KUCLC 2019 Grades 5 - up. THE LIST for 2019

Positive, adventurous, and charming, this book is about a foundling who wants to meet her hero, a world class bicycle racer. She does, fleeing from ominous women in black, making friends with ghosts, horses and people along the way. Also, there is a Mostly Silent Monastery! MG, orphans, introverts, friendship, cycling, adventure,

Aru lies to make herself feel better when she has to do without the vacations and things her classmates have. But the story that a clay lantern in the Hindi museum is cursed? That story is true. Her classmates dare her to light the lantern and ALL HECK BREAKS LOOSE. MG, Hindi mythology, diversity, Indian cultures, adventure, fantasy, Rick Riordan Presents

Toño left the *milpita* in Mexico four years ago. Manuel decides to follow his older brother on the cargo trains that run along the border with the US. The trip takes three years of deprivation, beatings, robberies, interspersed with kindness and help. LA is exciting but Manuel fears deportation and realizes that his life is in the parched fields of his home. MG, violence, immigration, Latinx, poverty, border issues

Izzy - Isabella - spends her life between her black father and his girlfriend in a wealthy neighborhood and her white mother and HER boy friend in a lower middle class neighborhood. Thank goodness for soon-to-be stepbrother Darren who is old enough to drive her around. Unfortunately, being black, male and a driver can be dangerous today. MG, diversity, #BlackLivesMatter, divorce, family

A group of boys, led by the bully Juryk, and Patryk, vie to find the finest button and become King of them all. First, Russian soldiers march into the village. Then the Germans come. The boys steal buttons from uniforms on wash lines, and even from dead soldiers. As Juryk’s behavior turns more cruel, reasonable Patryk slides into the most questionable actions. MG, competition, social order, war, bullying, historical fiction WWI
This is the second book about Nandu and his elephant, Hira Prisad. They live in the Royal breeding center, a place where orphaned and damaged animals can find refuge. But with bandits, poachers and rogue elephants roaming the jungle, Nandu and his adopted father worry about the safety of their animals. **MG, elephants, animals, animal rights, environment, Nepal**

Jessa left her younger sister Oona to travel to the planet Toki in the first 5 Worlds graphic novel. Oona lit the first of the 5 beacons in an attempt to save her planet. Meanwhile, Jessa discovers that the evil that threatens all 5 planets has taken over the Cobalt Prince. **MG, graphic novel, sci-fi, fantasy, siblings, powers, adventure**

Ellie just found out that the mother she never met just died. Ellie’s mother was in an ‘80s band that still brings in fans and the substitute band leader knew her way back when. **MG, YA(?), grief, 1980s, marching band, musicians, single parents, friends**

Dinosaurs work for the people of New York City. When the Draft Riots break out some orphans are kidnapped by Magistrate Riker - to be sold to slavers. Magdalys flees to Brooklyn where she spies for the Vigilance Committee to save their friends. **MG, historical fiction, fantasy, science fiction, diversity, adventure, Black people**

A boy journals life with his little sister, from her arrival when he is eight years old, through to his departure for college. A-DOR-A-BLE!!! As one Goodreads reviewer said, “I’m not crying. You’re crying.” Heavily illustrated, touching and funny! **MG, Elementary, siblings, family, friendships,**

Min leaves her dust strewn, forgotten planet when she hears a rumor that her brother, Jun, has deserted the Space Forces to search for the Dragon Pearl. She uses her forbidden Fox magic to infiltrate her brother’s old unit. Taking risks to clear her brother’s name almost ends this adventure for Min and her new Space Force friends. **MG, fantasy, sci-fi, magic, Korean mythology, Rick Riordan Presents**
Oliver Cromwell Pitts is an indentured servant, sold to a slovenly, cruel tobacco grower. He and the man’s black slave form a bond and manage to escape. The slave goes deeper into the swamp. Oliver goes to the city where he is caught again and brought before the magistrate…. MG, historical fiction, slavery, cruelty, friendship, civil rights, diversity

In 1946, after his mother’s death, Langston and his father move to Chicago. Langston is on his own in the city and he finds refuge in the library, run by a black librarian who introduces Langston to his namesake. MG, historical fiction, Black people, diversity, racism, literature, poetry

In this fictionalized memoir, Mia works the front desk of the motel she lives in, as her parents hide other immigrants in the motel. She uses her writing skills to make life better for everyone. MG, social justice, immigration, memoir, writing, Asian

