



BCALA x GNCRT: BLACK LIVES MATTER
BLACK LITERATURE MATTERS - COMICS READING LIST

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Children's Comics, Graphic Novels & Picture Books

The Adventures of Sparrowboy

by Brian Pinkney

A paperboy discovers he has superpowers like his hero Falconman.
Ages 0-8

Black Heroes of the Wild West: Featuring Stagecoach Mary, Bass Reeves, and Bob Lemmons

by James Otis Smith

Introduction by Kadir Nelson

This nonfiction graphic novel brings to life the tales of three African American historical figures who made an impact on the Western expansion of the United States and were known for their success as a stagecoach driver, deputy marshal, and horseman.
Ages 8-12

The Crossover (Graphic Novel)

by Kwame Alexander

Art by Dawud Anyabwire

Adapted from the Newbery award-winning novel in verse, this coming-of-age story features twin brothers and their relationships to each other, to their father, and to basketball.
Ages 9-12

Dream Big, Little One

by Vashti Harrison

This beautifully illustrated board book edition of instant bestseller *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History* showcases eighteen women who changed the world and is the perfect goodnight book to inspire big dreams.
Ages 0-8

The Little Rock Nine and the Fight for Equal Education

by Gary Jeffrey

Art by Nana Li

This graphic nonfiction follows the African American students chosen to integrate a high school in Little Rock, Arkansas, after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down school segregation.
Ages 9-12

New Kid

by Jerry Craft

When seventh-grader Jordan Banks starts attending a private school that is primarily white, he has to learn how to navigate microaggressions, tokenism, and not fitting in. *New Kid* won the Coretta Scott King Award (2020) and is the first graphic novel to win the Newbery Medal Award (2020).
Ages 9-12

Shortcut

by Donald Crews

A group of children encounter a freight train after taking a shortcut on the tracks.
Ages 0-8

Bessie Stringfield: Tales of the Talented Tenth, No. 2

by Joel Christian Gill

Imagine a five-foot-two-inch-tall woman riding a motorcycle eight times across the continental United States. Now imagine she is Black and is journeying across the country in the pre-Civil Rights era of the 1930s and '40s.
Ages 9-12

Twins

by Varian Johnson

Art by Shannon Wright

Best friends and twin sisters, Maureen and Francine Carter start to grow apart when they enter the 6th grade.
Ages 8-12

When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop

by Laban Carrick Hill

Art by Theodore Taylor III

The beginnings of hip hop in the 1970s and 1980s is introduced through this biography of DJ Kool Herc, starting on the island of Jamaica and moving to the Bronx, NY.
Ages 6-10

Woke Baby

by Mahogany Browne

Art by Theodore Taylor III

Woke babies are up early. Woke babies raise their fists in the air. Woke babies cry out for justice. Woke babies grow up to change the world. This lyrical and empowering book is both a celebration of what it means to be a baby and what it means to be woke. With bright, playful art, *Woke Baby* is an anthem of hope in a world where the only limit to a skyscraper is more blue.
Ages 0-8

Young Adult Comics & Graphic Novels

Aya: Life in Yop City

by Marguerite Abouet

Art by Clément Oubrerie

Translated by Helge Dascher

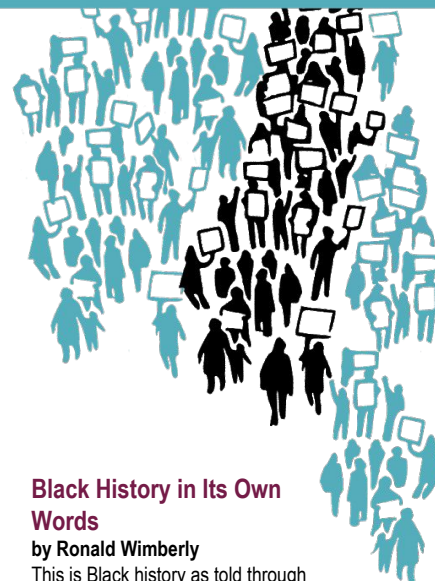
Aya and her friends navigate the paths of womanhood available to them in the Ivory Coast during the late 1970s. Collects volumes 1-3.

