

# Choice Board #1: Annotated Bibliography

By: Lauren Alberti

This collection includes various texts and films to enrich each student's Social Studies learning experience.



## 01 Life is Beautiful

Benigni, R. (Director). (1997). *Life is Beautiful* [Motion picture on DVD]. Italy: Miramax Films.

This is a film about a happy family who enjoying all that life has to offer until the German forces begin sweeping Italy. Since they are Jewish, they are sent away to concentration camps; the mother going to one, and father and son going to another. In order to protect his son from the horrific reality as much as he can, Guido acts as if they are playing a game. This film not only depicts the realities of WWII, but it gently reminds us of the power of perspective. This would be used in a 6th grade classroom to emphasize the devastation of WWII as well as the importance of perspective.

## 02 Maus: A Holocaust Memoir

Spielmann, A. (2011). *Maus: A survivor's tale*. New York: Pantheon.

*Maus* is a graphic novel that tells the story of a young man's experience with the Holocaust. This novel is particularly interesting in the way it characterizes each group with different animals. This novel takes the reader through the experience of the Holocaust, forcing its readers to practice empathy. This would be another source to use within a 6th grade classroom so that students can learn about WWII through a more engaging graphic novel. Students could also be challenged after reading this through having them create their own cartoon strips and characters.



## 03 The Olympians

O'Connor, G. (2010). *Olympians*. New York: FirstSecond.

This is a series of mythical fiction that captures readers into Greek mythology. O'Connor has made Greek mythology very accessible to those who may suffer from dyslexia as they may find this type of storytelling. This series appeals to students who rely more on graphics or who aren't quite as into reading novels. Greek Mythology can sometimes be an intimidating topic, so this series will get students hooked. To take this a step further, teachers could "gamify" their classrooms and have different "bosses" that correspond with different characters' journeys.



## 04 The Arrival

Tan, S. (2014). *The Arrival*. London: Hodder Childrens Books.

Tan presents us with a novel that illustrates the life of an immigrant and the ways in which he adjusted to his brand new life. This novel challenges students to put themselves in someone else's shoes and see the hardship that come with immigrating to the United States. This book discusses the usual journey of the so-called "American Dream" and the difficulties along the way.



## 05 Persepolis

Saragi, M. (2004). *Persepolis*. New York: Pantheon.

This novel tells the story of a young girl's life as she endures the political and religious turmoil in Iran. When she escapes this turmoil, Marjane must really consider her identity and the way in which she acts. She must continue to find her religious moral compass. This would be a great novel to utilize within a 6th grade classroom to teach about the representation of the war as well as the struggle to find identity amidst such turmoil. Teachers could also expand upon this idea through relating it to students' own search for identity and the ways in which our political and social climates have influenced such searches.



## 06 The Four Immigrants Manga

Kiyama, H. Y., & Schick, F. L. (2009). *The four immigrants manga: a Japanese experience in San Francisco, 1904-1924*. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press.

The themes in this manga are drawn from the experiences of Japanese immigrants into San Francisco that happened between 1904-1924. The graphics within the manga emphasize the racial attitudes that was prevalent during this time through seeing it through the lens of a Japanese immigrant. This graphic novel is for students to get non-readers engaged in U.S. history as well as teach about the racism that the Japanese people endured. It is important for students to understand the realities for these immigrants and not have their history sugarcoated. Once again, students could create their own comic strips to emphasize something that shocked them most within this novel.



## 07 Gone With the Wind

Fleming, M. (Wolcott 1939). *Gone With the Wind* [Motion picture on DVD]. United States: Lew'n's Inc.

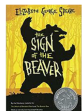
This film focuses on the Reconstruction of the Civil War through the perspective of a woman, Scarlett O'Hara. As we experience life through the protagonist's point of view, the audience is able to consider the war's social and personal influence. This story is through the perspective of the slaveholder's and thus should be carefully implemented within the classroom. Discussion would be a key element when using this film to supplement teaching of the Civil War. This movie is extremely long so probably not something that I would show in full. Showing clips of this movie could supplement lessons of the Civil War and would bring the era alive to students.



## 08 The Sign of the Beaver

Spence, E. G. (1983). *The Sign of the Beaver*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

This historical novel tells the story of a boy in the 18th century, who is left alone to guard his cabin in Maine. He is left alone to fend for himself, but receives help from nearby indigenous peoples. His family does not return the way he is supposed to and his new captives invite him to join the Beaver Tribe. Students could use this novel as an anchor text regarding Native Americans and consider what they might do had they been in this boy's situation. They would have to consider what he might do, but they would be as well as the tribe that he would be joining.



## 09 Chains

Anderson, L. H. (2016). *Chains*. Place of publication not identified: Aladdin Childrens Books.

This novel tells the story of a young African American slave during the Revolutionary War. It follows the life of the protagonist as he and his younger sister's freedom as they attempt to escape their master. This is a powerful story that brings us into the shoes of these slaves. Since slavery was quite a long time ago, reading this novel about children that around the students age will make this era more real.



## 10 Copper Sun

Draper, S. M. (2016). *Copper sun*. New York, NY: Aladdin Books for Young Readers.

This novel is told from the points of view of a fifteen year old slave and seventeen year old indentured servant. This story takes us through the slave trade process and then onto the plantation, where survival is the only thing on these character's minds. They depend on each other as they endure enslavement and pursue freedom. It would be very interesting to read the book and have students read excerpts from all points of view during this time.

