



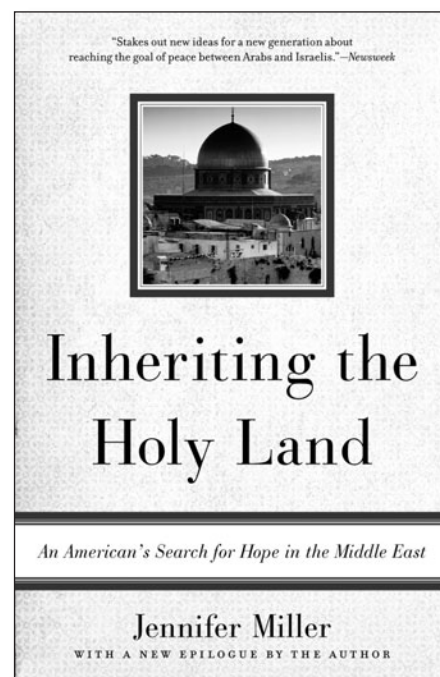
# Inheriting the Holy Land

## An American's Search for Hope in the Middle East

by Jennifer Miller

Ballantine | Trade Paperback  
978-0-345-46925-0 | 320 pages | \$14.95/\$21.00 Can.

Reading Level: 9



### • note to teachers •

*Inheriting the Holy Land* is the result of author Jennifer Miller's involvement with an organization called Seeds of Peace. Seeds of Peace was founded in 1993 by John Wallach, a former diplomatic correspondent for the Hearst newspapers. After the first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, Wallach conceived the idea of an international summer camp that focused on conflict resolution. Jennifer Miller, who participated in Seeds both as a camper and as a counselor, later spent six months in Israel and the occupied territories where she interviewed Israeli and Palestinian alumni of Seeds of Peace. Miller was interested in finding the lasting influences of the Seeds experience on these young people. The resulting book is an informative, anecdotal account of daily life in a region torn by violence and a presentation of the reasons for renewed hope in the next generation for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

*Inheriting the Holy Land* can provide an enriching and unique perspective on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict for any class that is examining world history or global issues. With the renewed outbreak of hostilities in that region in the summer of 2006, the book has become particularly timely.

### • about the book •

Shortly after graduating from Brown University, Jennifer Miller traveled to Israel to interview Seeds of Peace alumni. She wanted to see the region and the conflict through the eyes of the generation that will inherit both the land and the conflicts surrounding it. Miller was curious to see how much of the Seeds experience stayed with these young people once they had returned to their homes and daily lives. What she discovered gave her hope that the future leaders of Palestine and Israel will find a peaceful resolution to their nations' conflicts. Miller believes, however, that the United States must take a major role in helping this resolution become a reality.

*Inheriting the Holy Land* is written in an anecdotal style. The book is built around interviews with the Seeds of Peace alumni, interviews with the current leaders of Israel and Palestine, and Miller's own observations. Miller includes a wealth of historical background, but it is scattered throughout the book, appearing during pertinent scenes. For that reason, it is important to provide background information to students before assigning this book.

## • about the author

**JENNIFER MILLER** is a Jewish-American woman from what she acknowledges is a privileged, middle-class background. Her interest and involvement in the Middle East are the results of the influence of her father's career (he is a Middle Eastern expert for the U.S. State Department) and of her own experience with an organization called Seeds of Peace. Begun in 1993 by John Wallach, Seeds of Peace is a youth camp that brings young Israelis, Palestinians, and Arabs to the United States to focus on finding solutions to the conflict between their nations. Miller first attended Seeds of Peace as one of the American campers, and she later worked as a counselor at the camp. She is a graduate of Brown University and currently lives in Providence, RI. *Inheriting the Holy Land* is her first book.

## • teaching ideas

*Inheriting the Holy Land* is suitable for high school or college students who are studying world history or global affairs. It could be used on the upper middle-school level, but would require more guidance on the part of the teacher.

The book can be used in a study of current events to enhance a student's understanding of the origins and characteristics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It is an obvious source of information for courses in Middle Eastern history, world history, modern American foreign affairs, or diplomatic history. It also provides valuable reading for any study of cultural or ethnic conflicts. With the growing interest in Middle Eastern affairs, any class could benefit from a study of Miller's book.

In schools that require specific books for summer reading, *Inheriting the Holy Land* would be a valid assignment because it gives readers greater insight into a Middle East situation that impacts American national security and foreign affairs.

