



Best Narrative Nonfiction Books for Middle Graders

by Jennifer Kendall

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Narrative nonfiction books are informational books written in an engaging story-like format. The best narrative nonfiction is well-researched and contains extensive source notes, including a [bibliography](#), an index, and authentic photographs that validate the author's work. Check out some of these top notch award-winning nonfiction reads.

01 [Bomb: The Race to Build-And Steal-the World's Most Dangerous Weapon](#)

of 10

In this global thriller about the race to build the [first atomic bomb](#), scientists and spies from all over the world stealthily work toward being the first country to wield the most dangerous weapon. A fast-paced, historical narrative, Sheinkin's multiple award-winning book is a fascinating and sobering look at weapons, war, and humanity. (Roaring Book Press, Macmillan, 2012. ISBN: 9781596434875)

02 [Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart](#)

of 10

Author Candace Fleming's [Amelia Lost](#) is both a dramatic true mystery story centering on the disappearance of Amelia Fleming in flight and a biography of the famed aviatrix. Numerous photographs, news reports, and memorabilia are helpful additions to the 118-page book. (Schwartz & Wade Books, An Imprint of

Random House Children's Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., 2011. ISBN: 9780375841989)

03 **Moonbird: A Year on the Wind With the Great Survivor B95 by Philip Hoose**
of 10

B95 is a super athlete! A Red Knot shorebird first banded by scientists on a beach in Patagonia in 1995, B95 has logged enough migratory miles between the tip of South America and the northern Canadian Arctic to have traveled to the moon and back. Author and conservationist Phillip Hoose tells the story of this legendary bird and his amazing survival despite the environmental challenges forcing many shorebirds into extinction. (Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2012. ISBN: 9780374304683)

04 **Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice by Phillip Hoose**
of 10

Before Rosa Parks, there was Claudette Colvin. In March of 1955, 15-year-old Claudette refused to give up her bus seat to a white woman. The teen was hauled off the bus in handcuffs and taken to the police station. Because she was young, outspoken, and known for being a troublemaker, the civil rights activists of the day decided Colvin was an unsuitable candidate to represent their cause. However, Claudette would get a second opportunity to speak out against injustice, and this time her voice would be heard. (Square Fish, Macmillan, 2010. ISBN: 9780312661052)

05 **Wheels of Change: How Women Rode the Bicycle to Freedom by Sue Macy**
of 10

Which invention introduced a new recreational pastime, changed women's fashions, turned social tradition on its head, and paved the way for the women's vote? The bicycle! In vintage style, Sue Macy takes readers for a ride through a

timeline establishing the bicycle as the simple invention that led to radical changes for women. (National Geographic, 2011. ISBN: 9781426307614)

06 **Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust**
of 10

Jewish resistance groups throughout Europe worked quietly, quickly, and methodically to sabotage Hitler's regime. From blowing up key sections of railroad track to cutting telegraph lines to planting homemade bombs near German headquarters, partisan groups proved they had nothing to lose and were beyond courage. (Candlewick Press, 2012. ISBN: 9780763629762) Read a book review of .

07 **How They Croaked: The Awful Ends of the Awfully Famous by Georgia Bragg**
of 10

Irreverent, quirky, and factual, Georgia Bragg introduces readers to the ghastly deaths of some of history's biggest celebrities. From King Henry the VIII's pussoozing leg wound to Marie Curie's blackened radium-tainted fingers to Einstein's brain floating in formaldehyde, the morbid details of 19 historical figures deaths are brought to hideous life, with the text by Georgia Bragg and illustrations by Kevin O'Malley. (Walker Childrens, 2011. ISBN: 9780802798176)

08 **Flesh and Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and its Legacy by Albert Marrin**
of 10

On May 25, 1911, the wooden structure known as the Triangle Waist Factory went up in flames trapping women factory workers behind locked doors. In a matter of minutes, 146 people died. Most of the victims were of Jewish and Italian descent and newly immigrated to America. With candid detail, noted historian Albert Marrin explores the story of immigration and how the Triangle Fire tragedy triggered changes in working conditions. (Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. ISBN: 9780375868894)

09 Lincoln's Grave Robbers by Steve Sheinkin

of 10

In 1875 Secret Service agents break up a Chicago counterfeiting ring and arrest the leader, Ben Boyd. To get their leader back, the counterfeiting gang comes up with a devious plan: steal Lincoln's body from the grave and hold it for ransom. A small slice of historical trivia becomes the setting for a true crime thriller in yet another exciting read from history writer Steve Sheinkin. Recommended for ages 10 to 14. (Scholastic, 2013. ISBN: 9780545405720)

10 Trapped by Marc Aronson

of 10

In 2010, 33 miners were trapped for 69 days in a collapsed mine 2,000 feet below the surface in Chile. A worldwide effort ensued as scientists, drillers, nutritionists, and other experts put their knowledge together to keep these miners alive, alert, and hopeful of an imminent rescue. Detailed interviews of this current event alongside the geological history of the terrain make this short narrative nonfiction an informative and heartfelt read. *Trapped: How the World Rescued 33 Miners from 2,000 Feet Below in the Chilean Desert* by Marc Aronson is recommended for ages 10 to 14. (Atheneum, Simon & Schuster, 2011. ISBN: 9781416913979)

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