with We Need Diverse Books, launches The May Book Project to help schools and libraries build and maintain robust Asian American youth literature collections.

BACKGROUND: Inspired by a group of St. Louis students who asked their schools for more AAPI books and were largely ignored, we brought together some of the nation's leaders in the AAPI literary space to curate an extensive, vetted, and thoughtful book list.

OBJECTIVE: We are raising national awareness of the need to create more inclusive libraries, give readers access to up-to-date Asian American literature, and provide funding for donating books to libraries.

WHY: We want to celebrate and promote rich Asian American literature in an effort to bring more representative and diverse books amidst rising anti-Asian hate. Trailblazer Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop tells us it is crucial that readers see both reflections of their lives as well as windows into the lives of others.

PURPOSE: We are partnering with communities to distribute book lists and purchase new materials for libraries. We are committed to donating books to libraries that do not have a budget for new materials.

- Learn more: veryasianfoundation.org/may-book-project
- Toolkit: bit.ly/MayBookProjectToolKit

FOR SPONSORS AND LIBRARIES



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The May Book Project: *What we can do with donations*

- \$50 buys two display posters for schools or libraries
- \$250 buys 10 books
- \$500 sponsors most virtual author/illustrator visits to schools or organizations
- \$900 buys one May Book Project book list (4 age groups)
- \$3500 buys out the entire May Book Project library set

*All suggested donations include shipping, handling, and process fees.

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The May Book Project: *For Libraries and Schools*

- ✓ Check out [The May Book Project: A Very Asian American Youth Literature Guide For All Readers](#)
- ✓ Celebrate any effort using #TheMayBookProject - Make a video or take a pic and tag us!
- ✓ Check out the APALA Rubric, a guide for reviewing and evaluating APIA youth literature for readers 0-18 years old
- ✓ At-need libraries can apply for free books through [The May Book Project](#), fulfilled by We Need Diverse Books and partners in the fall
- ✓ Ask your communities to sponsor a library book, a May Book Project book kit, or buy your entire suggested May Book Project collection
- ✓ Need hashtags? #TheMayBookProject #VeryAsian #WeNeedDiverseBooks #VeryAsianBooks #YouthLitForAll @WeNeedDiverseBooks @TheVeryAsianFoundation @ala_apala @asian_authors @civicasians

- Learn more: veryasianfoundation.org/may-book-project
- We Need Diverse Books: diversebooks.org
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FOR LIBRARIES AND SCHOOLS



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The May Book Project: *For Communities and Caregivers*

- ✓ Check out The May Book Project: A Very Asian American Youth Literature Guide For All Readers
- ✓ Celebrate with a video or pic using #TheMayBookProject
- ✓ Share the booklist with a library or school and ask them to 1) compare it to their own collections 2) ask libraries to check out the APALA Rubric or Toolkit to help build and maintain a more inclusive library
- ✓ Tell any at-need library they can apply for free books through The May Book Project by going to veryasianfoundation.org (fulfilled by partner We Need Diverse Books in the fall)
- ✓ Support your library or school: Can you buy a book? Lead a community book drive? Or raise enough money to buy one book kit off the list! Can you ask your employer to become a corporate sponsor?
- ✓ Need hashtags? #TheMayBookProject #VeryAsian #WeNeedDiverseBooks #VeryAsianBooks #YouthLitForAll @WeNeedDiverseBooks @TheVeryAsianFoundation @ala_apala @asian_authors @civicasians
 - Learn more: veryasianfoundation.org/may-book-project
 - We Need Diverse Books: diversebooks.org
 - Toolkit: bit.ly/MayBookProjectToolKit

FOR COMMUNITIES AND CAREGIVERS



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More about the 2022 List

This #VeryAsian Asian American Youth Literature list was inspired by the story of high school students in St. Louis, Missouri, who asked their schools to purchase more Asian American literature, but were ignored. At the request of news anchor Michelle Li, a team of Asian American scholars and readers created this list to support the students and to encourage the inclusion of high quality and diverse Asian American youth literature in school and public library collections, as well as community organization libraries, classroom collections, and home libraries. As Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop tells us, it is crucial that readers see both reflections of their lives as well as windows into the lives of others. Therefore, whether you live and work in a diverse or more homogenous community, we hope you will cultivate a diverse library, classroom, or home collection.

This list is divided into the following groups: picture books, early readers, middle grade, young adult, and adult crossover. In recognition of our diasporic and transnational histories, experiences, and communities, the included books are written and/or illustrated primarily but not exclusively by Asian North Americans. We've also aimed to be representative of the experiences of more than 30 distinct identities that fall under the Asian American umbrella, as well as different axes of identities such as migration experiences, religion, class, LGBTQ+, multiracial, documentation status, and so on. While some of these authors and illustrators have published widely, we decided to include only one or two books by each person, so we encourage you to visit each author and illustrator's website, sign up for their newsletters, and seek out additional works they've published. Some of the books (especially but not only the older books) have made an impact in the field of Asian American literature and are not without controversy. We invite readers to do further research on each book in order to understand the context in which it was produced and in which it continues to circulate. We have decided not to include PI because Pasifika and Pacific Islander people have their own histories, experiences, and literary traditions that are often eclipsed and sidelined by the more visible "Asian American" moniker. As such, familiarize yourself with these topics and check out books by Indigenous Hawaiian and Pasifika creators, such as by following the Little Pasifika Readers Instagram account, [Bess Press](#), and [Kamehameha Publishing](#).

We also encourage librarians and teachers to review the [APALA Rubric](#) to learn more about selecting and evaluating Asian American youth literature. The rubric can be used to conduct diversity audits of existing collections to weed and build more inclusive, reflective, and diverse collections. Check collections against this rubric, and where there are discrepancies, commit to purchasing books that are not yet in your classroom or library.

One of the most exciting things about Asian American youth literature today is that more and more books are being published every month—please check out forthcoming books and the resources at the end of the document.

*Asterisk indicates that the book is not created by an Asian American author or illustrator but features an Asian American main character or protagonist.