

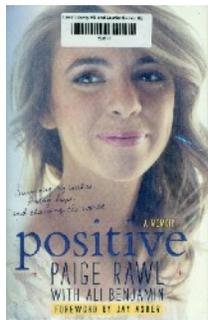
## Memoirs in the High School Library

Margot Dubé, Laval Senior Academy Library, Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board

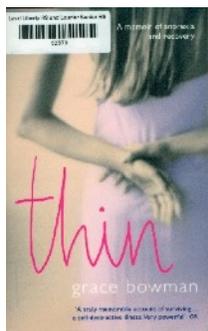
*“Memoir is about handing over your life to someone and saying, this is what I went through, this is who I am, and maybe you can learn something from it.”* (Jeanette Walls)

The memoir is a great genre for students who prefer reading about realistic situations, though often have difficulty finding the right novel to suit that need. A memoir is an autobiography but, as Brian Klems explains, “An autobiography focuses on the chronology of the writer’s entire life while a memoir covers one specific aspect of the writer’s life.” There is a wide range of memoirs based on a variety of experiences through childhood and adolescence; some events are so incredible you would never believe them unless they were true. It is important to note that some deal with mature themes.

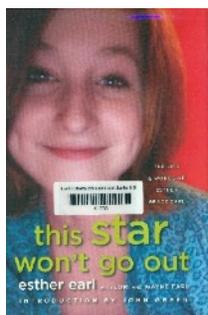
We have over 75 in our collection, but here is a list of some of the most popular. (Unless otherwise stated, summaries come from the publishers’ websites; photos were scanned from the original books.)



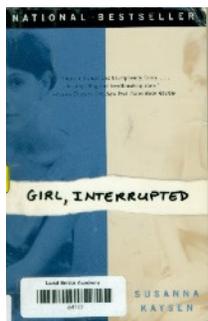
“An astonishing memoir for the untold number of children whose lives have been touched by bullying...Paige Rawl has been HIV positive since birth, but growing up, she never felt like her illness defined her. On an unremarkable day in middle school, she disclosed to a friend her HIV-positive status—and within hours the bullying began.”



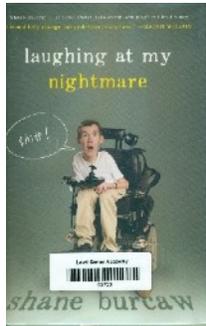
“Bright, popular, pretty and successful, Grace Bowman had the world at her feet. So what drove her to starve herself nearly to death at the age of 18? And what, more importantly, made her stop? A grippingly honest account of life with anorexia nervosa.”



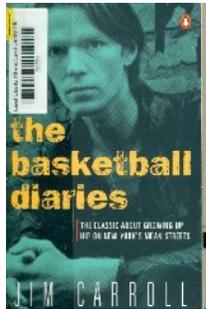
“In full color and illustrated with art and photographs, this [unique memoir] is a collection of the journals, fiction, letters, and sketches of the late Esther Grace Earl, who passed away in 2010 at the age of 16. Essays by family and friends help to tell Esther’s story along with an introduction by award-winning author John Green who dedicated his #1 bestselling novel *The Fault in Our Stars* to her.”



“In 1967, after a session with a psychiatrist she’d never seen before, eighteen-year-old Susanna Kaysen was put in a taxi and sent to McLean Hospital. She spent most of the next two years in the ward for teenage girls in a psychiatric hospital... Kaysen’s memoir encompasses horror and razor-edged perception while providing vivid portraits of her fellow patients and their keepers.”

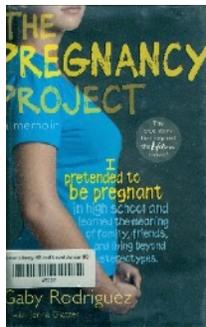


“With acerbic wit and a hilarious voice, Shane Burcaw’s *Laughing at My Nightmare* describes the challenges he faces as a twenty-one-year-old with spinal muscular atrophy.”



“Written between the ages of twelve and fifteen, this diary tells the story of Jim Carroll, a kid growing up stealing, hustling, getting high, playing basketball, and trying to find something pure on the streets of New York.”

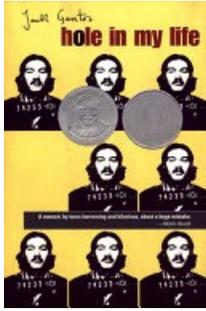
(Source: Google Books)



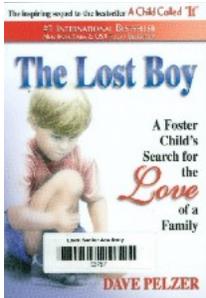
“I pretended to be pregnant in high school and learned the meaning of family, friends, and living beyond stereotypes.”



