

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**

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**.

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.

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.

When to use:



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?

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 subjects (SU), genres (GN), and themes (TH) using [field codes](#). For example: **GN LGBTQIA fiction**

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