Bingo Love

by Tee Franklin

Art by Jenn St-Onge and Joy San

Two young women meet at church bingo in 1963 and fall in love. They are forced apart and both marry men. Decades later, they meet again at church bingo and rekindle their romance.



Black History in Its Own Words

by Ronald Wimberly

This is Black history as told through quotes from the Black men and women who shaped and made it.

Black Panther & the Crew: We Are the Streets

by Ta-Nehisi Coates and Yona Harvey

Art by Butch Guice

The death of a Harlem activist kicks off a mystery that will reveal surprising new secrets about the Marvel Universe's past—and set the stage for a huge story in the near future!... Fear, hate and violence loom, but don't worry, The Crew's got this: They are the streets.

Colorblind: A Story of Racism

by Johnathan Harris

Art by Donald Hudson and Fahriza Kamaputra

A fifteen-year-old African American boy relays his experiences with racism and the lessons he learned in this autobiographical story.



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Colored: The Unsung Life of Claudette Colvin

by Émilie Plateau

This biography follows Claudette Colvin, who was arrested at the age of 15 when she refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, a short time before Rosa Parks.

E.X.O.: The Legend of Wale Williams, Part One: A Superhero Graphic Novel

by Roye Okupe

Art by Sunkanmi Akinboye

In 2025 Nigeria, superpowered Wale Williams investigates his father's disappearance.

(H)afrocentric Comics, Volumes 1-4

by Juliana "Jewels" Smith

Art by Ronald Nelson and Mike Hampton

This critical, wry assessment discusses topics such as gentrification, the housing crisis, and systemic racism.

I Am Alfonso Jones

by Tony Medina

Art by Stacey Robinson and John Jennings

Alfonso Jones, a young Black teen, is only trying to buy a suit when an off-duty cop mistakes a clothes hanger for a gun and shoots him on sight.

Icon: A Hero's Welcome

by Dwayne McDuffie

Art by M.D. Bright

This reprint collects adventures 1-8 of Milestone Comics' flagship character Augustus Freeman, a superpowered alien being who crash lands on Earth and is raised by enslaved individuals in pre-Civil War America.

Malcolm X: A Graphic Biography

by Andrew Helfer

Art by Randy DuBurke

Malcom X's life, from his youth as Malcolm Little to the national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam, is charted in this nonfiction biography.

MARCH

by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin Art by Nate Powell

U.S. Congressman John Lewis recounts the history of the Civil Rights Movement and his experiences as a civil rights leader.

Monster: A Graphic Novel

by Walter Dean Myers

Adapted by Guy A. Sims

Art by Dawud Anyabwile

Teen Steve Harmon records his experience of awaiting trial for robbery and murder in this graphic adaptation of the award-winning Walter Dean Myers novel.

Pitch Black

by Anthony Horton and Youme Landowne

Art by Youme Landowne

Writer and artist Horton tells his story of living homeless six stories below city streets in New York City's subway tunnels.

Quincredible, Vol. 1: Quest to Be the Best!

by Rodney Barnes

Art by Selina Espiritu and Kelly Fitzpatrick

Quin is a normal teen just trying to fit in. But Quin discovers a secret superpower: invulnerability. Can Quin use his new super-ability to save his family and his New Orleans community?

Race to Incarcerate: A Graphic Retelling

by Marc Mauer

Adapted by Sabrina Jones

Art by Sabrina Jones

Explore the causes of the exponential growth of the U.S. prison system and how the country has produced the highest rate of incarceration in the world.

A Right to Be Hostile: The Boondocks Treasury

by Aaron McGruder

800 comic strips featuring commentary on American life, culture, and politics from the perspective of two witty and insightful boys and their grandfather are collected in this edition.

Showtime at the Apollo: The Epic Tale of Harlem's Legendary Theater

by Ted Fox

Adapted by James Otis Smith

Art by James Otis Smith

This graphic adaptation of the 1983 prose work depicts the history of the Apollo theater, as well as legendary artists that performed there.

