



# EMPOWERMENT

## TEXT SETS

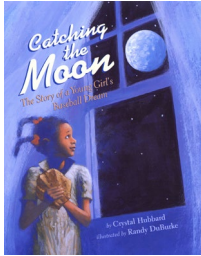
featuring  
**Women**

Discover text sets that feature female historical figures and girl characters who exhibit independence and determination as they solve problems, strive for their dreams, and achieve their goals. These mentor texts star women and girls who are thinkers and role models to inspire all children. Discussion questions and activities to use in the classroom follow each text set.

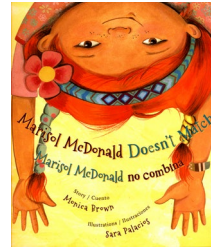


# UNIT: Past Versus Present

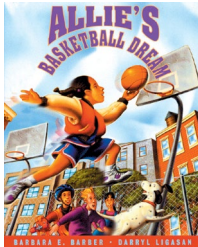
## Grades K-2



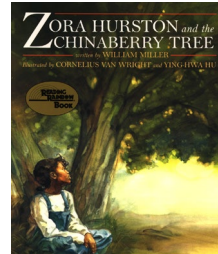
**CATCHING THE MOON: THE STORY OF A YOUNG GIRL'S BASEBALL DREAM** • Written by Crystal Hubbard, illustrated by Randy DuBurke • The spirited story of Marcenia Lyle, an African American girl who grew up to become "Toni Stone," the first woman to play for an all-male professional baseball team. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/catching-the-moon>



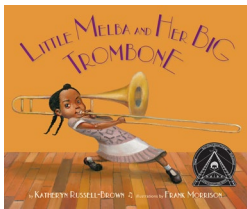
**MARISOL MCDONALD DOESN'T MATCH** • Written by Monica Brown, Ph.D., illustrated by Sara Palacios • Mismatched and fabulous Marisol McDonald celebrates her Peruvian and Scottish heritage. (Bilingual English/Spanish.) <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/marisol-mcdonald-doesn-t-match-marisol-mcdonald-no-combina>



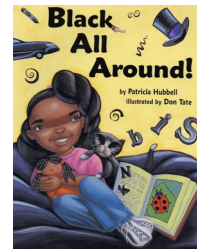
**ALLIE'S BASKETBALL DREAM** • Written by Barbara E. Barber, illustrated by Darryl Ligasan • Basketball is Allie's favorite sport—she's loved it ever since her father took her to her first game at Madison Square Garden. What will happen when she tries to play herself? Allie's story of self-determination is one that all young athletes will recognize. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/allie-s-basketball-dream>



**ZORA HURSTON AND THE CHINABERRY TREE** • Written by William Miller, illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright • Budding writer Zora Neale Hurston learns to listen to the stories of the people around her. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/zora-hurston-and-the-chinaberry-tree>



**LITTLE MELBA AND HER BIG TROMBONE** • Written by Kathryn Russell-Brown, illustrated by Frank Morrison • African American jazz virtuoso Melba Doretta Liston became a pioneering twentieth-century trombone player, composer, and music arranger at a time when few women, of any race, were part of the jazz scene. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/little-melba-and-her-big-trombone>



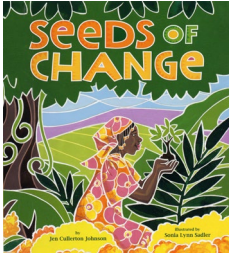
**BLACK ALL AROUND** • Written by Patricia Hubbell, illustrated by Don Tate • A young girl discovers all the wonderful and beautiful things around her that are black. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/black-all-around>

In this unit, compare and contrast how gender is viewed in historical versus modern time periods. Use *Catching the Moon*, *Little Melba and her Big Trombone*, and *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* as a platform to talk about women in history. Then read *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match*, *Black All Around*, and *Allie's Basketball Dream*, with modern-day female characters who stand up for themselves. Have readers think about:

