



## Young Adult: Biographies (listed alphabetically by subject's last name)

Barter, James. ***Idi Amin***. YA B AMI

Idi Amin, who preferred to be called "Big Daddy," will go down in history as one of the most vilified mass murderers of the twentieth century. Self-proclaimed President of Uganda, Amin illegally seized power in a military coup in 1971 and tyrannically ruled ten million fellow Ugandans until he ignominiously fled the African country in 1979. In his wake Amin left deplorable examples of brutality, torture, murder, and demented personal behavior. During his eight years of barbaric rule an estimated three hundred thousand Ugandans were killed by his orders. Although Amin died in exile in 2003 a failed dictator, there is still much to be learned about Uganda's history, Amin's dictatorship, and how he orchestrated his rise to power and maintained power while inflicting so much pain on his followers.

Sheinkin, Steve. ***The Notorious Benedict Arnold: A True Story of Adventure, Heroism, & Treachery***. YA B ARN

Most people know that Benedict Arnold was America's first, most notorious traitor. Few know that he was also one of its greatest Revolutionary War heroes. Steve Sheinkin's accessible biography introduces young readers to the real Arnold: reckless, heroic, and driven. Packed with first-person accounts, astonishing American Revolution battle scenes, and surprising twists, this is a gripping and true adventure tale from history.

Barakat, Ibtisam. ***Balcony on the Moon: Coming of Age in Palestine***. YA B BAR

Picking up where *Tasting the Sky* left off, *Balcony on the Moon* follows Ibtisam Barakat through her childhood and adolescence in Palestine from 1972-1981 and chronicles her desire to be a writer. Ibtisam finds inspiration through writing letters to pen pals and from an adult who encourages her to keep at it, but the most surprising turn of all for Ibtisam happens when her mother decides that she would like to seek out an education, too. This memoir is a touching, at times funny, and enlightening look at the not often depicted daily life in a politically tumultuous area.

Haugen, David M. ***The Beatles***. YA B BEA

In the 1960s, the "Fab Four" revolutionized the sound and appearance of rock and roll music. This anthology chronicles the rise and fall of rock music's most famous band.

Kramer, Barbara. ***Beyoncé: Singer, Songwriter, and Actress***. YA B BEY

Describes the life and work of the famous singer, from her early years in the singing group Destiny's Child to her solo career, her marriage to rapper Jay-Z, and her film roles.

Biles, Simone. ***Courage to Soar: A Body in Motion, A Life in Balance***. YA B BIL

Simone Biles' entrance into the world of gymnastics may have started on a daycare field trip in her hometown of Spring, Texas, but her God-given talent, passion, and perseverance have made her one of the top gymnasts in the world, as well as a four-time winner of Olympic gold in Rio de Janeiro. But there is more to Simone than the nineteen medals--fourteen of them gold--and the Olympic successes. Through years of hard work and determination, she has relied on her faith and family to stay focused and positive, while having fun competing at the highest level and doing what she loves. Here, in her own words, Simone takes you through the events, challenges, and trials that carried her from an early childhood in foster care to a coveted spot on the 2016 Olympic team. Along the way, Simone shares the details of her inspiring personal story--one filled with the kinds of daily acts of courage that led her, and can lead you, to even the most unlikely of dreams.

Shecter, Vicky. ***Cleopatra Rules!: The Amazing Life of the Original Teen Queen***. YA B CLE

In this lively, informal biography, Vicky Alvear Shecter shows that Cleopatra was a far more capable and powerful ruler than people have thought. Most of what we've known about Cleopatra—and what crept into art, film, and literature—came from her enemies, the Romans. But, ascending to the throne at 17, Cleopatra proved herself a brilliant negotiator who forged alliances that kept her in power and in control of her kingdom. This book about Egypt's last and most famous pharaoh features an inviting text, many sidebars, and excellent color illustrations: maps, photos of ancient artifacts, and artworks from many historical periods.

Cohen, Roger. ***Danger in the Desert: True Adventures of a Dinosaur Hunter***. YA B COH

In the movies, there's Indiana Jones; but in the "real" world, there was Roy Chapman Andrews. Some say this fearless, larger-than-life adventurer--who, like Indiana, had a wide-brimmed hat, leather jacket, and six-shooter--may have been the inspiration for the big-screen hero. From 1910 to 1930, Andrews led countless expeditions for the American Museum of Natural History, boldly facing such dangers as killer pythons, man-eating wild dogs, marauding bandits, blinding sandstorms, and imprisonment by corrupt officials. Even as China and Mongolia exploded in revolutionary chaos, he and his team of paleontologists intrepidly journeyed by car, camel, and horse through the uncharted Gobi desert where he discovered the largest deposits of dinosaur fossils ever seen. His group amazed the world with their discoveries--and scientists are still following in Andrews's footsteps, digging in the rich sites he found.

