**MULTICULTURAL FICTION**

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| **DEFINITION:** Multicultural fiction relates the American experience from minority points of view. These books can be literary fiction, popularly written family stories, romances, mysteries, or any other genre. This list provides a small sample of authors from various cultures, but only begins to touch on the diversity present in America.  |

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Multicultural fiction’s primary characteristic is a minority character or group’s perspective. Typically the main characters are members of a minority group; mere inclusion of secondary characters who belong to a minority group does not qualify a novel as a work of multicultural fiction. Groups such as African Americans, Asian Americans, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered, Hispanic Americans/Latinos, Jewish Americans, Native Americans, and other cultures are included in multicultural fiction. Since multicultural fiction includes various genres, it is as diverse in style as it is in characters’ perspectives.

**APPEAL:** Readers belonging to a particular culture identify with the cultural backdrop of the story and appreciate the validation of their experience. Readers outside the culture represented in a novel can gain an understanding of the lives and cultures of their neighbors.

**READERS:** Readers of multicultural fiction include people of all backgrounds and ages. As mentioned above, readers may be drawn to multicultural fiction for its familiarity to their own experience or for its power to introduce them to other viewpoints. Literary fiction written from a particular cultural viewpoint often introduces the theme of cultural differences within society, which can make these novels excellent choices for book discussions. Readers of a particular genre often read multicultural fiction within that genre.

**TRENDS:** The major trend is that multicultural literature has, to a great extent, gone mainstream. Multicultural novels appear on the bestseller lists, win mainstream literary awards, and are considered mainstream fiction by some readers.

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| Asian-American | Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Gish Jen, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, Amy Tan, Gail Tsukiyama |
| Gay & Lesbian | Carol Anshaw, Michael Cunningham, E. Lynn Harris, Laurie King (Kate Martinelli), Armistead Maupin, Sarah Waters, Jeanette Winterson |
| Hispanic Americans | Julia Alvarez, Rudolfo A. Anaya, Denise Chavez, Sandra Cisneros, Oscar Hijuelos, Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez |
| Jewish Americans | Nathan Englander, Allegra Goodman, Faye Kellerman, Rochelle Krich, Cynthia Ozick, Noami Ragen, Philip Roth |
| Native Americans | Sherman Alexie, Louise Erdrich, Leslie Silko |