

The

50

Best

*Young Adult Novels
of All Time* –So Far

(in chronological order)

Catcher in the Rye, by J.D. Salinger, 1951

This is the classic coming-of-age novel about Holden Caulfield's lost weekend in New York City that established the edgy style and voice of young adult literature sixteen years before the genre was invented.

The Outsiders, by S.E. Hinton, 1967

Sixteen-year-old Susie Hinton's novel about gang war between the Socs and the Greasers is just as relevant today as when it burst on the literary scene to become the first "young adult" novel and to establish a style that came to be called "the new realism."

The Contender, by Robert Lipsyte, 1967

With the gangs after him, 17-year-old high school dropout Alfred Brooks climbs the stairs to the boxing club where champions have worked out and begins to dream of becoming a contender.

The Chosen, by Chaim Potok, 1967

The son of a Hassidic rebel and the son of an intellectual Zionist form a deep, though unlikely, friendship and share adolescence, family conflict and a crisis of faith in the 1940s.

The Pigman, by Paul Zindel, 1968

Two high school sophomores tell of their friendship with a lonely old man which turns hurtful, then tragic.

Go Ask Alice, by Beatrice Sparks, 1971

The purportedly anonymous diary of a girl destroyed by drugs is still relevant after all these years.

Deathwatch, by Robb White, 1972

Needing money for school, a college boy accepts a job as guide on a desert hunting trip and nearly loses his life as he becomes prey for a madman with a .358 Magnum.

The Chocolate War, by Robert Cormier, 1974

High school freshman Jerry Renault discovers the devastating consequences of refusing to join in the school's annual fundraising drive and angering the school bullies.

Forever, by Judy Blume, 1975

This candid account by 18-year-old Kathy explores the intimate details of a first sexual relationship.

Killing Mr. Griffin, by Lois Duncan, 1976

A group of high school students kidnaps a strict teacher to get even with him, but they don't know about his weak heart.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, by Mildred Taylor, 1976

An African-American family stands strong against the harsh racial climate of 1930s Mississippi. (Newbery Award)

I Am the Cheese, by Robert Cormier, 1977

Where is Adam going on his urgent winter bike ride to nowhere? Who is Brint the Interrogator? And why does Amy never answer the phone?

The Last Mission, by Harry Mazer, 1979

At the age of 15, Jack enlists in the Air Force to get back at Hitler, but he is not prepared for the reality of being a gunner on bombing raids.

Homecoming, by Cynthia Voigt, 1981

After their unstable mother abandons them in the middle of a trip, 13-year-old Dicey leads her brothers and sister on a long walk to find a home with their feisty grandmother.

Annie on My Mind, by Nancy Garden, 1982

Liza and Annie meet at New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art. They fall in love and then find that a public declaration is too threatening to their friends and relatives.

Running Loose, by Chris Crutcher, 1983

Louie Banks takes a stand against his coach and playing dirty football; he falls in love, and loses his girlfriend in a fatal accident—all in his senior year of high school.

Over



***The Moves Make the Man*, by Bruce Brooks, 1984**

Jerome, the only black kid in school, practices his basketball moves alone until Bix enters the scene to teach him the fine points of the game and trouble ensues.

***Remembering the Good Times*, by Richard Peck, 1985**

Tough, beautiful Kate, stalwart Buck, and rich, brilliant Trav form a friendly trio of mutual support until Trav takes his own life.

***The Goats*, by Brock Cole, 1987**

Stripped naked and left on a deserted island by fellow campers as a joke, Howie and Laura develop self-respect as they figure out how to survive humiliation, natural dangers and each other.

***Hatchet*, by Gary Paulsen, 1987**

When the small plane taking him to his divorced father crashes, Brian, the only survivor, is stranded in the Canadian wilderness and must work out his own survival.

***Fallen Angels*, by Walter Dean Myers, 1988**

Seventeen-year-old Richie Perry's stint in Vietnam brings home to him the agony and futility of war as he learns to kill and watches his comrades die.

***Weetzie Bat*, by Francesca Lia Block, 1989**

Lanky lizards! Punk teens Weetzie and Dirk search for love in a modern fairy tale that is funny, moving, and unlike any book you've read before.

***Maniac Magee*, by Jerry Spinelli, 1990**

Young Jeffrey Magee comes out of nowhere to become a legend as he brings the warring racial factions of the town of Two Mills together. (Newbery Award)

***Calling Home*, by Michael Cadnum, 1991**

"Imitating the dead is easy," thinks Peter as he telephones the parents of the friend he has accidentally killed.

***Downriver*, by Will Hobbs, 1991**

Fifteen-year-old Jesse and other rebellious teenage members of a wilderness survival team abandon their adult leader, steal his van and rafts, and run the dangerous white waters of the Grand Canyon.

***Make Lemonade*, Virginia Wolff, 1993**

A gutsy and exquisitely touching verse novel in which slovenly Jolly, 17, hires sensible LaVaughn, 14, to help her with her two little kids by different fathers.

***Catherine Called Birdy*, by Karen Cushman, 1994**

This hilarious journal of a young girl recreates the Middle Ages, fleas and all.

***When She Hollers*, by Cynthia Voigt, 1994**

One morning Tish challenges her molesting stepfather with a knife and must face the dread of what he will do to retaliate that night.