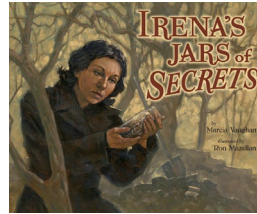
- Explain to students how *Catching the Moon*, *Little Melba and her Big Trombone*, and *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* took place in the past. *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match*, *Black All Around*, and *Allie's Basketball Dream* all take place in today's times. How do the girls and women in the historical fiction and biographical titles make it possible for the girl characters featured in today's titles to express and be themselves?
- Compare and contrast the characters across the titles—track character and personality traits, and then analyze them afterwards. What do these girls and women have in common? What makes them special and unique? What personality traits do they share? Why are those traits important to their identity and who they are?
- Consider who mentored and championed these women and girls on their journeys. What role did other women play in their lives? Where are some examples of men championing women and girls?

# UNIT: Influence of Grade & Time Period

## Grades 3-5



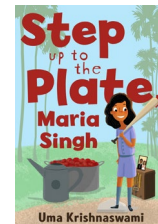
**SEEDS OF CHANGE: PLANTING A PATH TO PEACE** • Written by Jen Cullerton Johnson, illustrated by Sonia Sadler • This picture book biography profiles scientist Wangari Maathai, the first African woman — and first environmentalist — to win a Nobel Peace Prize, for her work planting trees in her native Kenya. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/seeds-of-change>



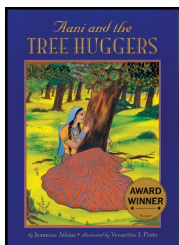
**IRENA'S JARS OF SECRETS** • Written by Marcia Vaughan, illustrated by Ron Mazellan • Irena Sendler, a Polish Catholic social worker, helped save nearly 2,500 Jewish children during the Nazi occupation of Poland during World War II. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/irena-s-jars-of-secrets>



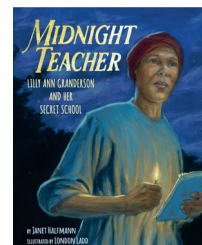
**SHINING STAR: THE ANNA MAY WONG STORY** • Written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Lin Wang • The true story of Chinese American film star Anna May Wong, whose trail-blazing career in Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s broke new ground for future generations of Asian American actors. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/shining-star>



**STEP UP TO THE PLATE, MARIA SINGH** • Written by Uma Krishnaswami • While her parents and neighbors struggle to stay on their farmland in California during World War II, nine-year-old Maria Singh learns to play softball just like her heroes in the All-American Girls' League. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/step-up-to-the-plate-maria-singh>



**AANI AND THE TREE HUGGERS** • Written by Jeannine Atkins, illustrated by Venantius J. Pinto • In this enduring story of environmental action based on a true event in northern India, Aani and other women in her village save their forest from destruction. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/aani-and-the-tree-huggers>



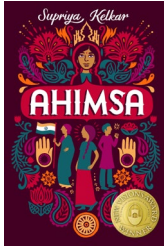
**MIDNIGHT TEACHER: LILLY ANN GRANDERSON AND HER SECRET SCHOOL** • Written by Janet Halfmann, illustrated by London Ladd • Meet Lilly Ann Granderson, an African-American teacher who believed so strongly in the power of education that she risked her life to teach others during slavery. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/midnight-teacher>

In this unit, support students in analyzing how these characters navigated perceptions of women during that particular time period and setting.

- How do these women and girls transcend stereotypes associated with their gender during the time period featured within the text?
- How do the characters and historical figures in this collection change people's views of them in the time and place the book is set?
- Conduct settings studies on each of the books, and then compare and contrast the settings and the main characters within the setting. How do people perceive women in that setting and time period? How does the setting make it difficult for the characters to achieve their goals? How did the characters rise above the obstacles they encountered in their environment? Have students create a chart of the different settings and analyze the different social and economic contexts within that setting.
- Now consider the social movements of our time. What challenges do women face today? Compare the time period of each book to our present moment. What circumstances have improved for women and girls, if any?
- Consider conducting this unit alongside a Women's Suffrage movement. Analyze the norms of the Women's Suffrage movement in contrast with the norms today. Have students research what the Women's Suffrage movement wanted to address and who were the leaders, and who were not the leaders. Have students analyze how the characters of these books, if at all, reflect or represent any of the sentiments that leaders of the Women's Suffrage movement expressed during this important time period in history.