Nominated for the Kirkus Prize for Young Readers. Nominated for the NAACP Image Award for Youth/Teens 2019. Six middle graders - all from a small specialized class - are given the chance to meet once a week and talk together with NO ADULT IN THE ROOM. Each of them has a burden they carry, from missing parents, ICE, #BlackLivesMatter, poverty and learning differences. Together they make a safe place to share their worries. MG, activism, compassion, friendship, support, diversity

Frances prefers crows to people, outside to inside, her ratty old hat and her rain boots to leggings and hair ribbons. Then, her older sister starts to hate her. A smarter kid, James, comes to her class. Her best friend, the bus driver, gets very sick. A new friend from her class might help her manage. MG, coming of age, growing up, grief, acceptance, family, kindness, forgiveness

The House with Chicken Legs by Sophie Anderson. Usborne Publications, 2018. 1474940668 (ISBN13: 9781474940665) Marinka wants a friend of her own age, impossible when her house must go where her grandmother is needed. She does not see the value in the work that Baba Yaga does, helping the newly dead move on to the next plane. Her rebellion almost destroys her home. MG, responsibility, self-determination, acceptance, fantasy, Russian culture.
When a tornado forces everyone into the middle school gym, Ivy loses her sketchbook, filled with drawings of girls holding hands. Just girls. Then someone leaves a drawing from that book in her locker and a message urging her to find someone she can talk to. In the end, Ivy finds that her family and friends support who she is. MG, diversity, sexual identity, friendship, literature, LGBTQ

Vanessa is so proud when Vanessa Williams, a black woman, wins Miss America. Although Vanessa is shy, and her family is beset with problems, her idol gives her the courage to try out for her eighth grade teacher’s pageant. MG, historical fiction, diversity, Black issues, body image, family problems, self-confidence

Louisiana’s grandmother drags her away from her friends and her home in the middle of the night. After Granny has a medical emergency, she disappears, leaving Louisiana miles away from her friends in the care of strangers. MG, family, abduction, foster care, abandonment, compassion

Lu is going to be a big brother. Coach wants Lu to try jumping the hurdles. Lu fights for co-captain of his team and in the meantime, he learns some earth shaking stuff about his Dad. MG, sports, family, parent problems, acceptance, forgiveness, perseverance, change, diversity, Black people,

A letter from Her Majesty, the Queen of England, insists that this book is truly true. Mac is asked to help the Queen find the crown jewels. Barnett manages to include some pre-USSR break-up history, and corgis. The book is fun. MG, elementary, mystery, humor, graphics, historical fiction(?)

Assigned to group therapy for going off script, Riley meets a collection of Manic Pixie Dream Girls (MPDG) with similar issues and Zelda (MPDG, Geek subtype). When the entire Manic Pixie Dream trope is put in danger, Riley, Zelda, even his Main Character crush, all have to prove that Manic Pixie Dream teens are an important part of teen literature. YA, literature, writing, self-determination, fantasy,
Kids pay Marcus Vega to walk them to and from school. He’s big! When a fight gets him suspended, his mom takes the family to Puerto Rico for a week. Marcus meets members of his father’s family and discovers the beauty of the island. But his father is elusive until the very end. MG, Latinx, Puerto Rico, family, father/son, responsibility, coming of age

Merci resists being a Sunshine Buddy to the new boy, Michael. She has to give up a chance to play soccer at her private school to help watch her twin cousins. She locks horns with class queen, Edna Santos. And Lolo, her grandfather is acting strangely. MG, Latinx, middle school, friends, family, aging, dementia, diversity, Newbery Award Winner

Celi wants to dance to the drumming of her best friend, Magda. She doesn’t want to think about the changes in her body, or boys - except for Iván - or the Moon Ceremony her mother planned for her. When Iván treats Magda badly, Celi has to decide who she wants as her friend.
MG, body awareness, puberty, menstruation, sexual identity, diversity, Latinx,

Carrying her father's French horn, Gusta arrives at the orphanage run by her grandmother in a small town in Maine. Her German sounding name makes her a target at school since WWII has just ended. Gusta must stand up for herself and the orphans.
MG, activism, WWII, historical fiction, labor unions, prejudice, patriotism

Xiomara deals unwanted attention to her curves, her anger, her frustrations by writing the poems she can never share. When her teacher starts a weekly poetry slam, Xiomara knows she can’t go but also knows that her words must be spoken - out loud. YA, poetry, gender bias, sexual awakening, mother/daughter, Latinx, body image, feminism, bravery, Printz Award

