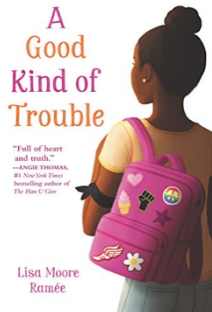


Texts for Adolescents (As of Summer 2023) Suggestions from the Students of READ 500/ Montclair State University

Contact: Erik Jacobson / jacobsone@montclair.edu



A Good Kind of Trouble

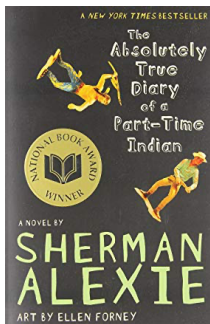
Lisa Moore Ramée

Themes: identity; activism; standing up for what is right; social justice; friendship

Appeal: This book shows the perspective of a 12-year-old black girl named Shayla, who struggles with her own identity while trying to adjust to the recent events of the world. A police officer killed an unarmed black man and was not convicted of any wrongdoing. Shayla hates getting in trouble, but she feels the need to make a difference. Shayla decides that some rules are worth breaking. This book is written in kid-friendly language but includes such a powerful message.

Suggested Activities: I would recommend this book as a read-aloud in the middle grades to spark strong conversations regarding social justice, standing up for what is right, even if others are saying it is wrong, and for educating students on real-world events.

Submitted by Crystal Nzegwu



The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

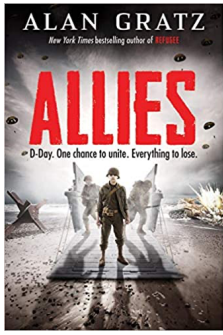
Sherman Alexie

Potential Appeal: At first the book has engaging illustrations on the cover and throughout that may appeal to students. The novel is about a teenage boy that lives with his family on an Indian reservation. The novel is told through a journal type of writing which also may appeal to students. Junior, the main character, has many birth defects and is often made fun of. The Indian reservation which he lives on, along with his family, are extremely poor. His teacher encourages him to go to another school in a very wealthy town. Junior ends up doing this and is faced with many new experiences and adventures. I also like it because it represents a different culture which is under represented in school libraries.

Suggested Activities:

- Analyzing the characters/Character study
- Author's Viewpoint - Compare and contrast an illustration of a white student and himself on page 57.
- Vocabulary - Accurate Adjectives - The teacher can provide a list of words for the students to find in the book and use context clues or a dictionary to look up their meanings.
- Connections - engage students in text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections.
- Students can create a narrative comic based on their own life.
- The theme is about identity so students can do various creative activities that have to do with self-identity.

Submitted by Jacqueline Doria



Allies

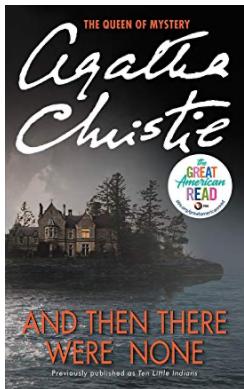
Alan Gratz

Themes: Friendship, loyalty, heroism

Potential Appeal: I suggest adolescent readers read *Allies* by Alan Gratz which is an historical fiction war story book published on October 3, 2019. The book takes place June 1944 on D Day. The themes discussed in this book are heroism, friendship, and loyalty. This text is about D Day and the invasion of France. The main character in the story is Dee Carpenter and in this text he is an American soldier going into his first battle to fight the German soldiers. The story is about a journey to letting France know that D Day is about to happen. The events of the Germans killing children and women and ships and other things blowing up are informing the students about the tragic events that went on during this time. All the people who fought at D Day, soldiers, medics, and so on, were heroes that day. Because of the heroic people and loyalty to each other they overcame many challenges that came their way during the text. These people saved the world from the Nazis. I would highly recommend this book because of the several themes shown.

Suggested Activities: I would suggest incorporating this book in history lessons on the current events in today's world. Because this book talks about segregation and injustice, I feel that it would be educational and eye opening to the world before us and now how we have grown and learned from history. I would have my students read and analyze the text along with answering critical thinking questions. Students will compare the book to real life events. Students can go in literature circles and discuss their opinions and facts about the events that occurred during the text.