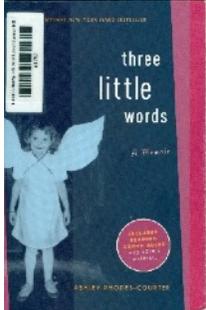
“Seventeen-year-old Arin Andrews shares all the hilarious, painful, and poignant details of undergoing gender reassignment as a high school student in this winning teen memoir.”



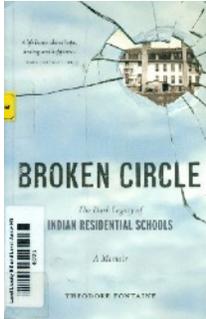
“In the summer of 1971, Jack Gantos was an aspiring writer looking for adventure, cash for college tuition, and a way out of a dead-end job. For ten thousand dollars, he recklessly agreed to help sail a sixty-foot yacht loaded with a ton of hashish from the Virgin Islands to New York City, where he and his partners sold the drug until federal agents caught up with them.”



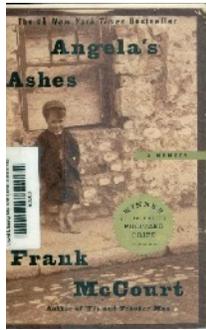
Dave Pelzer's sequel to *A Child Called "It"*. Here, “he answers questions and reveals new adventures through the compelling story of his life as an adolescent. Now considered an F-Child (Foster Child), Dave is moved in and out of five different homes...Tears, laughter, devastation and hope create the journey of this little lost boy who searches desperately for just one thing -- the love of a family.”  
(Source: Google Books)



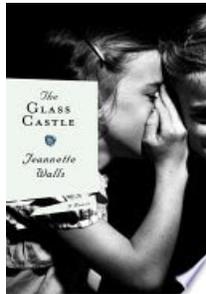
“An inspiring true story of the tumultuous nine years Ashley Rhodes-Courter spent in the foster care system, and how she triumphed over painful memories and real-life horrors to ultimately find her own voice.”  
This was followed by a sequel *Three More Words* in 2015.



“Theodore Fontaine lost his family and freedom at age seven, when his parents were forced to leave him at an Indian residential school. His life was not his own for the next 12 years. The after-effects of those years have lasted much longer.”

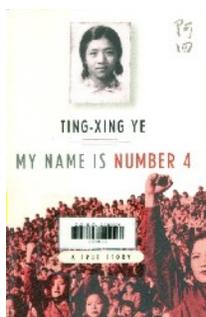


[This is the] “memoir of Frank McCourt, born in Depression-era Brooklyn to recent Irish immigrants and raised in the slums of Limerick, Ireland. Frank endures poverty, near-starvation and the casual cruelty of relatives and neighbors—yet lives to tell his tale with eloquence, exuberance, and remarkable forgiveness.”

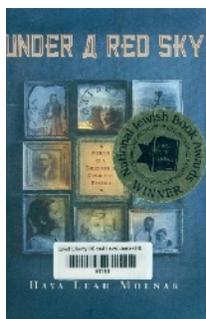


A memoir of growing up “with parents whose ideas and stubborn nonconformity were their curse and their salvation...[a] tale of unconditional love in a family that, despite its profound flaws, gave [Jeannette Walls] the fiery determination to carve out a successful life.”

(Source: Google Books)



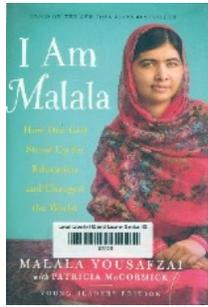
“Here is the true story of fourteen-year-old Ting-xing’s tumultuous life turned upside down by China’s Cultural Revolution.”



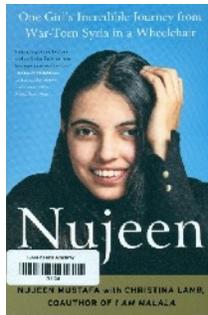
“With razor-sharp depictions of her animated family, Haya Leah Molnar’s memoir of her childhood captures with heartbreaking precocity the very adult realities of living behind the iron curtain [in postwar Bucharest, Romania]”.



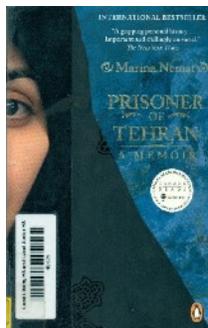
“Vesna Maric left Bosnia the beginning of the war, at the age of sixteen, on a convoy of coaches carrying refugees to Penrith in the north of England. *Bluebird* is Vesna's funny, vivid and immensely readable memoir of the experience, from the beginning of the war through to her eventual return to Bosnia years later...written with brilliant comic timing.”