When his father brings a baby mini donkey home, a boy decides to keep it alive and raise it as a pet. His success just sets off a series of problems. But, it also nets the boy a friend. MG, elementary, animals, kindness, farms, families, friendship
When Bobby Gene and Caleb try to trade their baby sister for a bag of contraband fireworks, their summer takes a nose dive. Styx Malone, older and so cool, comes to the rescue. He trades those fireworks all the way until they get the moped, shiny and red, on sale in the hardware store. Then, Styx shows himself less than the Franklin boys think he is. MG, diversity, social welfare system, foster care, Black people, friendship, courage, growing up.

When Sunny stops running the mile, Coach is baffled but looks for a solution. Sunny’s Dad is stunned. The mile is his link to Sunny’s mother, his dead wife. Reynolds lets these characters find a solution. MG, grief, acceptance, change, rebellion, sports, diversity, Black people

When Nan calls for help while trapped in a chimney, the warm ball of clay that the Sweep left behind rescues her. That ball turns into Charlie, who will do anything to keep her safe. Winner of the Sydney Taylor Book Award for Older Readers 20188. MG, YA, golems, chimney sweeps, Victorian era, activism, social order, social justice, magic realism, historical fiction

A close brush with a pick up truck lands Kiana in the wrong classroom, along with a collection of misfits and bad actors. 58 year old Mr. Kermit just needs to get to May and retire. Mr. Kermit never expected to care about teaching again but this class and their shenanigans lead to a stellar year and a decades long showdown. MG, humor, learning differences, activism, educational system, determination, compassion, fairness

When Rupert spends Christmas with the very rich Rivers family, he gets to eat whatever he wants and wins piles of prizes in the family’s crazy games. He loses every last thing in the final game. Through the next few months, members of the Rivers family, sweep Rupert up for adventures in hopes of “making it up” to him. MG, magic realism, poverty, adventure, humor
T. Lily Decker needs to stay away from all stress, including alcohol, drugs, sex and boyfriends. Someday, she will find out if she inherited her mother’s schizophrenia. An extra credit assignment to cover the birth of a baby elephant for the local paper pushes Lily off her straight and narrow path. The mother elephant charges her baby and Lily steps between them. Talk about stress. **YA, mental illness, activism, maternal instincts**

Charlotte and Ben know each other as the top two contenders in an online Scrabble game. When Ben gets awful family news, he has no one to share it with so he calls Charlotte. Meanwhile, Charlotte’s father is dreadfully sick and her best friend has new interests. Their texts help them navigate stressful times as they find new ways to survive growing up. **MG, family, illness, parent problems, friendship, bullying, perseverance, acceptance, coming of age**

NON-FICTION

These Field Guides cram a lot of information into an open format with lists and line drawings. The writing style is informal and a bit cheeky. By focussing on things that beavers can do best - their superpowers, - the author and illustrator tap into superhero mania! **MG, Elementary, science, non-fiction, animals**

This graphic biography explains the political tensions of the pre WWII era, Bonhoeffer's growth into a resistance leader, Bonhoeffer's growth as a theologian, his evolving views of what it meant to be a Christian, his part in the plot to kill Hitler, his imprisonment and eventual execution. **YA, MG, non-fiction, biography, WWII, Nazism, Hitler, resistance, activism, espionage**

In the summer of 1919, a group of black boys float their raft too close to the white beach. A white man kills one of the boys with a rock. In the three weeks that follow, riots break out all over the packing district of Chicago. This book tells the story of the tensions that make that riot inevitable. The Great Migration and big business’s efforts to pit ethnic groups and Black and White workers against each other lead up to a deadly riot. **MG, YA, history, non-fiction, race relations, Black issues, Union history,**
Winner of the Sibert Award, this is a beautiful book about a determined and talented woman, who observed all the stages of insect development and recorded them in luminous paintings. NF, art, history, biography, women’s accomplishments, science.