Finally, the book can be used in journalism or writing classes as an example of interview and anecdotal writing.

## • discussion and writing: comprehension

### “Preface”

Miller begins with a summary of her last days in Israel and of her attitude as she prepared to return home.

1. Why does Miller describe her journey from Gaza to Tel Aviv as “unimaginable for most Israelis and Palestinians”?
2. What two important provisions are needed for the journey?
3. What connection does she draw between the movie *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?
4. What has convinced her that “hatred, mistrust, and bias are learned”?
5. What is the only way to understand or solve the Palestinian-Israeli crisis?
6. What group does Miller believe can solve the conflict? Why?
7. What does she identify as the greatest lesson the adults of the region can teach the youth?

## “Introduction: An Antipolitics Kid”

Vocabulary: *polemic, shisha, intifada*

Miller describes her background and the way she became involved with Seeds of Peace.

1. What aspects of Miller’s background led to her interest in the Middle East?
2. What are her goals in writing the book?

---

## “An Unusual Friendship”

Vocabulary: *Star of David, Yom Kippur*

Miller visits an Israeli boy and a Palestinian boy who became good friends at the Seeds of Peace camp.

1. Describe Omri.
2. Describe Mohammed.
3. What obstacles stand in the way of their continued friendship?
4. What do the Star of David and the army tag represent to Omri?
5. What does Mohammed’s necklace represent to Mohammed?
6. What does Mohammed’s necklace represent to Omri?
7. Why did the U.N. partition of Palestine in the 1940s fail?
8. Why do Arabs call the 1948 war of independence “The Catastrophe”?
9. What happened to the Arab Muslims who lived in the territory that became Israel?
10. What threatening clause was removed from the Palestinian Charter in 1998?
11. What attitudes do the boys express concerning the city of Jerusalem? How are their attitudes alike? How are they different?

---

## “Our Dream, Jerusalem”

Miller examines the effects of a bombing in Jerusalem.

1. Why didn’t Omri call Mohammed after the bombing in 2003? Why didn’t Mohammed call Omri?
2. Which boy does Miller seem to think should have made the first move? Why?
3. Who was Yitzhak Rabin? Who is Benjamin Netanyahu? How did their attitudes during their respective terms as Israeli prime minister differ?
4. What was unique about the Seeds of Peace camp in 1997?
5. Why have Seeds of Peace officials never again stopped camp in response to Middle Eastern violence?
6. What bombing took place two blocks from Miller’s Jerusalem home?

## • discussion and writing: comprehension (continued)

### “A Tourist in the Old City”

Mohammed takes Miller on a tour of Jerusalem.

1. By what other name is the Lion's Gate in Jerusalem known?
2. What is an Arab *souk*?
3. What is the main entrance to the Arab part of Jerusalem called?
4. Why does Mohammed think of al-Ram, rather than the Old City, as his home?
5. What does *Haram al-Sharif* mean? What do Jews call this Jerusalem site?
6. What is *Waqf*?
7. What controversy surrounds the Haram?
8. Why is Miller not surprised that some Palestinians celebrated the 9/11 bombings in the U.S.?
9. How does Miller state the basic belief of American negotiators (p.38)?
10. What has been the attitude of Arab governments toward the Palestinians?

### “Textbook Debates”

Miller examines the curricula at Israeli and Palestinian schools.

1. What conclusion does Miller reach concerning the choice of *The Merchant of Venice* as the play at a Palestinian high school?
2. What is important about Reem's father?
3. What does Miller see as the root of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis? How do the Palestinian and Israeli educational systems exacerbate this problem?
4. What nations controlled the curricula in Palestinian schools before the Oslo Accords in 1994?
5. What three recommendations did the CDC make about the curricula in Palestinian schools?
6. How are religion and religious beliefs addressed in Palestinian schools? What kind of reaction has this treatment received?
7. What different views of women are expressed by Mohammed and Tamara?
8. According to Miller, why do Palestinian textbooks “educate for identity as much as for knowledge” (p.55)?
9. What is the CMIP? How are its reports viewed?
10. What does Miller see as the “main difficulty with Palestinian education” (p.61)?
11. What basic conflict does Israel face in its history curriculum? What are the arguments for and against each position?
12. How is religion handled in Israeli schools and textbooks as compared with its treatment in Palestinian schools and books?
13. Through what three stages has Israeli education gone since the founding of Israel in 1948?
14. On what point concerning the 1948 war do Palestinian and Israeli texts differ? How?

