

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH WITH THESE AUTHORS

CANADIAN

André Alexis

Award-winning Canadian author André Alexis writes lyrical, thought-provoking literary fiction covering a wide range of themes. He considers many of life's fundamental questions, exploring concepts such as good vs. evil, faith, personal agency, and fate.

Start with: [*Fifteen Dogs*](#).

Esi Edugyan

Two-time Giller Prize winner Esi Edugyan's fiction jumps between the past and the present. She is concerned about the experiences of black people trapped in unusual, hostile situations. Her mood is often menacing and uncomfortable, the threat of actual physical danger just around the corner.

Start with: [*Washington Black*](#).

Dany Laferrière

Dany Laferrière is a Haitian-born Canadian author living in Montreal known for lyrical works that often address the immigrant experience. He has won many literary awards:

Start with: [*An Aroma of Coffee*](#).

Suzette Mayr

Suzette Mayr is a Canadian novelist who has written six critically acclaimed novels. Her works have won and been nominated for several literary awards including the Giller Prize.

Start with: [*The Sleeping Car Porter*](#).

AMERICAN

Brit Bennett

Brit Bennett's moving, lyrical, and stylistically complex novels explore a range of themes surrounding Black identity and the ongoing impact of racism, particularly in women's lives. She creates memorable and complex female protagonists -- sympathetic, flawed, and deeply human. **Start with:** [*The Mothers*](#).

Ta-Nehisi Coates

As a blogger and journalist for *The Atlantic* magazine and website in the late 2000s, Coates wrote provocative articles on pop culture and politics. His searing memoir *Between the World and Me*, earned him a National Book Award and comparisons to James Baldwin. Coates has also published fiction including the novel *The Water Dancer*. **Start with:** [The Water Dancer](#).

Yaa Gyasi

Gyasi is a Ghanaian American novelist whose books feature themes of lineage, generational trauma, and Black and African identities. At the age of 26, Gyasi won the National Book Critics Circle's John Leonard Award for Best First Book, the PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Novel, and the 2017 American Book Award. **Start with:** [Homegoing](#).

N.K. Jemisin

The first Black writer to win a Hugo Award for best novel, Jemisin is one of the foremost authors of 21st-century science fiction. She earned her first Hugo for *The Fifth Season*, the inaugural book of her apocalyptic Broken Earth Trilogy. Her novel *The City We Became* marked the beginning of a new series of books—the Great Cities series—set in New York City. **Start with:** [The Fifth Season](#).

Tayari Jones

Tayari Jones writes moving literary novels that focus on well-developed African American characters and the various emotional traumas they carry. She deftly captures the complex emotions of her characters, following them as they cope with issues ranging from racism and incarceration to family discord and bereavement. **Start with:** [An American Marriage](#).

Imbolo Mbue

Imbolo Mbue is a Cameroonian American novelist and short story writer. She is known for her debut novel *Behold the Dreamers*, which garnered her the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction and the Blue Metropolis Words to Change Award. Her works draw from her own experiences as an immigrant, as well as the experiences of other immigrants. **Start with:** [Behold the Dreamers](#).

James McBride

An accomplished jazz musician and a journalist, McBride became a best-selling author with his first book *The Color of Water*, a memoir of his white, Jewish mother. *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*, his latest, follows the friendships and divisions among the Jewish and Black residents of Pottstown, Pennsylvania, in the 1920s and '30s. **Start with:** [The Good Lord Bird](#).

Toni Morrison

Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison is known for an emotive, rhythmic writing style that achieves lushness with ordinary words. The cruelty of racism and sexual oppression are major themes, often framed in vividly depicted historical settings. **Start with:** [Beloved](#).

Leila Mottley

Leila Mottley is an American novelist and poet. She is *The New York Times* bestselling author of *Nightcrawling*, which was a nominee for numerous awards, including the Booker Prize, making her the youngest author to have been nominated for the award. **Start with:** [Nightcrawling](#).

Kiley Reid

Kiley Reid's debut novel, published in 2019, examines race and privilege, raising powerful questions about identity, class and interpersonal relationships. *Such a Fun Age* immediately became a *New York Times* bestseller and went on to win the African American Literary Award in 2020.

Start with: [*Such a Fun Age*](#).

Jesmyn Ward

National Book Award-winner Jesmyn Ward writes character-driven literary fiction often set in small towns on the Mississippi Gulf coast, pre- and post-Hurricane Katrina. Her stylistically complex work follows the lives of poor families facing disaster from within and without.

Start with: [*Salvage the Bones*](#).

Colson Whitehead

Whitehead is known for blending history and fantasy in his novels. His first Pulitzer was for *The Underground Railroad*, which tells the story of a young woman who escapes slavery. He won his second Pulitzer for *The Nickel Boys* about two Black teenagers who are placed in a juvenile reformatory. **Start with:** [*The Underground Railroad*](#).

Jacqueline Woodson

Award-winning author Jacqueline Woodson writes sensitively about racism, class, friendship, and family. Her compelling, well-drawn protagonists, usually black, deal with life no matter what it brings, figuring themselves out with integrity and purpose. **Start with:** [*Red at the Bone*](#).

BRITISH

Candice Carty-Williams

Candice Carty-Williams is a British writer, best known for her 2019 debut novel, *Queenie*. At the British Book Awards in 2020 Carty-Williams became the first black woman to win the *Book of the Year* accolade, for her novel. **Start with:** [*Queenie*](#).

Sara Collins

Sara Collins is a Jamaican-born Caymanian-British novelist and former lawyer. She earned a Costa Book Award for her 2019 historical fiction novel *The Confessions of Frannie Langton*.

Start with: [*The Confessions of Frannie Langton*](#).

Abi Daré

Abimbola "Abi" Daré is a Nigerian author and public speaker who now lives in England. In 2018 she won the Bath Novel Award, and was a finalist in the Literary Consultancy Pen Factor 2018. Her debut novel *The Girl With The Louding Voice* was published in 2020 to critical acclaim.

Start with: [*The Girl With The Louding Voice*](#).

Bernadine Everisto

Booker-prize winning novelist, poet, dramatist, and essayist Bernardine Evaristo is a British writer of Nigerian descent whose candid, amusing, and stylistically complex fiction explores the lives of diverse characters, especially descendants of the African diaspora, in contemporary England.

Start with: [*Girl, Woman, Other*](#).

Zadie Smith

Zadie Smith burst onto the literary scene having written her first work while she was still an undergraduate. Her fiction provides readers with stories that are both entertaining and thought-provoking, and her essays do so, as well. **Start with:** [*White Teeth*](#).

AFRICAN

Chinua Achebe

Nigerian author Chinua Achebe's work focuses on the issue which shaped his country -- European colonialism and its effects on those colonized. His prose is unadorned and beautiful in its simplicity, with an almost oral storytelling quality -- what the story communicates about African society is paramount. **Start with:** [*Things Fall Apart*](#).

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie writes character-driven novels and short stories about life in Nigeria and America. Her prose is luxuriant and highly evocative and her characters are equally as compelling. Violence, injustice, and despair stand shoulder to shoulder with compassion, bravery, and love in her fiction. **Start with:** [*Americanah*](#).

CARRIBEAN

Charmaine Wilkerson

Charmaine Wilkerson is a Caribbean-American journalist, writer, and author. She is known for her debut novel, *Black Cake*, which was a New York Times Bestseller, and which relayed the importance and ability of transferring culture and stories through food. **Start with:** [*Black Cake*](#).