Submitted by Michelle Handal



And Then There Were None

Agatha Christie

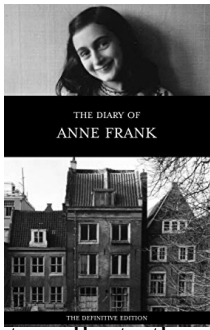
Potential Appeal: Plot, Characters, Foreshadowing

And Then There Were None is a mystery novel that is an engaging and suspenseful read for adolescent readers. Trying to figure out who might be next to go and who the murderer is certainly kept me entertained when I read it when I was younger. Each character has his/her own backstory, which makes the reader suspect certain characters as the one responsible for the deaths. Following the plot is a great way to get readers thinking about what they're reading in order to make meaning.

Suggested Activities:

- Foreshadowing Scavenger Hunt → After reading a chapter or two, go back to reread and find evidence of foreshadowing and explain what the evidence suggests (make a prediction)
- Journaling → After the first chapter or two, the students choose a character who interests them. They are to write journal entries for this character each chapter until their character is gone (retelling events from their perspective, telling how they're feeling at that point in the story, etc.).
- Creating their own setting → The students are to pretend they are writing their own mystery novel and they must choose their setting for their story. They are encouraged to choose a place in the U.S. or elsewhere, but they must conduct research and explain their reasoning for choosing that location.

Submitted by Giuliana Coccia

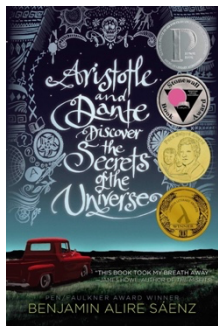


Anne Frank's Diary

Appeal: This book is about Anne Frank and her life through the Holocaust. Since it is in a diary format, students would be able to relate to that type of print because they themselves might have diaries that they write in. This book would be more relevant to them instead of reading from a textbook. This book would be a good to use during a social studies unit on WWII.

Suggested Activity: An activity that could go along with the reading of this book would be to collect other Holocaust stories. Have the students would look up them up and listen to the stories and then write a reflection after with a graphic organizer. Students could also write their own diary entry as if they were someone living in the Holocaust or as if they were Anne Frank. Another idea would be to create a newspaper article from that time period.

Submitted by Melissa Marchand



Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe

Benjamin Alire Sáenz

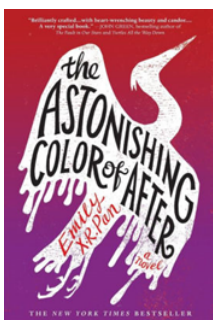
Potential appeal: This coming-of-age, realistic fiction story follows two teenage friends, Aristotle and Dante. The story explores uncommon friendships, romantic relationships, family dynamics, growing up, and the ways in which the world works. Front-and-center throughout the book are Latino and LGBTQ+ characters (a most welcome change).

Themes: Gender roles & sexuality (what does it mean to be masculine? Gay?), Relationships (what does it mean to be a good friend/partner/son?), Coming-of-age/Identity (how does one discover their own identity?).

Suggested activities:

1. Students can complete identity-reflection activities, such as filling out identity webs. Students may share with classmates via turn-and-talks or gallery walks (around an in-person classroom or virtually via Flipgrid/Padlet).
2. Students can learn about gender roles, LGBTQ+, and/or Latino/a/x history (e.g. civil rights, accomplishments, important figures, etc.) in order to have more real-world context while reading the book. Conversations about “the canon” and representation in literature can take place, too. Teachers may also encourage their students to learn the history of their own various identities.
3. As we learn in the book, Dante is an artist and expresses himself through his drawings. Students can spend time journaling by drawing, free-writing, or other creative means. For literacy practice, teachers can build on this by having students piece together a story (memoir/novella) that includes important literary elements.

