Finding Books with Diverse Characters

Search character appeal
Character appeal terms are a great way to search for books where the personalities and characteristics of the individuals are particularly noteworthy, and they now include specific information about characters coming from marginalized identities. See a full list in NoveList (search **TI “Appeal Index”** from the basic search bar), but a few examples of these terms include:

For disabilities: **Blind or have low vision**; **Physically disabled**; **Neurodivergent**

For race/ethnicity: **Asian**; **Black**; **Latino/Latina/Latine**; **Multiracial**

For gender and sexual orientation: **Asexual**; **Lesbian**; **Nonbinary**; **Queer**

For religion: **Atheist**; **Buddhist**; **Hindu**; **Pagan**

Real-world examples
Copy and paste these sample search strings. These searches use **field codes**.

Black characters in historical fiction:
**AP Black AND GN historical fiction**

Books about characters with physical disabilities and friendship:
**AP physically disabled AND SU friendship**

Character-driven books about a multiracial teenager:
**AP character-driven AND AP multiracial AND SU teenagers**

All kinds of lives
Our **All Kinds of Lives** Recommended Reads lists are ready-made lists with books that highlight the diversity of family, individual, and social situations.

Librarians and Educators: Need a list of books with characters of all different backgrounds?

Readers: Want to read about people who share your culture/religion/disability/sexual orientation?

Caregivers: Looking for a book with characters that your child can connect with?

When to use:

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TRY IT

At the **Advanced Search**, enter one or more of the identity terms in the search boxes.

Select **AP Appeal Factors** from the drop-down for each term selected.

Click **Search**.

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TRY IT

From the **Recommended Reads Lists** section on the homepage, select the **Fiction** tab.

Select the **Adult**, **Teen**, **Ages 9-12**, or **Ages 0-8** audience.

Click the **All Kinds of Lives** or **All Kinds of Reads** links, and select a list.
Finding Books with Diverse Characters (continued)

Search subjects, genres, and themes
While character identity terms provide basic broad character background, subject headings provide even more specific detail, genres connect you to the storytelling tradition, and themes help you dial in on recurring plot elements.

See a full list of genres in NoveList by searching Ti “Genre Index”
See a full list of themes in NoveList by searching Ti “Theme Index”

EXAMPLES
Subject examples: African Americans, autism, interfaith families, interethnic relations
Genre examples: LGBTQIA fiction, multicultural romances
Themes examples: dealing with mental illness; engendering gender; living with invisible disability; living with visible disability; all kinds of families

Search for #OwnVoices
To find works where the main character and the author share a marginalized identity, use the own voices appeal term. The term started as a hashtag created by YA author and disability activist Corinne Duyvis in September 2015. Enter AP own voices in the search bar and then set limiters to narrow down the results.

TRY IT
Enter AP own voices in the search bar.
Select the Teen audience under Refine Results.
Expand the Genre limiter and select Realistic fiction.
Expand the Theme limiter and select Immigrant experiences.

Explore Diversity Resources
From books to services to programming, NoveList has many tools you can use to make your library welcoming for all. In NoveList and NoveList Plus, access the Explore Diversity Resources page from the Explore Pages carousel on the homepage.

Browse award lists
In the search bar, enter ND award winners AND SU diversity to find lists of diverse award-winning books like the Walter Dean Myers Awards for Outstanding Children’s Literature and the American Indian Youth

EXAMPLES
Asian Pacific American Award for Literature
BCALA (Black Caucus of the American Library Association) Literary Award
Coretta Scott King Award
Hurston/Wright Legacy Awards
Lambda Literary Awards
National Jewish Book Awards
Pura Belpré Award
Schneider Family Book Awards
Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award

www.ebsco.com/novelist