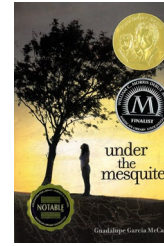
# UNIT: Conflict Analysis

## Grades 6-8



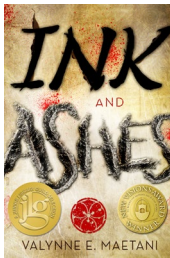
### **AHIMSA • written by Supriya Kelkar**

• In this historical novel, Gandhi asks for one member of each family to join the fight for independence from the British, and when Anjali's mother is jailed for doing so, Anjali must step out of her comfort zone to take over her mother's work. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/ahimsa>



### **UNDER THE MESQUITE • Written by**

**Guadalupe Garcia McCall •** Lupita, a budding actor and poet in a close-knit Mexican American immigrant family, comes of age as she struggles with adult responsibilities during her mother's long illness. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/under-the-mesquite>



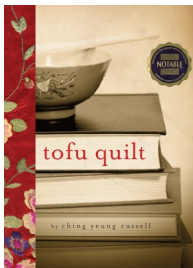
### **INK AND ASHES • Written by Valynne**

**E. Maetani •** When Claire Takata finds out that her deceased father was once a member of the yakuza – a Japanese crime syndicate – the secret threatens her friends and family, her newfound love, and even Claire's own life. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/ink-and-ashes>



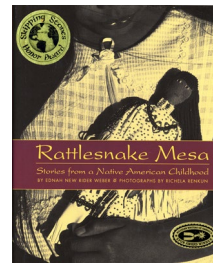
### **SUMMER OF THE MARIPOSAS • Written by**

**Guadalupe Garcia McCall •** In this creative retelling of *The Odyssey*, fifteen-year-old Odilia and her younger sisters embark on a journey to return a dead man to his family in Mexico, and must outwit monsters and witches to make it back home again. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/summer-of-the-mariposas>



### **TOFU QUILT • Written by Ching**

**Russell •** In this autobiographical novel in verse, Yeung Ying, a young girl in Hong Kong in the 1960s, aspires to become a writer, against the conventions of society and her family. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/tofu-quilt>



### **RATTLESNAKE MESA • Written by**

**EdNah New Rider Weber, illustrated by Richela Renkun •** This true account of a spirited Native American girl's experiences growing up on a reservation and attending Phoenix Indian School in the 1920s is written in an engaging, unconventional style and accompanied by dramatic photographs. <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/rattlesnake-mesa>

In this unit, students will analyze the different conflicts presented in the six texts, including conflicts within the protagonists, conflicts with their peers, and conflicts in the larger world. How are those conflicts relevant in society? How do those conflicts relate to sexism? How do these characters attempt to resolve their conflicts? How and why do those conflicts resolve or not resolve?

- Have students examine the conflicts within the characters' selves. What problems do the girls featured in these books have to face within themselves? Why are they dealing with those conflicts? What external factors create their internal conflicts?
- Have students examine the characters' conflicts with their peers. What are their relationships like with family and friends? What kinds of conflicts occur in their relationships with peers? Why do they have these conflicts with peers? What external factors create these peer conflicts?
- Have students examine the characters' conflicts with the world. What conflicts within their societies make it difficult for these characters to achieve their goals? Think about global issues, such as gender expectations, racism, and other social conflicts. How do these characters confront and deal with these challenges? How does sexism play into these global and societal conflicts?

To build your Empowerment Text Sets Featuring Women collection for your school, contact:



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