

# VOYA'S NONFICTION HONOR LIST 2016



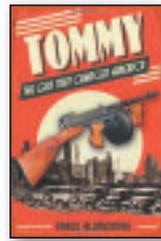
**T**his year's list of high quality, middle grade nonfiction offers something for everyone. With Common Core increasing classroom focus on narrative nonfiction, research, and citing textual evidence, high quality, and high interest nonfiction is in high demand. From youth activists to girl power and saving bees, there are plenty of historical and present-day texts available for middle grade readers, teachers, and libraries.

## ★ NONFICTION HONOR LIST 2016 BOOKS MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA

- Suitable for middle school/junior high readers in grades six through eight
- Address curricular needs or personal reading interests
- Were published in 2015
- Contain some element(s) that raise them above other books on the same topic, such as unique research, creative presentation, inventive use of photography, or filling a niche at the middle level

## NARRATIVE NONFICTION

Blumenthal, Karen. **Tommy: The Gun that Changed America.** Roaring Brook/Macmillan, 2015. 240p. \$19.99. 978-1-62672-084-8. Photos. Biblio. Quotes. Index.



The Thompson submachine gun, better known as Tommy, was created by John Taliaferro Thompson in order to strengthen American soldiers in battle and ultimately save lives. Tommy, however, made it into the hands of

## ★ PUBLISHERS: HOW TO NOMINATE YOUR BOOKS FOR VOYA'S NEXT NONFICTION HONOR LIST

If your 2016 publications for middle/junior high school readers fulfill the criteria in this list's introduction, you may nominate qualified titles. Please note that the minimum grade level interest is grade six.

1. Select your finest publications; you are limited to five titles from each imprint.
2. Send five copies of each nominated book to our committee chair, addressed to: **Dianna Geers, VOYA Nonfiction Honor List Committee, Harding Middle School, 4801 Golf ST NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402.**
3. Be sure that we receive your books as early as possible but no later than **January 31, 2017.**
4. Winning selections will be featured in the next edition of the Nonfiction Honor List, an annotated bibliography in the August 2017 issue of **VOYA.**
5. Refer procedural questions to **VOYA Editor in Chief, RoseMary Honnold** at [rhonnold@voyamagazine.com](mailto:rhonnold@voyamagazine.com).

**NOTE:** Books submitted for the Honor List are not automatically reviewed in **VOYA.** Please send review copies to **Lisa Kurdyla, Review Editor, 16211 Oxford Ct., Bowie, MD 20715.**

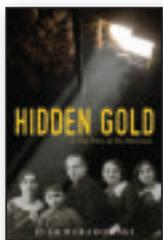
*Reminder:* See our February 2016 issue or our website at <http://www.voyamagazine.com> for how to nominate your fiction titles for our annual Top Shelf Fiction for Middle School Readers list.

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such infamous organized crime leaders as Al Capone which led to dangerous crimes on city streets. **Tommy** manages to be an action-packed story that weaves information about guns and gun control history, war, prohibition and organized crime, and the depression seamlessly into the plot.

“The Thomas submachine gun’s importance went beyond Al Capone and mobsters like him.”—Perry, age 12

Burakowski, Ella. **Hidden Gold: A True Story of the Holocaust.**



Second Story, 2015. 314p. \$12.95. 978-1-927583-74-6. Glossary. Photos. Maps.

**Hidden Gold** begins with the celebration of a new son’s birth into a successful, happy family. The Gold family knew that Jewish families were being captured and were working on an escape plan, but the plan was not complete when the family was separated and spent years hiding in

a barn. Written by the niece of the remaining Gold family son, readers get a story about the ugliness the human race can show, but also the beauty and strength of others.

“I like how it follows the whole family and captures their emotions.”—Jenna, age 12.

“The book begins at a very interesting part. It draws readers into the story.”—Elly, age 11

Doeden, Matt. **Impact: The Story of the September 11 Terrorist Attacks.**



Capstone, 2015. 112p. \$31.32. 978-1-491470-79-4. Photos. Glossary. Timeline. Index. Reading list. Photos.