Hey, Kiddo: How I Lost my Mother, Found my Father, and Dealt with Family Addiction. by Jarrett J. Krosoczka. Graphic, Scholastic, 2018. 9780545902472
Krosoczka details his life, raised by his grandparents because his mother is a drug addict and his father is unknown. Don’t expect flying spatulas or hair nets. This is truth, pain, love, anger, forgiveness, acceptance. YA, memoir, addiction, prison, grandparents, family, National Book Award Finalist

Herrera, the US Poet Laureate from 2015 - 2017, writes a jazzy, manic intro to stream of consciousness poetry. MG, YA, poetry, poetry slams, spoken word, non-fiction

Marley Dias spearheaded the #1000BlackGirlBooks campaign that focussed attention on the need for diversity in children’s literature. This is her story AND a guide to take action! The guide for “getting it done” is clearly written and useful in many ways. MG, YA, non-fiction, memoir, self-help, activism, #1000BlackGirl Books, volunteerism

On October 30th, 1938 The Mercury Theater broadcast a radio play based on H.G. Wells’ War of the World. Because people tuned in late, many listeners believed they were hearing a news broadcast. Police departments were flooded with calls. People ran from their homes. Listeners’ responses, calls for censorship. media frenzy and kudos to the actors all followed. MG, YA, radio, H.G. Wells, Orson Welles, propaganda, media,

This graphic novel explains the regime of Assad in Syria, the oppression of his government and the lengths to which Syrian people must go to find a safe place to live. It’s an appalling story, not for the faint of heart. YA, MG, history, non-fiction, immigration, refugees,
This is a picture book treatment of the Cherokee language and Syllabulary, with pronunciations and spellings of main concept words. MG, elementary, language, Native American culture

Poems, stories, memories, paintings, drawings, essays done by some of the top writers and artists for young people address the issues of racism, injustice, social inequity in our current social climate. Sobering, at the same time uplifting, this book should be part of every social studies class. Serve it in pieces. MG, non-fiction, racism, activism, social justice, diversity

A beautiful picture book biography of Carlos Santana. The concepts and writing level would be challenging for young readers. This is a lovely book to offer to your classes. MG, elementary, biography, diversity, music, Latinx

KU 2019 addendum

Here are a few more titles to consider, in no particular order.

Sal & Gabi Break the Universe by Carlos Hernandez. Disney Hyperion, 2019. 9781368022828 1368022820. Sal learns to meditate to deal with the loss of his mother. But he takes his practice a little too far, meditating things into existence. MG, grief, meditation, sci-fi, Rick Riordan presents, mythology, Cuban culture

The Waning Age by S. E. Grove. Viking, 2019. 9780451479853. Emotions disappear by the time a person is a teenager. But Natalia still loves her little brother fiercely. When he is kidnapped by a Big Brother-type organization, Natalia does everything to save him. YA, dystopian, future, sci-fi, kidnapping, emotions, love

Fear of Missing Out by Kate McGovern. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2019. 9780374305475 0374305471. When her brain cancer returns, Astrid goes on a road trip to find out if cryopreservation could give her a chance to experience a full life. YA, fatal illness, cancer, cryopreservation, road trips

The marks carved on Mayka’s stone body are fading. Mayka tries to find a human stone carver to sharpen those marks and the marks on her friends. But can human stone carvers be trusted? MG, fantasy, trust, future, self-realization, adventure
**We’re Not From Here by Geoff Rodkey.** Crown Book for Young Readers, 2019. 9781524773050.
After 20 years of suspended life support travel, human refugees arrive at the only planet that will support them. The sentient races that welcomed them 20 years before no longer want them. Only one family is allowed to live on the planet in an attempt to change the minds of the ruling party. **MG, sci-fi, immigration, prejudice, assimilation, humor, emotions**

**The Line Tender by Kate Allen.** Penguin Young Readers Group, 2019. 9780735231603
Lucy’s mother died while researching the sharks she loved so much. Five years later, a Great White shows up off the coast of Cape Cod. Lucy throws herself into solving the mystery of why the Great White is there, pulling together a trio of mismatched friends to help her. **MG, grief, ecology, sharks, ocean**

**Attendees Best Books READ in 2018/19**
This year I asked attendees to note the best book they read in the past year with only one restriction. The books could be from any year but they had to be books for young people. (Silly me! ALL books are for young readers.) Here are their choices.

Gratz follows a Jewish boy from the 1930s, a Cuban girl from the 1990s, and a Syrian boy from 2015 as they and their families flee violence and deprivation. **MG, YA, historical fiction, immigration, refugees, war**
This book was mentioned twice!