Victor LaValle's Destroyer

by Victor LaValle

Art by Dietrich Smith

A modern spin on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Victor LaValle's *Destroyer* brings forth two monsters—the original and the one created through a mother's grief over her son's murder. Who is the real monster and what makes us human?

Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty

by G. Neri

Art by Randy Duburke

This fictional retelling of the life of 11-year-old Robert "Yummy" Sandifer attempts to explain the circumstances that turned a young boy from candy-loving child to gun-wielding gang member.

Adult Comics & Graphic Novels

APB: Artists against Police Brutality: A Comic Book Anthology

Edited by Bill Campbell, Jason Rodriguez, and John Jennings

Comics, essays, art, and stories about police brutality are collected in this powerful anthology.

Are You at Risk for "Empathy Myopia"?

<http://www.ezracdaniels.com/empathymyopia>

by Ezra Clayton Daniels

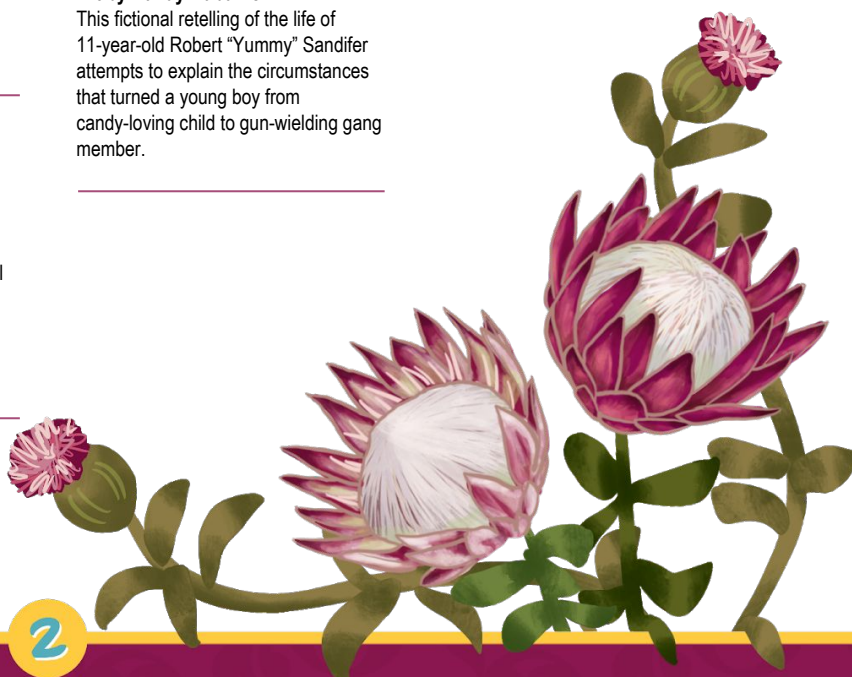
Upgrade Soul author and *BTM FDRS* writer Daniels offers readers a "thought experiment" to consider the narratives we tell about ourselves, the world we live in, and how a critical evaluation of these stories might break us free. Also available in print.

Big Black: Stand at Attica

by Frank "Big Black" Smith and Jared Reinmuth

Art by Ameziane

Big Black chronicles his time as a prisoner in Attica State Prison and the 1971 rebellion against injustices in the prison system.



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Bitter Root

by David F. Walker and Chuck Brown
Art by Sanford Greene

The Sangerye family is racing the clock to save 1920s New York from supernatural forces threatening to infect the community with hate.

Black

by co-creators Kwanza Osajyefo and Tim Smith 3

Art by Jamal Igle

When a young man survives being shot by police, he discovers that he's a part of a small group of Black people who possess superpowers.

Black History for Beginners

by Denise Dennis

Art by Susan Willmarth

This graphic retelling of Black history starting with enslavement and continuing through the Civil Rights Movement to the 2000s.