The story of September 11, 2001, is told through details surrounding five hours of the day’s events. Beginning with the story we all know, Doeden then breaks the day down by sharing stories of different people from different walks

of life. From a man boarding a plane to a woman going to work as an air controller, readers already know what is going to happen, but see this historical tragedy in many new ways. Common Core Standards connections listed.

“It shows what happened to the people who had to go through this and what their day had looked like before the mess started taking place.”—Emily, age 12

Graziani, E. **War in My Town.** Second Story, 2015. 152p. \$11.95. 978-1-927583-71-5. Photos. Maps. Index.



This little known World War II story took place in a comfortable village in northern Tuscany, Eglio. This peaceful village was overtaken by Nazi soldiers and was the last place in which the Nazi regime maintained control. It is told from the point of view of Bruna, who went from a comfortable life to having her brother forced to

become a soldier, living in constant fear and with little food, and eventually losing the family home due to soldier occupation. Even food could not be grown as land mines were placed in the fields. This story sheds light on the rise and decline of Germany and how this impacted non-Jewish citizens.

“It gives more than the big picture.”—Ethan, age 13

“It’s very detailed and has a great story line. I felt like I was there.”—Kaylee, age 12

Hoose, Phillip. **The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Petersen and the Churchill Club.**



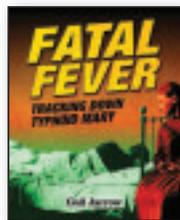
Farrar Straus Giroux/Macmillan, 2015. 208p. \$19.99. 978-0-374-30022-7. Photos. Images. Biblio. Index.

Fifteen-year-old Knud Pedersen was beyond upset and embarrassed that his homeland, Denmark, allowed the Germans to occupy their country during World War II. Not willing to

sit by and allow the Nazis to continue taking over, Knud, his brother, and some friends risked their lives committing acts of sabotage that stopped the momentum of Germany’s progress. Their covert actions and eventual arrest inspired others, which led to Danish resistance. A suspenseful and true story, it offers a unique look at World War II, a narrative from Knud himself, pictures, and historical documents; and reminds youth that they can fight for what’s right.

“Readers can learn a lot about World War II and that kids can take action in local issues.”—Malique, age 12

Jarrow, Gail. **Fatal Fever: Tracking Down Typhoid Mary.**



Creek, 2015. 192p. \$16.95. 978-1-62091-597-4. Glossary. Timeline. Additional Resources. Biblio. Index.

Filled with historical photos and images of primary source documents such as newspapers, fliers, and handwritten papers, **Fatal Fever** goes way beyond telling the infamous story of Typhoid Mary.

Mallon’s (a.k.a. Typhoid Mary) story is the narrative element that weaves together historical context, living conditions during the turn of the century, and information about other Typhoid Fever carriers, and provides a fresh and balanced look at formerly deadly, preventable diseases. Examining how others reacted to the tragic spread of disease lets readers see how the knowledge we now have about sanitary conditions is traceable back to Mary Mallon’s case.

“I know a little bit about Typhoid Mary, but this book makes important words big, bold, and interesting which makes you want to know more.”—Elijah, age 13

Lowinger, Kathy. **Give Me Wings: How a Choir of Slaves Took on the World.**



Annick, 2015. 146p. \$21.95. 978-1-55451-747-3. Pictures. Images. Maps. Further Reading. Timeline. Index.

Jubilee Singers began as a vocal group of emancipated slaves attending Fisk University, the first university in America to allow people of color to attend. Music of the Jubilee Singers still influences other forms of music today. Ella

Sheppard headed the Jubilee Singers after she earned enough money to attend college. **Give Me Wings** is the story of this powerful woman, teacher, advocate, and musician who was born a slave in Tennessee. Despite seemingly insurmountable circumstances, Ella managed to make beauty in her life with music and impacted the lives of her generation and ours. Information about the history of slavery and the system that allowed it is interwoven with Ella’s story showing the impact that determination, education, and advocacy can make.

