

Youth Activities

“Be the Lighthouse in Somebody’s Storm”

“Bridging the Gap for our Veterans”



Program goal 8
January 2026

Patriotism Through Literacy

Patriotism Through Literacy is a VFW Auxiliary Youth Activities initiative started in 2019, the purpose of which is to foster a love of reading while teaching students about America’s past primarily through historical fiction and creative non-fiction, promoting both patriotism *and* literacy, in addition to encouraging empathy and broadening perspectives. The intended age range of readers/listeners of the books below spans from pre-k through grade 12.

Introduces youth to historical figures and teaches them about events in our nation’s history while fostering a love of reading that can lead to a lifetime of learning.

In the world of children’s literature, there is often talk of “mirrors and windows.” In books labeled “mirrors,” kid readers get to see themselves reflected in the main characters. In “windows,” they see into the lives of characters they’d otherwise never know. That is why the books on our list of Recommended Reads not only showcase a number of periods in history from the Revolutionary War through post-9/11, they reflect a variety of character viewpoints: girls, boys, children, teens, adults, veterans, the children of veterans, etc., of all different backgrounds, cultures, colors, ethnicities, religions, American regions/states and abilities/disabilities.

The Recommended Reads are divided into **Historical Fiction** (fiction taking place in the past, set in the United States), **Americana and/or Educational** (fiction, non- or a mix of both, these books are about America’s holidays, history, geography, government, parental deployment, etc., primarily for younger readers/listeners who may not be ready for more complex books yet, with additional titles for young children with a deployed or recently returned veteran parent), and **Creative Non-Fiction, Biography & Memoir** (biographies of important figures in American history, historical accounts from real people/events learned through interviews, letters, or diary entries, and memoirs of childhood that paint a distinct picture of America in the past). The list is periodically updated to include newly published works. While some classics appear among our Recommended Reads, most of these titles or series were published in the past 25 years, with many published within the last decade.

Age groups

Preschool-Kindergarten
Grades 1-2

Grades 3-4

Grades 5-6

Grades 7-8

Grades 9-12

Recommended books



Approved by:
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Youth Dept of Florida

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