***Like Sisters on the Home Front*, by Rita Williams-Garcia, 1995**

When 14-year-old Gayle gets pregnant for the second time, her exasperated mother sends her 'down south' to Uncle Luther's family to get straightened out.

***Tomorrow When the War Began*, by John Marsden, 1995**

When a band of teenage friends return from a wilderness camping trip to find their town, and their country, in the hands of invaders, they begin their own guerrilla war.

***The Watsons Go to Birmingham, 1963*, by Christopher Paul Curtis, 1995**

This novel recounts tragicomic trip of a family of four to visit relatives in Alabama, just in time for a terrible historical event. (Newbery Award)

***Parrot in the Oven, Mi Vida*, by Victor Martinez, 1996**

Set in the gritty projects of a central California town, this novel traces the bittersweet summer when Manny achieves his ambition of being initiated into a gang. (National Book Award)

***Rats Saw God*, by Rob Thomas, 1996**

In a paper he grudgingly agrees to write in order to be allowed to graduate, senior Steve York reflects poignantly and often hilariously on his relationship with his famous astronaut father and the events in his life which have made him a "troubled teen."

***Buried Onions*, by Gary Soto, 1997**

Eddie, a homeboy in Fresno, is trying to make a life for himself in a violent world.

***Out of the Dust*, by Karen Hesse, 1997**

The moving story in blank verse of a young girl's hard times during the dust bowl times of the thirties. (Newbery Award)

***Tangerine*, by Edward Bloor, 1997**

Paul's thick glasses are no impediment (in his mind) to playing on Tangerine Middle School's soccer team, but does he really believe the story his parents and older brother tell him about ruining his eyes by staring at an eclipse of the sun?

***When She Was Good*, by Norma Fox Mazer, 1997**

Em Thurkill knows that her nightmare big sister Pamela is dead, but why does she still hear Pamela's voice in her head?

Tenderness, by Robert Cormier, 1997

Runaway Lori has a fixation on 18-year-old Eric, even though she knows he is a serial murderer and will probably kill again.

Bat 6, by Virginia Wolff, 1998

The 20 girls of the rival sixth grade softball teams of Barlow Road and Bear Creek Ridge recall what happened at the big game in 1949, when Aki had just come back from the internment camp and Shazam's father had been killed at Pearl Harbor.

Holes, by Louis Sachar, 1998

There is no lake at Camp Green Lake, but why does the evil-tempered woman who is the warden make Stanley Yelnats and his fellow prisoners dig deep holes every day? (National Book Award and Newbery Award)

Rules of the Road, by Joan Bauer, 1998

Jenna Boller, a tall, gawky girl who's a whiz at selling shoes, and gruff Mrs. Madeleine Gladstone, "the supremely aged president of Gladstone's Shoes," learn mutual respect and affection on a long sales trip, in a story full of wisdom, grace and laughs.

Soldier's Heart, by Gary Paulsen, 1998

In spare, almost biblical prose, Gary Paulsen writes of the horrors of combat in a Civil War novella based on the life of a real boy, Charley Goddard, who lies his way into the Union Army at the age of 15.

Whirligig, by Paul Fleischman, 1998

When 16-year-old Brent causes the death of a girl, his sentence is to go to the four corners of the country to build whirligigs in her image and to influence others lives in ways he never expects.

Bud, Not Buddy, by Christopher Paul Curtis, 1999

It's 1936 and Bud is on the lam from a foster home, riding the rails to find the father he's never met, Herman E. Calloway, and his famous band, the Dusky Devastators of the Depression. (Newbery Award)

Monster, by Walter Dean Myers, 1999

Is Steve Harmon guilty of being the lookout in a botched robbery during which a storeowner is killed? As he awaits the results of his trial, Steve writes the story as if it were a screenplay for a movie. (Printz Award)

Speak, by Laurie Halse Anderson, 1999

Unable to tell anyone why she busted a party by calling the cops, Melinda becomes becomes a silent observer of the lies and hypocrisies at her high school while she lives in fear of the boy who raped her.

Dreamland, by Sarah Dessen, 2000

With strange, sleepy Rogerson as a boyfriend Caitlin felt she could be anybody, not just the second-rate shadow of her sister—until he began to hit her.

A Year Down Yonder, by Richard Peck, 2000


In this Newbery-winning sequel to "A Long Way from Chicago," Mary Alice moves in with the terrifying and lovable Grandma Dowdel for more astonishing adventures.

Gold Dust, by Chris Lynch, 2000

Through the haze of his obsession with baseball, Richard Riley Moncreif only dimly hears what his best friend in eighth grade, Napoleon Charlie Ellis, is trying to tell him about blackness.

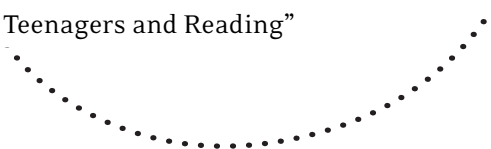
The Beet Fields: Memories of a Sixteenth Summer, by Gary Paulsen, 2000

Fleeing his drunken mother's sexual advances, a boy runs away for the summer to work in the beet fields of North Dakota, and then travels with a sleazy carnival.



"The achievement of great [young adult] literature is that it extends and applies the spare language, the focused story, the sharply etched conflicts of younger books to the multilayered, vexing, often ambiguous situations of the dawning adult world."

—Marc Aronson, "Exploding the Myths: The Truth about Teenagers and Reading"



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