## “Forever a Citizen, Never Israeli”

**Vocabulary:** Hizbollah, Hamas

Miller examines the experience of Arabs living in Israel.

1. What is Yara's background?
2. How is the Arab minority treated? Give specific examples.
3. What opinion, shared by many Jews, does Omri express? What is his justification?
4. What does Miller believe is necessary for a peaceful solution to the conflict?
5. How does Nardin view herself? What obligation does she recognize? What obligation does she not recognize?
6. What possibility is foreseen by Jews who call Israeli Arabs a “demographic threat” (p.78)?
7. How are Arabs responsible for their second-class status? How is the Israeli government responsible?
8. Why did the Arab community abstain from the 2001 national elections?
9. What happened to Asel Asleh?
10. What was the official explanation given by the government?

---

## “A Different Kind of Orthodox”

**Vocabulary:** orthodox

Miller visits and interviews Orthodox Jews.

1. What field trip did Miller make at the age of twelve?
2. What differences in lifestyle was Miller surprised to find?
3. Who “shattered” Miller's image of Orthodox Judaism? How?
4. What is the status of the religion of Judaism in Israel?
5. How is Omri different?
6. What are the characteristics of Sari's Orthodox lifestyle?
7. Why is there tension between secular Israelis and Israelis who are Orthodox Jews? How does this tension affect the basic purpose of Israel?
8. What is the significance of rebellious teenagers and the golden bull?
9. How can Israel respond if and when the Palestinian population outnumbers the Jewish population?

## • discussion and writing: comprehension (continued)

### “Tekoa”

Vocabulary: orthodox

Miller visits a Jewish settlement on the West Bank.

1. How do the Jewish settlers of the West Bank and Gaza view the U.S. opinion of them?
2. What territories did Israel win in 1967? From whom?
3. Based on U.N. Resolution 242 and the Fourth Geneva Convention, what is the status of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza? Why?
4. What justification do the Israelis give for the settlements?
5. What is the attitude of the sheikh of Wadi Nis toward the settlements?
6. What do the settlers call the West Bank?
7. What is Kayla's attitude toward the Palestinians and peace?
8. What is Rabbi Menachem Froman's view of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?
9. How does the rabbi interpret the Muslim phrase *Allahu Akbar*?
10. What conclusion does Miller reach after her conversation with Rabbi Froman?

### “Ramallah”

Miller visits a Palestinian town in the West Bank.

1. When Miller visited Ramallah, why was Arafat “trapped” in his headquarters?
2. Describe Ramallah.
3. What were the economic results of the second intifada and Operation Defensive Shield?
4. What personal experiences concerning the occupation and its aftermath did Reem and her family describe?

### “Soldiers and Seeds”

Miller interviews Seeds of Peace alumni who have served in the past or who still serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

1. What groups in Israel are exempt from compulsory military service?
2. Which earlier organization established precedent for the IDF? When and how did that organization operate? How was it different from other contemporary organizations?
3. What advantages helped Israel win a victory in 1948?
4. Why is Israel's modern army one of the most competent in the world?
5. How did the Israeli attitude toward the military change in the 1990s and again after 2000? Why?
6. What was Yoyo's attitude toward his Palestinian friends from Seeds of Peace when he began to prepare for his military service?
7. Describe the conscription process.
8. How did his military service change Uri?
9. What is Yoyo's criticism of the army's role?
10. Who is Ami Ayalon? What does he believe is the political problem?
11. How does Yoyo justify the IDF's tactics?
12. How does reality conflict with the Seeds of Peace experience?

## “Through the Gates of Gaza”

Miller visits Palestinians in Gaza.

1. What is Erez Crossing?
2. Describe the checkpoint process.
3. What tactics were used during the first intifada?
4. What does *hamas* mean in Arabic? How did the organization begin and change during and after the first intifada?
5. Why did Israel not trust the 2003 *hudna* (truce) with Hamas?
6. What teachings of the Koran seem to contradict the ideas and practices of Hamas?
7. Why do some Christian Palestinians support Hamas?
8. What factors led Hamas to become a more political entity in 2005?
9. What effects of refugee life on the children did Miller encounter in the refugee camp?
10. What attitudes toward the U.S. are expressed by Palestinians in Gaza?
11. Miller describes her reaction to Gaza as one of “disgust.” With what and whom is she disgusted? Why?

## “All About Abu”

Miller interviews and profiles the current generation of Palestinian leaders known as “Abu.”

