

# Happy Black History Month, 2026!

Since February is Black History Month, and February 4 is World Read Aloud Day, I thought it was the perfect opportunity to highlight some books that I believe are wonderful examples of children's literature that put a spotlight on African-Americans. The purpose of Black History month is to showcase the accomplishments and contributions of African-Americans, and what better way than reading books? There are thousands of books that exist that could be listed as books to read during February, but below is my (or should I say Dr. Toughlove's) Top Ten List:

## ***The Amazing Age of John Roy Lynch*** written by Chris Barton

This compelling nonfiction picture book tells the story of John Roy Lynch, a distinguished photographer, legislator, speaker of the house and civil rights icon. Born in Mississippi in 1847, he lived through the turmoil of slavery, the civil war, reconstruction, and Jim Crow laws. A hard worker and a born leader, Lynch understood the importance of operationalizing the laws that were passed to provide blacks with citizenship, voting rights and access to upward mobility. Additional historical information and reflections from Chris Barton and illustrator Don Tate provide more information. A great read for children aged 7-10 years.

## ***Brown Girl, Brown Girl*** written by Lesle Honore, illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera

This book is a beautifully written poem that celebrates the strength, joy and pride many black girls feel, while not minimizing that there are often obstacles to be overcome. The powerful words coupled with the captivating illustrations creates a moving reading experience. Perfect for children aged 4-8 years, but older children can enjoy it as well. An inspiring read.

***Kwame Crashes the Underworld*** written by Craig Kofi Farmer

This debut novel by Craig Kofi Farmer is a fanciful tale about a 12-year-old boy who is dealing with the death of his grandmother and a trip to Ghana for her celebration of life. This book has won numerous awards including but not limited to a Kirkus Reviews Best Book of the Year, a Chicago Public Library Best Book of the Year, and the Coretta Scott King John Steptoe New Talent Award. This middle grade fantasy book is ideal for kids aged 8-12 years.

***Game, Set, Match Champion Arthur Ashe*** written by Crystal Hubbard, illustrated by Kevin Belford

This informative book is recommended for children 8 years and up. It tells the compelling story of tennis legend, Arthur Ashe. Reading this book is an ideal way to learn about Arthur's journey from a young boy playing tennis at Brookfield Park in Richmond, Virginia to winning the US Open in 1975. After reading this book it will be abundantly clear to the reader why the largest tennis stadium in the world, Arthur Ashe stadium, is named after him.

***Ida B Wells Marches for the Vote*** written by Dinah Johnson, illustrated by Jerry Jordan

This is a beautifully written and illustrated book about the incredible life of Ida B. Wells. Ida was born in Mississippi, a year before the Emancipation Proclamation. Though she did not grow up a slave, she experienced the brutal racism of the Jim Crow South. Her journey as a writer, teacher, speaker and suffragette was a testimony to her devotion to civil rights for ALL people. A wonderful book for children aged 5-9.

***Brown, The Many Shades of Love*** written by Nancy Johnson James, illustrated by Constance Moore

This beautiful book celebrates all of the different shades of brown skin in one family. Its rhythmic verse and captivating illustrations present different

skin tones in a positive, unifying way. A real treasure for children aged 3-5 years.

***Wash Day Love*** written by Tanisia Moore

Once a week is wash hair day and the protagonist, Tasha, hates to get her hair washed. Tanisia Moore does a wonderful job celebrating black hair and intergenerational relationships with charm, grace and authenticity. Raissa Figueroa's illustrations are colorful, dynamic and almost jump off the page. A great book for children aged 4-8.

***Black Inventors: 15 Inventions That Changed the World*** written by Kathy Trusty

This wonderful nonfiction book provides in-depth summaries about inventions/contributions made Black Americans. There were many names I recognized, but several were new to me. This is an ideal book to learn more about the contributions Black Americans have made to our country and the world at large. A great selection for kids aged 8-12 years.

***Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre*** by Carole Boston Weatherford illustrated by Floyd Cooper

In the early 1900s, the Greenwood section of Tulsa, Oklahoma was a bustling, vibrant African-American community. Racial segregation was the norm in that part of the world, so the Greenwood district had its own schools, churches, libraries, restaurants, post office, etc. In 1921 armed Tulsans attacked Greenwood, looting homes and businesses and killing many residents. ***Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre***, using age-appropriate language and compelling illustrations, relates this horrific piece of United States history. This book is appropriate for children aged 6-12.

***Schomburg, The Man Who Built A Library*** by Carole Boston Weatherford

This Coretta Scott King Honor Winner describes not only the life of Arturo (Arthur) Schomburg, but the stories of numerous African-American

politicians, poets, shipbuilders, musicians, and so much more. The book begins by describing Arturo's early life in Puerto Rico and his quest to learn about the contributions made by African Americans. This was his lifelong quest, and was the driving force behind the creation of the Schomburg Collection at the New York Public Library. ***Schomburg, The Man Who Built A Library*** is a compelling, informative book that is perfect for children aged 8-12 years.