

METHODS

What We Included

Our data includes common readings for every college and university we could find—including readings for sub-units of an institution such as honors colleges. We included books assigned as summer readings, whether to freshmen or to all students. Generally these books are outside the regular curriculum, but a few of them are tied to first-year courses.

How We Categorized the Institutions and Programs

Each common reading program is categorized by **Institution Name, State, Type of Institution, Top Ranking, Program Name, Intended Audience,** and **Author Visit.**

We classify each college and university by **Type**—public, private sectarian, private nonsectarian, and community colleges. We also see whether they are ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* among either the top 100 National Universities or the top 100 National Liberal Arts Colleges. We have attempted to be comprehensive, although we have undoubtedly missed a few programs. We would be grateful for the names of common reading programs we have missed, so we may include them in our next report.

How We Categorized the Books

Each book is categorized by **Author, Title, Publication Date, Genre, Publisher, First Subject Category, Second Subject Category, First Theme,** and **Second Theme.** We include up to two subject categories and two themes for each book, as a way to be more precise in our description of the common readings.

Inevitably such categorization lacks nuance: we categorize Richard Blanco's *The Prince of Los Cocuyos: A Miami Childhood* under Artists' Lives/Arts and Ethnic Identity/Sexual Identity, when Immigration or Coming of Age would be perfectly plausible substitutes. It also flattens works: we put Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* under Family Dysfunction/ Separation, which is a true but not a full definition. We take our subject categories to be meaningful, but we draw conclusions from them with a grain of salt.

Subject Category defines what the book is explicitly about. **Theme** notes aspects of the book that we take to have been of interest to the selection committees or are of interest to us. For example, selection committees place great emphasis on *diversity* as a euphemism for mentioning various non-white ethnic groups at home or abroad; we have therefore identified a number of ethnic, geographic, and religious subject matters as themes. Selection committees do not explicitly state

their interest in whether a work is in the graphic medium, has a film or TV adaptation, or has an association with NPR, but we think these are significant facts that ought to be noted, and so we have included them as well.

Our subject categories largely overlap those of previous years, but with some alterations. We have limited our total number of subject categories to 30.