Hoose, Phillip. ***Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice***. YA B COL

On March 2, 1955, a slim, bespectacled teenager refused to give up her seat to a white woman on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Shouting, "It's my constitutional right!" as police dragged her off to jail, Claudette Colvin decided she'd had enough of the Jim Crow segregation laws that had angered and puzzled her since she was a young child. But instead of being celebrated, as Rosa Parks would be when she took the same stand nine months later, Claudette found herself shunned by many of her classmates and dismissed as an unfit role model by the black leaders of Montgomery. Undaunted, she put her life in danger a year later when she dared to challenge segregation yet again—as one of four plaintiffs in the landmark busing case *Browder v. Gayle*.

Corman, Richard. ***Misty Copeland: Power and Grace***. YA B COP

Power and grace define Misty Copeland, an influential ballet dancer who has broken through difficult barriers to become the first female African-American to be promoted to principal dancer at the American Ballet Theatre. Stunning black and white photography and her inspiring message of hope, strength, and focus speaks to young girls and women.

Redniss, Lauren. ***Radioactive: Marie & Pierre Curie, A Tale of Love and Fallout.*** YA B CUR

In the century since the Curies began their work, we've struggled with nuclear weapons proliferation, debated the role of radiation in medical treatment, and pondered nuclear energy as a solution to climate change. In *Radioactive*, Redniss links these contentious questions to a love story in 19th Century Paris.

Yeatts, Tabatha. ***Albert Einstein: The Miracle Mind.*** YA B EIN

Today, Albert Einstein is considered a genius, but his parents, teachers, and friends didn't always agree. He learned to talk later than most children and struggled in school. But his passion for mathematics and physics led him to develop a series of revolutionary theories about space, time, and gravitation that transformed not just physics, but also our very understanding of how the universe works.

Sheinkin, Steve. ***Most Dangerous: Daniel Ellsberg and the Secret History of the Vietnam War.*** YA B ELL

The story of Daniel Ellsberg and his decision to steal and publish secret documents about America's involvement in the Vietnam War.

Kidder, Tracy. ***Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World.*** YA B FAR

Traces the efforts of Dr. Paul Farmer to transform healthcare on a global scale, documenting his visits to some of the world's most impoverished regions and the unconventional methods that enabled him to improve and save lives.

Stone, Tanya Lee. ***Ella Fitzgerald: A Twentieth-Century Life.*** YA B FIT

The name Ella Fitzgerald brings to mind a silky voice crooning jazz standards. The First Lady of Song earned her nickname by touring almost nonstop for over fifty years, winning thirteen Grammys, and recording album after album. But who was the woman behind the name? How did a teenage runaway become a renowned jazz singer? Long after her homeless days, Ella remained insecure she often suffered stage fright. Yet she was a born performer, able to improvise lyrics and record songs in single takes. She even seemed more comfortable on stage than off, and close friends found her hard to truly know.

Woog, Adam. ***Anne Frank.*** YA B FRA

Anne Frank's famous diary, the basic framework of an extraordinary life story, has made her an enduring symbol of courage and hope in the face of adversity -- a heroine for those who today still suffer under cruelty, oppression, and prejudice.

McClafferty, Carla Killough. ***In Defiance of Hitler: The Secret Mission of Varian Fry.*** YA B FRY

At a time when most Americans ignored the atrocities going on in Europe in 1940, American journalist Varian Fry put himself in great danger to save strangers in a foreign land. He was instrumental in the rescue of more than 2,000 refugees, including novelist Heinrich Mann and artist Marc Chagall.

Howard, Tim. ***The Keeper: The Unguarded Story of Tim Howard.*** YA B HOW

In this heartwarming and candid memoir, US national soccer team goalkeeper Tim Howard does something he would never do on a soccer field: he drops his guard. Howard opens up for the first time about how a hyperactive kid from New Jersey with Tourette Syndrome defied the odds to become one of the world's premier goalkeepers.

Jennings, Jazz. ***Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender) Teen***. YA B JEN

Jazz Jennings is one of the youngest and most prominent voices in the national discussion about gender identity. At the age of five, Jazz transitioned to life as a girl, with the support of her parents. A year later, her parents allowed her to share her incredible journey in her first Barbara Walters interview, aired at a time when the public was much less knowledgeable or accepting of the transgender community. This groundbreaking interview was followed over the years by other high-profile interviews, a documentary, the launch of her YouTube channel, a picture book, and her own reality TV series--I Am Jazz--making her one of the most recognizable activists for transgender teens, children, and adults.