1. What does Fatah mean in Arabic? What is its aim?
2. Why does Mohammed Dahlan feel that Israel’s demands are unreasonable?
3. Why do Israelis respect the late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat and Jordanian King Hussein?
4. What does Miller believe was the reason for Arafat’s “inaction” at the Camp David summit in 2000?
5. In what ways do Palestinians perceive the Palestinian Authority as an organization that steals from them? Is there evidence that this perception is true?
6. What does Miller mean by “insiders” and “outsiders” in the Palestinian world? How is Mohammed Dahlan a “hybrid”?
7. What does Ruba see as the problem with traditional Palestinian leadership? What advantage do younger Palestinians have?
8. Who are the Samaritans? What is their status?
9. Who are the Neturei Karta? What is their stand on Israel?
10. What did Miller learn in her interview with Arafat?
11. What is the relationship between the ineffectiveness of the Palestinian Authority and the growing popularity of radical groups such as Hamas?
12. Why does Qaddura Faris believe Palestinian leaders must understand Israel’s language and history?



## • discussion and writing: comprehension (continued)

### “Clinton’s Applause”

**Vocabulary:** coalition, cynicism, kibbutz

Miller examines the current state of the peace process.

1. Why was the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin seen as a tragedy for the peace process?
2. What was the *Atalena*? What connection did Rabin have to it?
3. Explain what is meant by a coalition government. What are the weaknesses of such a government?
4. How is the career of Gila Gamliel typical of Israeli politicians? How does this process contribute to the public cynicism toward politics?
5. What threat does the cynicism of young people present?
6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of someone like Shimon Peres in Israel’s current situation?
7. What agreement did the two major political parties in Israel make in 2005?
8. Who is Yassi Beilin? What actions has he taken for peace? How is he perceived in Israel?
9. According to Barak, what is the desire of the “silent majority” in Israel?

### “Hope for the Holy Land”

**Vocabulary:** meritocracy

Miller looks for reasons to hope that a peaceful resolution can be found.

1. Why does Miller consider peace a creative process?
2. What effect did the Seeds of Peace experience have on Mohammed? On Omri?
3. How did Seeds of Peace give Dalal and others an “alternative worldview” (p.234)?
4. What conclusions does Miller reach about Ayat, the suicide bomber?
5. Does Miller agree that “in the end, negotiation will end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, not fighting” (p.238)? How?
6. What connection does Miller see between Israeli policies and the growth of anti-Semitism worldwide?
7. For what “domestic reason” should Israel pursue negotiation?
8. What questions does Miller believe young Israelis and Palestinians ask that their leaders do not?
9. Why does Miller believe that the boys in Ramallah lack hope?
10. Why does Miller believe that the young people in the Camp David photo are “the ones who really matter” (p.244)?

### “Epilogue: Reflections of America”

Miller reflects on her experiences in the Middle East.

1. What conclusions concerning America does Miller reach in her self-reflection?



## • discussion and writing: discussion

1. Based on the experiences of Omri and Mohammed, what obstacles stand in the way of peace between Israelis and Palestinians?
2. Do you see similarities between the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the racial tensions in the U.S. (e.g., tensions caused by black-white conflicts and by current issues concerning illegal immigration)? Explain.
3. American organizations host various camps such as Seeds of Peace for children from similar situations. What does America's multicultural society have that regions such as the Middle East, Northern Ireland, and India and Pakistan, for example, do not?
4. Palestinians are in a sense "men without a country." What does this mean for them in day-to-day terms? What repercussions go along with this lack of identity?
5. On the basis of the opinions expressed in this book, what seems to be the attitude of the rest of the world toward the U.S.? How is that perception incorrect?
6. Miller discusses the biases in Palestinian and Israeli textbooks and educational systems. How do American texts and schools handle the issues of the Middle East? Are there biases apparent in our materials?
7. What role can or should education play in bringing about a peaceful settlement to the conflict in the Middle East?
8. On pages 99 and 100, Miller discusses the very real threat posed to Israel by demographics. In light of this reality, what are the options for Israel? What are the pros and cons of each option?
9. Is it valid to say that Seeds of Peace does for Israeli and Palestinian young people what the integration of public schools did for American youth? Explain.
10. Read the chapter "Clinton's Applause." What similarities do you see between the American and Israeli political arenas? What differences?
11. On pages 243 and 244, Miller discusses changes in the Palestinian government after Arafat's death. How did the election in 2005 of a government led by Hamas change her predictions?
12. Do you agree with the conclusions Miller reaches concerning America's role in the Middle East? Explain.
13. What effect do you think the events of the summer of 2006 will have on the young people in the book and on the peace process in general?