“The diagrams and pictures in **Give Me Wings** wonderfully add to the descriptive text.”—Audrey, age 13

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. **Rhythm Ride: A Road Trip Through the Motown Sound.**



Roaring Brook/Macmillan, 2015. 176p. \$22.99. 978-1-59643-973-3. Photos. Biblio. Index.

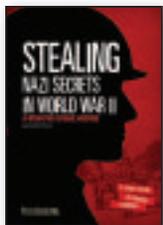
Taking readers on a guided tour of the “Rhythm Ride,” the narrator introduces readers to the important people in Berry Gordy’s life, during his meager beginnings.

He followed his ambitious dreams and love of music to create a new generation. From Detroit to Motown to the civil rights movement, **Rhythm Ride** navigates the history and development of a new culture of young, vibrant performers in the context of a changing United States. Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, the Four Tops, the Temptations,

the Supremes, and the Jackson Five were young and hitting the radios and performing for live audiences. The ride ends with President Obama hosting a Motown celebration at the White House in 2011, and says the journey will continue to go on.

“It tells about black musicians’ achievements and the great things they did with music in the 60s.”—Keanna, age 13

Raum, Elizabeth. **Stealing Nazi Secrets in World War II: An Interactive Espionage Adventure.** Capstone, 2015. 112p. Photos. Images. Map. Timeline. Glossary. Biblio. Index.



In this new twist on the old choose-your-own-adventure books, readers are immersed in factual, historical settings and choose which mission and decision they want to follow. These stories are all based on real people and were carefully

researched. The interactive decision-making will invite readers to absorb historical knowledge while reading exciting text.

“The best part is that you can make your own choices in this book.”—Chloe, age 12

Sheinkin, Steve. **Most Dangerous: Daniel Ellsberg and the Secret History of the Vietnam War.** Roaring Brook/Macmillan, 2015. 384p. \$19.99. 978-159643-952-8. Photos. Images. Source Notes. Index.



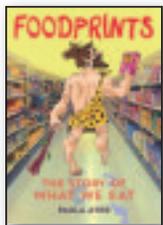
Daniel Ellsberg had access to top secret information as an employee of the U.S. government. Documents that proved the government had lied and withheld information from its citizens bothered him as he knew soldiers

were dying and men were being jailed for not complying with drafts during the Vietnam War. Daniel copied and shared proof of corruption, hoping to help end the war. This put him in danger, sparked controversy, and made him a hated, “dangerous” man, but also a hero. President Nixon, wanting to ruin Ellsberg’s credibility, had men scour for information that could bring him down which led to the Watergate scandal. This story begs for conversation about the first amendment, democracy, and our political system. Ending with coverage of Edward Snowden, the person responsible for WikiLeaks, readers learn that the same issues exist today. Appealing for mature middle grade readers who are interested in history and government.

“A story of the supposed corruption of the United States government and one man’s dangerous attempt to end it.”—Adam, age 13

## REFERENCE

Ayer, Paula. **Foodprints.** Annick, 2015. 208p. \$26.95. 978-1-55451-719-0. \$16.95. 978-55451-718-3. Illus. Photos. Reading List. Index. Charts.



Starting with humans as hunters and gatherers, the domestication of plants, the invention of farm machines, and all the way through to today as we eat fast food and have school lunches, **Foodprints** shares the history of our food and other food-related information. Other topics

include unique foods from other cultures, food additives, the environment, advertising strategies, eating healthy, and making informed, yet realistic choices in what we eat. Information is provided about the food we consume and how to develop strategies to become analytical consumers of information.

“Why didn’t I know some of this already?”—Sima, age 13

DK. **Careers.** DK Publishing/Penguin Random House, 2015. 320p. \$19.99. 978-1-4654-2973-5. Illustrations. Glossary. Index.

