Novels for literature circles

The following novels and other literature deal with issues of race, racism, and cultural genocide that can be used in the classroom:

1. *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Lee Harper. One issue in this classic novel focuses on racial inequality and discrimination when an African-American man is wrongly accused of raping a Caucasian girl.

2. *In the Heat of the Night* by John Ball. The novel centres on racial prejudice and discrimination against an African-American police detective who is assigned to work with a Caucasian police officer in the southern United States.

3. *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa is based on the author’s own experiences telling the story of the internment of the Japanese Canadians in BC during World War II.

4. *Smile Through the Tears: The Story of the Rwandan Genocide* by Rupert Bazambanza is a graphic memoir of a survivor in the 1994 Rwanda genocide between the Hutus and the Tutsis.

5. *Maus* and *Maus II* by Art Spiegel. The two-volume graphic novel chronicles a Jewish survivor of Hitler’s Europe and his son who is a cartoonist who tries to come to terms with his father’s story and history itself.

6. *Caught in the Crossfire* by Alan Gibbons explores racism and bullying from the point of view of teenagers in Britain.

7. *White Girl* by Sylvia Olsen is set in modern times, and deals with racism head on in a real way. It points out cultural and philosophical differences on and off of a reservation.

8. *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hossein. The novel is a story set in Afghanistan and provides a sense of traditional Afghan lifestyle and culture. It touches on issues of race, class, and gender.

9. *My Name is Seepeetza* by Shirley Sterling. This novel is written from an Aboriginal perspective and tells the story of a girl’s life in a residential school.

10. *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* by bell hooks. Stitching together girlhood memories with the finest threads of innocence, feminist intellectual bell hooks presents a powerful account of growing up in the South.

11. *Ravensong* by Lee Maracle. This story is set in an urban Aboriginal community on the Pacific Northwest coast in the 1950s. It is a powerful book about what it means to be the marginal “other.”

12. *Out on Main Street* by Shani Mootoo. Focusing on a lesbian South Asian couple, this novel explores racial and religious diversity and gender issues.

13. *Forgotten Fire* by Adam Bagdasarian. This powerful historical novel describes the life of a young boy living through the Armenian genocide in 1915.

14. *Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli. Exploring themes of racism and homelessness, the novel follows the story of an orphaned boy looking for a home. He experiences the sharp racial boundaries of society.

15. *Ask Me No Questions* by Marina Budhos. This novel is a moving and thought-provoking story of a Bangladeshi family’s experience as immigrants post 9/11.