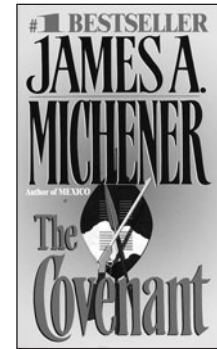
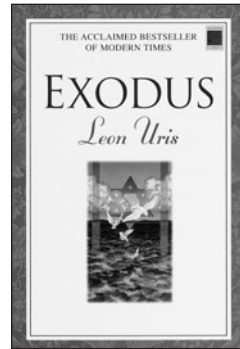
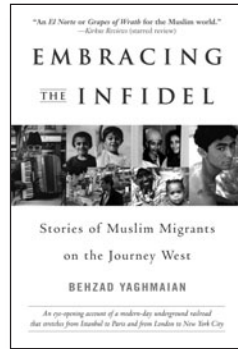
## • class activities

1. Miller's timeline begins in 1947. Ask students to construct a timeline going back to the ancient and medieval periods for a complete understanding of the history of this region. Assign topics for oral reports based on this research.
2. Miller mentions films such as *Exodus* and *Not Without My Daughter*. Watch these films in class and analyze the depiction of Israeli and Arab culture and politics presented in each.
3. Research one of the historical or political figures mentioned in the book. Report on this person's contributions to or actions against peace.
4. Watch documentaries such as the PBS video *Wounded Spirits in the Promised Land* for additional perspective on the Middle East.
5. Ask students to compose letters to the President or to their Congressmen or Senators that express the students' opinions concerning the American responsibility in the Middle East.
6. Draw a map of Israel and the occupied territories and identify the cities and towns that Miller visited. Indicate which areas are predominantly Israeli and which are predominantly Palestinian.

## • beyond the book

1. Research the ancient incident at Masada. How does that incident relate to the mindset of the modern state of Israel?
2. Read other books that deal with religious or ethnic conflict, such as *Covenant* by James Michener, *Trinity* by Leon Uris, or *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Compare the attitudes, sources of conflict, and causes for hope that are depicted in these novels with those of the situation in the Middle East.
3. Read other books that deal with the state of Israel, such as *Dawn* by Elie Wiesel or *Exodus* by Leon Uris. Do these books give you more or less reason to hope?
4. Research one or more of the Arab-Israeli Wars (1948, 1956, 1967, 1973). How did each of these conflicts affect the peace process?
5. Research Seeds of Peace and other similar organizations. If possible, interview people who have participated in these programs.
6. If possible, interview Americans of Middle Eastern or Jewish backgrounds. What insight can they give you concerning the situation in the Middle East?

## • for further reading



### ***The Gun and the Olive Branch***

by Thomas Paine

### ***Image and Reality of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict***

by Norman G. Finkelstein

### ***One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate***

by Tom Segev

### ***The Seventh Million: Israelis and the Holocaust***

by Tom Segev

### ***Death as a Way of Life: From Oslo to the Geneva Agreement***

by David Grossman and Haim Watzman

### ***Embracing the Infidel***

by Behzad Yaghmaian

***Dawn*** by Elie Wiesel

***Exodus*** by Leon Uris

***Trinity*** by Leon Uris

***Covenant*** by James Michener

***Kaffir Boy*** by Mark Mathabane

***Manchild in the Promised Land***

by Claude Brown

***To Kill a Mockingbird***

by Harper Lee

***Edges: O Israel, O Palestine***

by Leora Skolkin-Smith

***The Last Jihad***

by Joel C. Rosenberg

## • about this guide's writer

**Susan Corley** teaches high school history in South Carolina. Her experience is with many different levels of students in grades 9-12. She has also taught high school English and served as an adjunct for local colleges.

## • other guides available

We have developed teacher's guides to help educators by providing questions that explore reading themes, test reading skills and evaluate reading comprehension. These guides have been written by teachers like you and other experts in the fields of writing and education. Each book is appropriate for high school readers. Reading ability, subject matter and interest level have been considered in each teacher's guide.