Keat, Nawuth. ***Alive in the Killing Fields: Surviving the Khmer Rouge Genocide***. YA B KEA

In this captivating memoir, Nawuth Keat defies the odds and survives the invasion of his homeland by the Khmer Rouge. Under the brutal reign of the dictator Pol Pot, he loses his parents, young sister, and other members of his family. After his hometown of Salatrave was overrun, Nawuth and his remaining relatives are eventually captured and enslaved by Khmer Rouge fighters. They endure physical abuse, hunger, and inhumane living conditions. But through it all, their sense of family holds them together, giving them the strength to persevere through a time when any assertion of identity is punishable by death. Nawuth's story of survival and escape from the Killing Fields of Cambodia is also a message of hope; an inspiration to children whose worlds have been darkened by hardship and separation from loved ones. This story provides a timeless lesson in the value of human dignity and freedom for readers of all ages.

Wyborny, Sheila. ***Kim Jong II***. YA B KIM

Lucent Books' contemporary biography series profiles the lives and careers of some of today's most prominent newsmakers. Whether covering contributions and achievements or notorious deeds, books in this series examine why these well-known people garner public attention. Through quotations from the individuals profiled as well as from friends, supporters, and critics, readers learn how these men and women view themselves as well as how others regard them. Offering insight into the lives of people who have made an impact in the modern era, People in the News volumes are sure to be of interest to students researching current topics and popular culture.

Doeden, Matt. ***A Marked Man: The Assassination of Malcolm X***. YA B X

Three men were found guilty of the murder. But rumors of conspiracy and cover-up still swirl. Who gave the order for Malcolm X's murder? Why did two of the convicted killers insist upon their innocence even after being released from prison in the 1980s? In this chronicle of an assassination, find out the answers to these questions and learn more about the impact of Malcolm X's life, and his death, on civil rights in the United States.

Crompton, Samuel Willard. ***Peyton Manning***. YA B MAN

This is the captivating biography of a football superstar. Quarterback Peyton Manning's career symbolizes family, faith, and competitiveness. The son of former NFL great Archie Manning and the older brother of Eli Manning, he has made the Indianapolis Colts his extended family as well. Although he possesses a good deal of natural talent, Manning struggled on many occasions throughout his career. To his detractors, he was the spoiled kid of doting parents, the antithesis of the "self-made football player." Manning earned his way to football greatness in Miami in 2007 after leading the Colts to their first Super Bowl win in 36 years. This fascinating biography explores the life of the only player in his career to be named NFL MVP, Super Bowl MVP, and Pro Bowl MVP. Off the gridiron, Manning's Peyton Manning Foundation supports leadership programs for disadvantaged youth in Indiana, Tennessee, and Louisiana, displaying his dedication to family and family values.

Lenburg, Jeff. ***Hayao Miyazaki: Japan's Premier Anime Storyteller.*** YA B MIY

Hayao Miyazaki is one of the world's most respected animation filmmakers. He is known for creating compelling characters, engaging stories, and breathtaking animation. Miyazaki who began his career in 1963 as an in-betweeners for Toei Doga studio, found his true calling as an anime and manga artist, working on classic Japanese features and television series and creating the best-selling manga, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. In 1985, he cofounded Studio Ghibli, and in 1989, he wrote and produced its breakthrough animated feature *Kiki's Delivery Service*. Since then, Miyazaki has directed some of the most successful and popular anime features of all time, including *Howl's Moving Castle*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Ponyo*, and *Spirited Away*.

Thomas, Garen Eileen. ***Yes We Can: A Biography of Barack Obama.*** YA B OBA

Yes, we can heal this nation. Yes, we can seize our future. And as we leave this great state with a new wind at our backs and we take this journey across this great country, a country we love, with the message we carry from the plains of Iowa to the hills of New Hampshire, from the Nevada desert to the South Carolina coast, the same message we had when we were up and when we were down, that out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we will hope.

Goldstein, Nancy. ***Jackie Ormes: The First African American Woman Cartoonist.*** YA B ORM

In the United States at mid-century, in an era when there were few opportunities for women in general and even fewer for African American women, Jackie Ormes blazed a trail as a popular artist with the major black newspapers of the day.

Padilla Peralta, Dan-el. ***Undocumented: A Dominican Boy's Odyssey from a Homeless Shelter to the Ivy League.*** YA B PAD

A Princeton University salutatorian describes his experiences as an undocumented immigrant youth in New York City, relating his efforts as a scholarship student in a private school that sharply contrasted with his street life in East Harlem.

Denenberg, Barry. ***All Shook Up: The Life and death of Elvis Presley.*** YA B PRE

Born on January 8, 1935, Elvis Aaron Presley was destined to rewrite the history of music almost from the moment he picked up a guitar. He played music that was rooted in blues, gospel, country and rockabilly, and he redefined a generation by breaking down the boundaries that separate white from black. Everyone listened to Elvis. Everyone danced to Elvis. Everyone had an opinion about Elvis. And the fame was nice, but it came so fast. The money. The cars. The screaming fans. Somewhere in all that, the singer from Tupelo, Mississippi got lost-and that's the saddest song of all.

