



## Discussion Project Reading Lists

All reading lists marked with an asterisk\* are suitable for readers of various levels and people with significant time constraints.

### **Maine at 200: How should life be?**

We view our state's **bicentennial year**, 2020, as an invitation to take stock, to look back with new eyes at what's already happened, to look around with renewed care at what's happening now, and to grapple with big questions, like **who are we? where are we? how did we get here? and where might we be going?** And the most important place to talk about big questions like these is wherever we live and work and engage with the opportunities and challenges of life in Maine.

There are so many ways of approaching this big question!

We have put together four different reading lists for you to choose from. All of them are intended to provide opportunities for people to engage with any or all of our four bicentennial themes: Many Maines, Migration & Borders, Race & Ethnicity, Wabanaki Voices.

#### **\*Poetry!**

*3 Nations Anthology: Native, Canadian, & New England Writers*, edited by Valerie Lawson  
Additional poems by Maine authors will be provided via PDF and/or in a printed packet.

#### **\*Freedom Over Me**

*Freedom Over Me: Eleven slaves, their lives and dreams brought to life*, by Ashley Bryan.  
*Magnificent Homespun Brown: A Celebration*, by Samara Cole Doyon. Illustrated by Kaylani Juanita.  
*The Canoe Maker: David Moses Bridges, Passamaquoddy Birch Bark Artisan*, by Jean Flahive and Donald Soctoma. Illustrated by Mari Dieumegard.  
Additional short readings will be provided via PDF and/or in a printed packet.

#### **\*A New Land**

*A New Land: A Collection of Youth Poetry*, from the Telling Room  
*Thanks to the Animals*, by Allen Sockabasin, Passamaquoddy Storyteller. Illustrated by Rebekah Raye.  
*Moon Watchers: Shirin's Ramadan Miracle*, by Reza Jalali. Illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien.  
Additional short readings will be provided via PDF and/or in a printed packet.

## Life and Times

'The life and times of Strider Wolf', Sarah Schweitzer & Jessica Rinaldi (photo essay)

'Work', Lura Beam; 'Kennebec Crystals', Robert P. Tristram Coffin (short stories)

*Seaweed Chronicles: A World at the Water's Edge*, Susan Hand Shetterly (selections)

'My Father, Out to Sea', Jaed Coffin (essay)

*Women of the Dawn*, Bunny McBride (nonfiction; selections)

*Dawnland Voices: An Anthology of Indigenous Writings from New England*, ed. Siobhan Senier (selections)

*3 Nations Anthology: Native, Canadian, & New England Writers*, ed. Valerie Lawson (selections)

'The Shameful Story of Malaga Island', William David Barry, *Downeast Magazine* 1980 (article)

Joint Resolution Recognizing the Tragic Expulsion of the Residents of Malaga Island, 124th Legislature,  
April 7, 2010

*Somalis in Maine: Crossing Cultural Currents*, ed. Kimberly Huisman & Mazie Hough (selections)

Oral Histories from the USM Franco-American Collection: Marie Sturtevant

'Island Body' & 'Mexican Almuerzo in New England', Richard Blanco (poems)

## Things Fall Apart

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, is one of our featured books this year. It's a powerful, accessible novel that explores family, society, and the destructive clash of cultures in the moment of colonization in Nigeria.

"*Things Fall Apart* may well be Africa's best-loved novel ... For so many readers around the world, it is Chinua Achebe who opened up the magic casements of African fiction."

— Kwame Anthony Appiah

"The power and majesty of Chinua Achebe's work has, literally, opened the world to generations of readers. He is an ambassador of art, and a profound recorder of the human condition."

— Michael Dorris

"[Achebe is] a powerful voice for cultural decolonization."

— *The Village Voice*

The book can stand alone as the text for a series of discussions, or as part of 5 different lists that explore some of Achebe's key themes in two or more texts.

### \*Two worlds at once

*Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe

*The New Kid*, by Jerry Craft

### Family

*Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe

*The Round House*, by Louise Erdrich

### Community

*Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe

*Year of Wonders*, by Geraldine Brooks

*Doing Time: 25 Years of Prison Writing*, edited by Bell Gale Chevigny

## **Cultures Interacting**

*Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe

*No No Boy*, by John Okada

*There There*, by Tommy Orange

## **Justice**

*Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe

*Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, by Bryan Stevenson

*The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race*, edited by Jesmyn Ward

*Homegoing*, by Yaa Gyasi

## **One Book is Enough**

While we often include several texts in the reading list for a discussion series, one book is enough. For the Fall Discussion Project, there are two books on offer as stand-alone texts.

***Stamped: Racism, Anti-Racism, and You***, by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi

Through a gripping, fast-paced, and energizing narrative written by beloved award-winner Jason Reynolds, this book shines a light on the many insidious forms of racist ideas—and on ways readers can identify and stamp out racist thoughts in their daily lives.

***Things Fall Apart***, by Chinua Achebe

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, is one of our featured books this year. It's a powerful, accessible novel that explores family, society, and the destructive clash of cultures in the moment of colonization in Nigeria.

## **Choose your own texts**

If you want to use texts that you and your group choose for your Discussion Project – great!

Texts for discussion are often pieces of writing – stories, novels, essays, poems – but texts can be surprisingly varied. The pictures in illustrated stories, images with no text at all, audio recordings, video recordings ... all sorts of things can be excellent grounding for rich, meaningful discussion among participants in a group.

As you think about texts to use, remember that fostering a discussion is easiest when the text the group reads allows openings for interpretation. In our experience, stories (long or short, with or without illustrations) and poems often allow such openings, and invite people to think and feel in new ways, and to explore people and situations different from their own. We have found that texts explaining an issue or providing information often feel more accessible when a poem or story is included alongside them – the evidence they provide can be put to use as people work to understand and find words for their understanding of the story or poem.

Please be in touch with us if you have any questions!  
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