**Careers** offers middle grade through high school readers

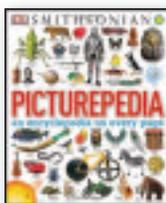


careers at a glance in an easy-to-understand format. Before getting to the careers, information about understanding oneself, interests, motivation, and circumstances is explained to help readers guide themselves as they consider different paths. Organized into career clusters, each career is given a two-page infographic layout. Included in the infographics are salary ranges, future outlook, skills needed, and pathways within the featured career. Pages also include references to related careers and a glance at what such a career may look like on a daily basis.

“Shows kids who might not know who they want to be who they can be.”—Cody, age 13

“It tells me about jobs that I might want in the future and gives details about them.”—Lauren, age 12

\_\_\_\_\_. **Picturepedia.** DK Publishing/Penguin Random House, 2015. 360p. 978-1-4654-3828-7. Photos. Images. Maps. Index.



In collaboration with the Smithsonian, DK has managed to create a visually appealing wealth of information. Each two-page spread is a one-stop encyclopedia article using text and high quality, detailed images, timelines, and

directions, depending on the topic. Information on an almost limitless amount of topics is presented in a playful way to lure readers in for more knowledge. Some may be interested in a few of the topics while others may devour the entire book. This is an easy book to return to and find information you may have overlooked on previous visits.

“It has a lot of different things going on that catch your eye.”—Kayla, age 12

\_\_\_\_\_. **Space! The Universe as You’ve Never Seen It.** DK Children, 2015. \$24.99. 208p. 978-1-4654-3806-5. Photos. Images. Maps. Index. Glossary.



DK’s **Space!** is definitely for the space enthusiast—or it may easily create new ones. Images that are detailed, meticulously labeled, contain cut-out views—along with beautiful photographs and sidebars—allow a wealth of information to be covered. Subjects are shown from the microscopic level to a whole, where it fits in the universe, and the tools used to explore or study the topic. Constellations, space exploration, galaxies, and the solar system are only a few of the larger categories covered down to the finest of details.

“This book has good ways of showing how things work through diagrams and there is not too much on one page.”—Addy, Age 13

“Lots of charts, graphs, tables, and pictures make it very appealing to the eye.”—Kourtney, age 12

\_\_\_\_\_. **Super Shark Encyclopedia and Other Creatures of the Deep.** DK Publishing/Penguin Random House, 2015. 208p. \$24.99. 978-1-4654-3584-2. Photos. Images. Glossary. Index.



Featuring information on nearly one hundred sea creatures, this book has great appeal for research and pleasure reading. Pictures and details of anatomy, x-ray vision, and facts

create enthusiasm for even reluctant readers. This book could provide enjoyment and information for middle grade readers up through adults—from those who just want to look at really cool pictures to those who want to use the information for research purposes.

“It is interesting—with stats, facts, and information about sea creatures.”—Vishnu, age 11

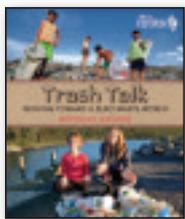
Fitts, Ruth. **Australia to Zimbabwe: A Rhyming Romp around the World to 24 Countries.** Love the World, 2015. 336p. \$24.95. 978-0-9962495-7-7. Index. Maps. Photos. Illus.



Filled with colorful pictures, sidebars, historical background, as well as current pop culture, upbeat and creative poetry, activities, recipes, and games, this book offers intriguing and varied information on the twenty-four countries it features. Recommended resources are provided on the country's page rather than as a compiled list at the end. This book could be read cover to cover or visited for specific information. A great resource for students, teachers, and libraries.

"I love all of the photos!"—Greg, age 11

Mulder, Michelle. **Trash Talk: Moving Toward a Zero-Waste World.** Orca, 2015. 48p. \$19.95. 978-1-4598-0692-4. Photos. Images. Additional Resources. Index.



This book covers the history of trash—the smells, diseases, and rodents that came from trash—and the growing issue of where to put all of it. Using historical documents, and black-and-white as well as color photos,

**Trash Talk** does exactly that: talks about trash. It features kids involved in studies, movements, and projects such as recycling, repurposing, composting, dumpster diving, and lowering the amount of waste left behind in this world. Colorful headings, sidebar facts, and images from around the world make this a good clean heap of information.