To obtain these free teacher's guides, please visit our website:

<http://www.randomhouse.com/highschool>

### Fiction:

Achebe, Chinua. **Things Fall Apart**  
Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. **Purple Hibiscus**  
Asimov, Isaac. **I, Robot**  
Bradbury, Ray. **Fahrenheit 451**  
Brooks, Terry. **The Shannara Trilogy**  
Butler, William. **The Butterfly Revolution**  
Cather, Willa. **My Antonia**  
Cisneros, Sandra. **La casa en Mango Street**  
Cisneros, Sandra. **The House on Mango Street**  
Clark, William van Tilburg. **The Ox-Bow Incident**  
Clarke, Arthur C. **Childhood's End**  
Cook, Karin. **What Girls Learn**  
Crichton, Michael. **Jurassic Park**  
Dunn, Mark. **Ella Minnow Pea**  
Ellis, Ella Throp. **Swimming with the Whales**  
Ellison, Ralph. **Invisible Man**  
Gaines, Ernest. **A Lesson Before Dying**  
García Márquez, Gabriel. **Chronicle of a Death Foretold**  
Gibbons, Kaye. **Ellen Foster**  
Guterson, David. **Snow Falling on Cedars**  
Hansberry, Lorraine. **A Raisin in the Sun**  
Hayes, Daniel. **Eye of the Beholder**  
Hayes, Daniel. **The Trouble with Lemons**  
Homer. Fitzgerald, Robert, trans. **The Odyssey**  
Kafka, Franz. **The Trial**  
L'Amour, Louis. **Hondo**  
Le Guin, Ursula K. **A Wizard of Earthsea**  
Maxwell, William. **So Long, See You Tomorrow**  
McCarthy, Cormac. **All The Pretty Horses**  
Mori, Kyoko. **Shizuko's Daughter**  
Naylor, Gloria. **Mama Day**  
Otsuka, Julie. **When the Emperor Was Divine**  
Potok, Chaim. **The Chosen**  
Pullman, Philip. **The Amber Spyglass**  
Pullman, Philip. **The Golden Compass**  
Pullman, Philip. **The Subtle Knife**  
Rawles, Nancy. **My Jim**  
Remarque, Erich Maria. **All Quiet on the Western Front**  
Richter, Conrad. **The Light in the Forest**  
Shaara, Jeff. **Gods and Generals**  
Shaara, Jeff. **The Last Full Measure**  
Shaara, Michael. **The Killer Angels**

Shute, Neil. **On the Beach**  
Smith, Alexander McCall. **The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency**  
Sparks, Christine. **The Elephant Man**  
Spiegelman, Art. **Maus I**  
Tan, Amy. **The Joy Luck Club**  
Tolkien, J.R.R. **Lord of the Rings Trilogy**  
Tolkien, J.R.R. **The Hobbit**  
Twain, Mark. **Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**  
Voigt, Cynthia. **Dacey's Song**  
Voigt, Cynthia. **Homecoming**  
Wartski, Maureen. **Candle in the Wind**  
Wolff, Tobias. **Old School**

### Nonfiction:

Armstrong, Karen. **Islam**  
Baldwin, James. **Nobody Knows My Name**  
Baldwin, James. **The Fire Next Time**  
Bible. **The Five Books of Moses**  
Blank, Carla. **Rediscovering America**  
Cary, Lorene. **Black Ice**  
Chen, Da. **Colors of the Mountain**  
Collins, Billy. **Poetry 180/180 More**  
Conway, Jill Ker. **The Road from Coorain**  
Frank, Anne. **Diary of a Young Girl**  
Haley, Alex. **The Autobiography of Malcolm X**  
Hickam, Homer. **October Sky**  
Hunter, Latoya. **The Diary of Latoya Hunter**  
Hunter-Gault, Charlayne. **In My Place**  
Katz, Jon. **Geeks**  
Kennedy, Randall. **Nigger**  
Kidder, Tracy. **Mountains Beyond Mountains**  
Lewis, Anthony. **Gideon's Trumpet**  
Nafisi, Azar. **Reading Lolita in Tehran**  
Opdyke, Irene Gut. **In My Hands**  
Pollan, Michael. **The Botany of Desire**  
Santiago, Esmeralda. **Almost a Woman**  
Santiago, Esmeralda. **Cuando era puertorriqueña**  
Santiago, Esmeralda. **When I Was Puerto Rican**  
Suskind, Ron. **A Hope in the Unseen**  
Thomas, Piri. **Down These Mean Streets**  
Whiteley, Opal. **Opal: The Journey of an Understanding Heart**