Watson, Stephanie. ***Prince: Musical Icon.*** YA B PRI

This informative title highlights the life of Prince. Readers will learn about his childhood in Minneapolis, Minnesota, including an early interest in music that led him to teach himself to play several instruments at a young age. The book discusses Prince's legendary music career, from the release his first album when he was only 19 years old up to his 2015 release, *HITnRUN*. Prince's diverse musical influences are explored, as is the 1984 album *Purple Rain* and the movie of the same name, which launched him to a level of superstardom beyond what he had achieved with any of his previous albums. The album features many hit singles, such as "When Doves Cry," "Let's Go Crazy," and "Purple Rain." Prince's difficult business relationship with recording label Warner Bros. and his 1993 decision to change his name to an unpronounceable symbol are also discussed. His political activism is included, as is his commitment to mentoring up-and-coming musicians. Details of the investigation surrounding his tragic

death at age 57 are also discussed. This book includes details of Prince's life and covers the controversies surrounding his life and death.

Rice, Condoleezza. ***Condoleezza Rice: A Memoir of My Extraordinary, Ordinary Family and Me.*** YA B RIC

Her life began in the comparatively placid 1950s in Birmingham, Alabama, where black people lived in a segregated parallel universe to their white neighbors. She grew up during the violent and shocking 1960s, when bloodshed became a part of daily life in the South. Rice's portrait of her parents, John and Angelena, highlights their ambitions and frustrations and shows how much they sacrificed to give their beloved only child the best chance for success. Rice also discusses the challenges of being a precocious child who was passionate about music, ice skating, history, and current affairs. Her memoir reveals with vivid clarity how her early experiences sowed the seeds of her political beliefs and helped her become a vibrant, successful woman.

Romero, Jordan. ***No Summit Out of Sight: The True Story of the Youngest Person to Climb the Seven Summits.*** YA B ROM

The story of Jordan Romero, who at the age of 13 became the youngest person ever to reach the summit of Mount Everest. At age 15, he reached the summits of the world's 7 highest mountains.

Jones, Victoria Garrett. ***Eleanor Roosevelt: A Courageous Spirit.*** YA B ROO

Tireless worker, skillful negotiator, bold spokesperson for the rights of all mankind: more than a century after her birth, Eleanor Roosevelt remains one of the most admired women the world has ever known. Her development from timid and uncertain young woman to confident, courageous adult capable of dealing with both personal tragedy and public notoriety makes an inspiring story— especially for female readers. Stepping in to keep her husband's political career alive while he battled the after effects of polio, she ultimately transformed the role of First Lady from figurehead to activist, and set a new standard by which all her successors have been judged.

Marrin, Albert. ***The Great Adventure: Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of Modern America.*** YA B ROO

Theodore Roosevelt is one of America's liveliest and most influential figures. He was a scholar, cowboy, war hero, explorer, and a brilliant politician. As president, Roosevelt's far-reaching policies abroad and at home forever changed both our nation's place in the world and the life of every modern American.

Collins, Tracy Brown. ***Babe Ruth.*** YA B RUT

Chronicles the life and achievements of Babe Ruth, who set a home-run record while playing for the New York Yankees and was among the first group of players to be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Marvel, Laura. (Editor). ***William Shakespeare.*** YA B SHA

William Shakespeare only lived from 1564 to 1616, but his works have lived on the stage and on the page for four centuries. Several authors in this anthology examine the biographical evidence and the continuing controversy over Shakespeare's authorship of the works attributed to him; others focus on why Shakespeare's works have proven relevant and inspiring to so many generations of readers, writers, scholars, and artists. The words Shakespeare coined, the characters he created, his plays and poems are his legacy, which permeates our language and culture today.

Yousafzai, Malala. *I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up For Education and Changed the World*. YA B  
YOU

Malala Yousafzai was only ten years old when the Taliban took control of her region. They said music was a crime. They said women weren't allowed to go to the market. They said girls couldn't go to school. Raised in a once-peaceful area of Pakistan transformed by terrorism, Malala was taught to stand up for what she believes. So she fought for her right to be educated. And on October 9, 2012, she nearly lost her life for the cause: She was shot point-blank while riding the bus on her way home from school. No one expected her to survive. Now Malala is an international symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize winner. Malala's powerful story will open your eyes to another world and will make you believe in hope, truth, miracles and the possibility that one person -- one young person -- can inspire change in her community and beyond.

Created by SPPL Librarians  
Updated – November 2019