



Thriving Young
— Teachers —

Bringing Passion, Skill, and Confidence Together

25 Great Books About Teachers that Every Teacher Should Read

Five Great Teachers in Middle Grade Novels

1. Ms. Bixby in [Ms. Bixby's Last Day](#) by John David Anderson
Ms. Bixby is “one of the good ones.” When she becomes ill, three sixth graders in her class set out on a quest to give her a day she will never forget. We won't forget either.
2. Mrs. Granger in [Frindle](#) by Andrew Clements
When fifth grader Nick invents a new word, Mrs. Granger tries to put a stop to his shenanigans. She is not the typical beloved teacher in children's books, but you will love her in the end.
3. Miss Pointy in [Sahara Special](#) by Esmé Raji Codell
Sahara struggles in school. When her mother removes her from the special education program she encounters Miss Pointy, who doesn't look or act like other teachers. Miss Pointy might just save Sahara, and all of us.
4. Miss Agnes in [The Year of Miss Agnes](#) by Kirkpatrick Hill
Everything about education changes when Miss Agnes shows up in a small Alaskan village. She brings art, music and stories of the world to her students. Her story may take place in the past, but her teaching methods are something we can aspire to today.
5. Miss Edmunds in [Bridge to Terabithia](#) by Katherine Paterson
Once in a while a teacher comes along who really understands you. Miss Edmunds shows us the power a teacher has to deeply affect the lives of her students.

Five Great Teachers in Children's Picture Books

1. Mr. Slinger in [Lily's Purple Plastic Purse](#) by Kevin Henkes
Lily is having a bad day, but Mr. Slinger is able to help her through it in a kind and understanding way. We also give him bonus points for inventing "the lightbulb lab."
2. Mr. Falker in [Thank You Mr. Falker](#) by Patricia Polacco
Trisha struggles with reading and becomes the victim of bullying. Mr. Falker recognizes her reading disabilities and teaches her how to read. This book is a love story to a teacher who made a difference in the life of a little girl.
3. Miss Nelson in [Miss Nelson is Missing](#) by Harry Allard
When her class misbehaves, clever Miss Nelson teaches them a lesson. This is a classic of children's literature, and deservedly so. Read this aloud and you will laugh with your class.
4. Mr. Isobe in [Crow Boy](#) by Taro Yashima
Children ignore Chibi, a lonely, frightened little boy. When Mr. Isobe becomes their teacher, they learn to understand the nature of his gifts and appreciate that what makes us different makes us special.
5. Mrs. Peterson in [The Junkyard Wonders](#) by Patricia Polacco
The teacher in room 206 lovingly calls the children her special education classroom "The Junkyard Wonders." She takes a disparate group of students and turns them into a learning community, her tribe. It is a powerful story with one of the best last pages in all of children's literature.

Five Great Teachers in Literature for Adults

1. Mr. Chips in [Good-bye Mr. Chips](#) by James Hilton
This is a classic "teacher" book. Mr. Chips transforms from a bubbling first year teacher to a beloved English schoolmaster. Also check out the [1939 Academy Award winning movie](#) version.
2. Miss Barrett in [Up the Down Staircase](#) by Bel Kaufman
Sylvia Barret, an idealistic young teacher in an inner city high school becomes disenchanted with teaching as she wades her way through the bureaucracy. Told through a series of memos, letters, homework and public-address announcements, it is as humorous and fitting today as it was when it was written in the 1960's.

3. Mr. Watts in [Mr. Pip](#) by Lloyd Jones
Mr. Watts is the new teacher on an island devastated by war. The young narrator Matilda, sums up the changes “This was school, but not how I remembered it.” This is a heart wrenching story about the power of having a voice.
4. Christy in [Christy](#) by Catherine Marshall
In 1912, a young woman moves to the Smokey Mountains and begins life as a teacher. She builds relationships and gradually learns to understand and respect these proud, impoverished people.
5. Mr. Pruitt in [Staggerford](#) by Jon Hassler
Pruitt is a high school English teacher who boards with a spinster who taught children for 41 years. It is a humorous look at life as a teacher in a small Minnesota town.

Five Teachers Who Tell Their Story

1. Mr. Braithwaite in [To Sir With Love](#) by E.R. Braithwaite
Unable to find a job in London after World War 2, Braithwaite takes a teaching job in London’s rough East Side. Braithwaite struggles with his students, but eventually earns their respect. The [movie based on the book](#), starring Sidney Poitier, is a classic teacher movie.
2. Frank McCourt in [Teacher Man](#) by Frank McCourt
No one spins a story like the Irish, and McCourt is Irish through and through. This is the story of his thirty years as a high school teacher in New York. You’ll find it hilarious and honest.
3. Stacey Best in [Nobody Don’t Love Nobody: Lessons on Love from the School with No Name](#) by Stacey Bess
Stacey Bess is a beginning teacher whose first job is the afternoon teacher at a community homeless shelter. As she works with her students, children from grades K-6 who are homeless, she is both appalled and heartened. This is an important story, and one not often told.
4. Madame Esmé in [Educating Esmé: Diary of a Teacher’s First Year](#) by Esmé Raji Codell
Esmé, an imaginative, caring first year teacher documents the good and the bad about her year. She has a take no prisoners attitude towards pointing out the deficiencies in a system that doesn’t seem to have children’s best interests at heart. Read it to be both inspired and angered.

5. LouAnne Johnson in [My Posse Don't Do Homework](#), also published as [Dangerous Minds](#) by LouAnne Johnson
This could be subtitled, "Ex-marine Takes on High School Hoodlums" but it is more than that. Johnson documents her unconventional style and how she ultimately wins over her students. It is also a [movie](#).

Five Teachers Who Document Their Careers in Multiple Books

1. Ron Clark
Clarke is an award-winning teacher and founder of The Ron Clarke Academy in Atlanta. He hopes to train and inspire teachers to use methods that are successful. He is the author of [The Excellent 11](#) and [The Essential 55](#) among other titles.
2. Vivian Gussin Paley
Paley worked for forty years as a preschool and kindergarten teacher. She wrote thirteen books chronicling the lessons from her classroom. Among the titles are [You Can't Say You Can't Play](#), [The Girl With the Brown Crayon](#), and [The Boy Who Would be a Helicopter](#).
3. Rafe Esquith
Rafe Esquith is the director of The Hobart Shakespeareans, a troupe of young actors who study and perform in Shakespearean plays. He was previously a classroom teacher, who documented his methods in his books, [Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire](#), [There are No Shortcuts](#), and [Lighting Their Fires](#). In 2015, Esquith was fired for misconduct. He filed a billion-dollar lawsuit against the district. We know Rafe, have spent time in his classroom, and understand why he has won many honors and awards including the National Medal of Arts.
4. Torey Hayden
Hayden was working as a special education teacher when she began documenting her experiences. [One Child](#), her break out book was about a six-year-old child with severe behaviors. Other nonfiction titles such as [Ghost Girl](#) and [Somebody Else's Kids](#), followed. Hayden is also the author of several fiction books.
5. Mary MacCracken
MacCracken's career was spent working with children with emotional and cognitive disabilities. She devised a highly individualized approach to learning. Among her books are bestsellers [The Lost Children](#) (originally titled **A Circle of Children**), and [Lovey: A Very Special Child](#).