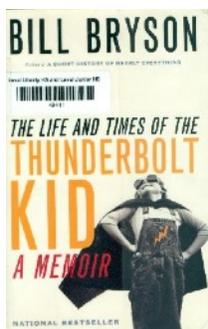
“Malala Yousafzai was only ten years old when the Taliban took control of her region....How one girl stood up for education and changed the world.”-



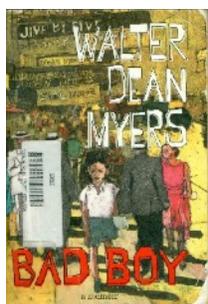
“*Nujeen* is a unique and powerful memoir that gives voice to the Syrian refugee crisis, offering a vision of hope and inspiration from unlikely circumstances.”



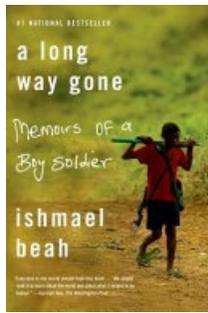
“In 1982, sixteen-year-old Marina Nemat was arrested on false charges by Iranian Revolutionary Guards and tortured in Tehran’s notorious Evin prison...[this] is an extraordinary tale of faith and survival.”



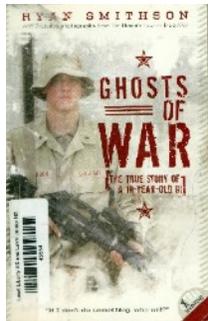
“In this laugh-out-loud memoir [Bill Bryson] recreates the life of his native city [Des Moines], his family, and his young self in all their transcendental normality.”



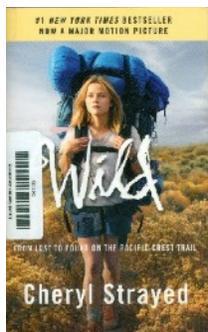
“In a memoir that is gripping, funny, and ultimately unforgettable, New York Times bestselling author Walter Dean Myers travels back to his roots in the magical world of Harlem during the 1940s and 1950s. Here is the story of one of the most distinguished writers of young people's literature today.”



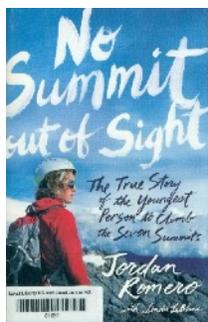
“At the age of twelve, Ishmael Beah fled attacking rebels in Sierra Leone and wandered a land rendered unrecognizable by violence. By thirteen, he’d been picked up by the government army, and Beah, at heart a gentle boy, found that he was capable of truly terrible acts. At sixteen, he was removed from fighting by UNICEF, and through the help of the staff at his rehabilitation center, he learned how to forgive himself, to regain his humanity, and, finally, to heal.”



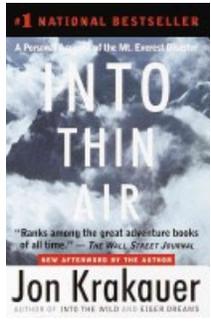
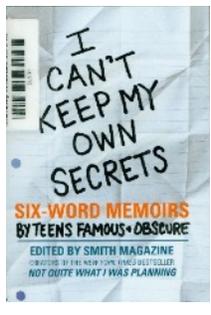
“Ryan Smithson joined the Army Reserve when he was seventeen. Two years later, he was deployed to Iraq as an Army engineer. In this extraordinary and harrowing memoir, readers march along one GI’s tour of duty. It will change the way you feel about what it means to be an American.”



“At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything... Four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life. With no experience or training, driven only by blind will, she would hike the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State—and she would do it alone.”



“The story of Jordan Romero, who at the age of 13 became the youngest person ever to reach the summit of Mount Everest. At age 15, he reached the summits of the world’s 7 highest mountains.”

	<p>“A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Jon Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that “suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down.” He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more-including Krakauer’s-in guilt-ridden disarray, would also provide the impetus for <i>Into Thin Air</i>, Krakauer’s epic account of the May 1996 disaster.”</p>
	<p>“This is a book with over 600 authors (all aged thirteen to nineteen) and 600 characters (all real, as far as we know) and 600 stories (which can be read in any order). What every story has in common is that each was written about the author’s own life, and that each is the exact same length: six words.”</p>

#### Works Cited

- "Google Books." *Google Books*. Google, n.d. Web. 17 Oct. 2016. <<https://books.google.ca/>>.
- Klems, Brian. "Memoir vs. Autobiography." *WritersDigest.com*. F & W Media, Inc., 8 May 2013. Web. 12 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.writersdigest.com/online-editor/memoir-vs-autobiography-2.>>
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