Lida is forced to make bombs for the Nazis after she is sent to the camps. But can she sabotage those bombs? **MG, historical fiction, suspense, concentration camps**

A Prince, who secretly wears dresses, trusts this all-important secret to the dressmaker, his best friend. Her dilemma is that she wants her creations to be seen and admired. What is a designer to do? This book received a lot of attention and several awards. **YA, MG, gender identity, cross dressing, fashion, secrets, friendship, LGBTQIA, graphic novel**

**Sweep: The Story of a Girl and her Monster by Jonathan Auxier.** This book made my list so check above for details. **AWESOME!**

**Poisoned Apple by Katherine McIntyre.** Decadent Publishing, 2015. 9781613337837
Neve’s stepmother tosses her to the curb when Neve turns 18. Neve’s father abandoned her when he found his true love, another man. Now Neve wonders if her bad luck is her own fault. **YA, abandonment, fairy tale, stepparents, LGBTQ+, depression, mental illness**
The hero is a champion skater, a pastry chef and the freshman player on his college’s hockey team. Hockey’s practice of checking is a whole new concept. And his team captain? WOW! YA, graphic novel, hockey, LGBTQ+

The Hemmings grandparents left their potato farm to become land developers so that their children and grandchildren could “thrive”. Five teenagers come together from terribly tangled backgrounds - poverty, Flea Circus? cancer treatments, eager-to-please, Pine Barrens. Is this what thriving looks like? A. S. King’s books are hard to describe. YA, mental health, poverty, wealth, family,

Circle of Friends. This is all the notation said.
I found Circle of Friends by Maeve Binchy. Adult
And a series by Mary Jo Putney Adult
and a graphic novel series about teens by Sean McKeever, Takeshi Miyazawa and Norman Lee (Marvel Comics). YA, MG, superheroes, Marvel Comics
AND a wordless picture book by Giori Carmi All ages, kindness, pay it forward

“Absolutely loved this YA non-fiction book. It’s impossible not to cry while listening to Shostakovich’s 7th symphony- the “Leningrad symphony” - after hearing about everything the people of Leningrad suffered during (& before) WWII and the brave performance of the symphony in the city on the day that Hitler claimed he would be celebrating their defeat.” KUCLC attendee. YA, non-fiction, history, WWII, music, Shostakovich, Leningrad, Hitler

“A dystopian Future Society. High School students have an Internet “Feed” implanted and have constant access to the Internet. It does not end well.” KUCLC attendee YA, future, sci-fi, Internet, dystopia

Semi-autobiographical account of a Native American teen who transfers to a “white” high school in order to improve his chances at success in the larger world. YA, cartooning, memoir, Native American, fiction,

Aru Shah - that’s all the notation says BUT I gave attendees a chance to pick their favorites from the listed books and the first book in this series is on the list. Check above for more details.

Andrew Ender plays video games for the government. Little does he know that he is engaged in something far more desperate. His older brothers vie for the power that Ender seems to wield in this first entry in the Ender’s Saga series. YA, adult, science fiction, classic, interplanetary conflict
When Katniss’s younger sister’s name is pulled out of the hat as a candidate for the Hunger Games, Katniss takes her place. The Hunger Games are a yearly punishment for the outlying territories that dared to rebel against the government. Every year, a candidate from each territory fights to the death with the other candidates in a televised competition. YA, science fiction, dystopia, survival, battles, books into movies.

After being homeschooled for five years to accommodate the surgeries on his malformed face and skull, Auggie finally enters a private school in New York City. The school is proud to have him and teachers make sure that all the students treat him with acceptance and respect. But how do the other kids in Auggie’s class really feel? This book has helped feed the burgeoning movement toward kindness. MG, Elementary, diversity, different abilities, birth defects, kindness, acceptance, appearance

Slaughterhouse Five by Kurt Vonnegut. Dial Press, 1999 (originally published in 1969). Billy Pilgrim discovers that time is constantly occurring in this anti-war book by one of the most important American authors of the 20th century. The book was inspired by the firebombing of Dresden in WWII. It introduced the fictional writer, Kilgore Trout, and a planet called Tralfamadore and the mantra “So it goes?” The book needs to be read to be understood. Adult, YA, anti-war, pacifist, science fiction, time travel, social commentary.

To access this booklist, an Online Resource list, and the info on the book review session for K-4, visit Kutztown University Children’s Literature Conference’s website at http://kuchildrensliterature.weebly.com/
Choose Notable Children’s Books from the lefthand sidebar and THEN click on Kutztown Libguide to access the book lists.

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