From Truth With Truth

by Lawrence Lindell

In this "Kinda a Graphic Memoir," Lindell shares insight into his childhood and adolescence and learns to come to terms with depression, PTSD, and bipolar disorder in concert with his identity.

The Harlem Hellfighters

by Max Brooks

Art by Caanan White

This fictionalized story of the all-Black 369th Infantry follows members from their enlistment to their brave fight in World War I France and never shies away from the prejudice they encountered along the way.

Hot Comb

by Ebony Flowers

In this 2020 Eisner award-winning short story collection, ethnographer, teacher, and cartoonist Ebony Flowers recounts rich coming-of-age experiences with hair, community, and culture.

Incognegro: A Graphic Mystery

by Mat Johnson

Art by Warren Pleece

Two fictional Black reporters who are able to "pass" as white are sent to Mississippi to investigate the murder of a white woman. The prequel *Incognegro: Renaissance* is also available from the same publisher.

Josephine Baker

by José-Louis Bocquet

Art by Catel Muller

The life of the extraordinary Josephine Baker is traced from her performances in Paris to her work with the French Resistance during World War II to her activism after the war.

Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation

by Octavia Butler

Adapted by Damian Duffy

Art by John Jennings

Octavia Butler's *Kindred* comes to life in this graphic retelling of an African American woman transported back to her family's antebellum beginnings and the ties that bond them together.

The Life of Frederick Douglass: A Graphic Narrative of a Slave's Journey from Bondage to Freedom

by David F. Walker

Art by Damon Smyth and Marissa Louise

An abolitionist, a runaway slave, an esteemed orator, a prolific writer, a progressive leader—whether you only know of Frederick Douglass by name or are already familiar with his storied life, this graphic novel biography will pull you in and leave you with an intimate appreciation of the man behind the name.

The Massacre of Black Wall Street

<http://bit.ly/TheMassacreBlackWallStreet>
TheAtlantic

by Natalie Chang

Art by Clayton Henry and Marcelo Maio

This scrolling digital comic, commissioned as a companion piece to HBO's *Watchmen* series, tells the true and untold story of the 1921 Massacre of Black Wall Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma, during which as many as 300 Black Tulsans were murdered, thousands were left homeless, and the economic prosperity of Black Wall Street obliterated. This nonfiction comic features extensive source material links and resources.

The Nib

<https://thenib.com>

The Nib is a webcomics publisher primarily focused on political and social commentary. Over the years, a number of creators have published invaluable work on the Black experience in the United States. Some suggested works include:

- "Black Mothers Face Far Worse Health Outcomes. How Do We Fix It?" by Whit Taylor
- "Lighten Up: A Cartoonist Reflects on the Subtle Racism of Shifting Skin Tones in a Marvel Comic" by Ronald Wimberly
- "The Weight of Being Black in America" by Bianca Xunise

Parable of the Sower: A Graphic Novel Adaptation

by Octavia Butler

Adapted by Damian Duffy

Art by John Jennings

The state of the union is up in flames, literally and figuratively, in this harrowing graphic adaptation of Butler's dystopian novel of the same title. It falls on one young woman to re-envision a new world and a new faith.



Three-Fifths a Man: A Graphic History of the African American Experience

by Sid Jacobson

Art by Ernie Colón

From the Atlantic slave trade to the Black Lives Matter movement, Jacobson and Colón explore the history of African Americans and their indelible mark on America's landscape.

Yellow Negroes and Other Imaginary Creatures

by Yvan Alagbé

Set in a French context among Beninese immigrants, the title story in this collection explores life as a member of an overly scrutinized minority.

Your Black Friend

by Ben Passmore

Passmore explores the stresses and harm a Black man experiences in his everyday life through his relationships with non-Black people.

Suggestions for further reading:

Black AF, The Case for Loving, King, Little Leaders, Little Legends, Fights, Drowned City, The Silence of Our Friends, Silver Wire, Strange Fruit Volume II, A Wreath for Emmett Till



BCALA Task Force Committee

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ART & DESIGN BY CRYSTAL CHEN