"There were things other kids did to help the environment."—Matt, age 11

Ross, Michael Elsohn. **She Takes a Stand: 16 Fearless Activists Who Have Changed the World (Women of Action).** Chicago Review, 2015. 208p. \$19.95. 978-1-61373-026-3. Photos. Additional Resources. Biblio. Index.

Part of the *Women in Action* series, **She Takes a Stand** profiles females from the past through the present who chose to be bold and fight for issues that impacted many. Whether standing



up for rights of women, for people being taken advantage of by wealthy elites, or for the right to be safe from violence, these females made issues their priority and made changes around the world to better life for others. From Mother Jones and Jane Addams to Malala Yousafzai, this book is a great resource for research as well as inspiration.

"It shows ways or examples that you can change the world and it teaches girls to have confidence."—CJ, age 12

Salas, Laura Purdie. **Catch Your Breath: Writing Poignant Poetry.** Capstone, 2015. 64p. \$33.99. 978-1-4914-5990-4. Images. Glossary. Further readings. Index.



A book filled with motivation for reluctant writers or those wanting inspiration, **Catch Your Breath** helps budding writers find ways to take others' breaths away with great writing. Positive wording, examples, tips, and short bios on poets using various poetry forms are covered. This book could be used by an individual, a writing group, or for classroom lessons. Whimsical images add to the approachability of this informational text.

"It shows you how to think like a poet."—Maleeyah, age 12

Wilcox, Merrie-Ellen. **What's the Buzz? Keeping Bees in Flight.** Orca Footprints, 2015. 48p. \$19.95. 978-1-4598-0960-4. Photo. Additional Resources. Glossary. Index.



Detailed, high-resolution photos, captions, and sidebars transport readers into the world of bees. Through pages about bee anatomy, their homes, and how they navigate the world, there is much

to be learned about these insects. The importance that bees play in feeding our world is explained, not just with honey but through pollination of clover that feeds animals that provide us milk and meat, as well as plants that provide the oxygen we breathe. Bees are an integral part of sustaining life on the planet. As there is currently an increased awareness of the decline in bees, this book is buzzing with information about what they do as well as how to help keep the bee population from declining further and how kids can be involved.

"It's important that people know about this stuff."—Jacob, age 12 ■

## ★ MEET THE COMMITTEE

Dianna Geers, a twenty-four-year middle school teaching veteran, currently a middle school teacher librarian in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is the committee chair for the 2016 VOYA Nonfiction Honor List. Geers holds two master's degrees from the University of Iowa, is an adjunct professor in their School of Library and Information Science, and is National Board Certified in Library Media/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood. She has been reviewing books for VOYA for five years.

Jessica Camacho, Iowa, holds a master's degree in science education from Montana State and has been teaching for eight years. Currently, she teaches "Option," which is an eighth grade middle school project-based program. Camacho worked with her students to review the books. The students come from broad backgrounds, including twenty-five English language learners.

Donna Charipar of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has been teaching and coaching at the middle school level for twenty-four years in various capacities. She holds a master's of education degree from the University of Iowa. After teaching math for twenty-one years, she began teaching literacy in which her students challenged themselves and her to read a book a week.

Stephanie Cornell of Marion, Iowa, holds a library and information science master's degree from the University of North Texas. Her sixteen years as an educator include serving as a young persons' library apprentice for the Las Vegas Clark County Library District, a co-chair for the Goldfinch Award in Iowa, and a Spanish teacher and librarian in both states. She is currently a middle school teacher librarian.

Janette Schroeder, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has a love for learning and teaching. She believes that effective teaching has the power to make significant changes in our world. She's worked as a teacher and as an instructional coach at both elementary and middle school levels over the last twenty-six years. She has a master's degree in education with an emphasis in reading and is National Board Certified as a middle childhood generalist.

Kirsten Swain of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Northern Iowa. She is currently working on her master's degree in TESOL. She spent a year teaching in a middle school setting and is currently working as a third grade teacher, and is the parent of a middle school child.