Submitted by Ceelea Graham



The Astonishing Color of After

Emily X.R. Pan

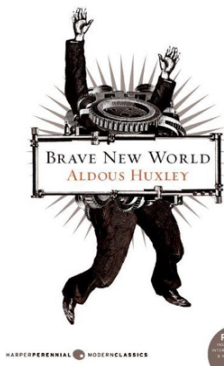
Theme: discovering identity, family, and grief

Appeal: Leigh is a teenage girl who is half Asian and white that lived in the United States with her mother and father. She did not have a great relationship with her father, however; she was quite close and fond of her mother. One-night Leigh had stepped out for a few and

upon her arrival at home she finds out that her mother had committed suicide. Her mother left her a strange note telling her to remember. Leigh kept an obsession over the note. She felt lost and alone. One-night Leigh woke up in the middle of the night to see a bird in her room. Leigh realizes the bird is her mother. Leigh's mother had come back in the shape of a crimson bird trying to send Leigh a message. She wanted Leigh to visit Taiwan and meet her maternal grandparents. Leigh then travels to Taiwan, but she felt out of place everywhere she visited in Taiwan. Her grandparents made a valiant attempt to make her feel comfortable and encouraged her to not be like her mother who also struggled with feeling like she was out of place and did not belong. Leigh eventually realizes that that her mother's suicide was more complex than she originally perceived. By the end of the novel, Leigh remembers how to laugh, love and live. Leigh finally has accepted her mother's loss and has learned that she should not conceal her feelings.

Suggested Activities: This novel would be great to be incorporated in schools for adolescents because many of students have not learned the proper methods to cope with grief and loss. Adolescents usually prefer to conceal their feelings. Suicide has become more prevalent in schools for various reasons. A suggested activity will be an entry journal where they can write their experiences or share their inner most thoughts that they are afraid to share with others or the public. Once they are done documenting these feelings, they could physically burn the page out of the journal as a symbolic release of one's feelings. Also, another great exercise is allowing the person to write a letter or attend a special event for someone they recently lost to say a formal goodbye.

Submitted by Angela Ebrahimzadeh



Brave New World

Aldous Huxley

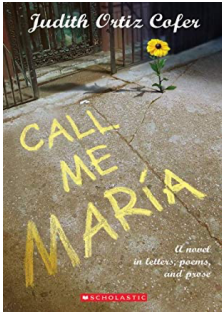
Theme: the use of technology to control society, the consumer society, the incompatibility of happiness and truth, the dangers of an all- powerful state, individuality, happiness and agency

Potential Appeal: *Brave New World* is set in 2540 CE. This novel examines a futuristic society, called the World State, that revolves around science and efficiency. In this society, emotions and individuality are conditioned out of children at a young age. There are no lasting relationships in this world because, “everyone belongs to everyone else” (a common World State dictum). The novel opens up with Huxley thoroughly explaining the scientific and compartmentalized nature of this society, beginning at the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. This is where children are created outside of the womb and cloned in order to increase the population. The reader is then exposed to this world's class system. The class system highest to lowest includes, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon. One of the main characters in this story is Bernard Marx, an Alpha. While Lenina Crowne and Bernard Marx are traveling, they find two people engaging in unfamiliar rituals. They meet Linda and her son, John. Marx decided to bring the two of them home with him and Lenina because he believes John is the Director's son. Marx presents Linda and John to the director. This provokes the Director's resignation because his crime is now exposed. John is kept in the “brave new world” as a sort of experiment while his mother, Linda is sent to the hospital for her addiction to “soma”, a drug used to feel calmer. Linda eventually dies from the drug and John then goes on an anti-soma rampage. John becomes angry and is overcome with passion. After coming under the influence of soma, he falls asleep. When he wakes in the morning, appalled at his complicity in the system, he commits suicide. This novel influences readers through a dystopian world and forces the reader to ponder.

Suggested Activities: A suggested activity for adolescent readers could be to answer the following question reflected from the novel, *Brave New World*: In a perfect world with no poverty, sickness, or sadness, what is

society missing? Once each student has written their thoughts or ideas down, they will be able to present their opinions on what they feel society would be missing in a perfect world.

Submitted by Devin Stabile



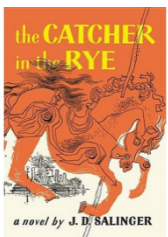
Call Me Maria
Judith Ortiz Cofer

Potential Appeal: This book follows the life of Maria. Maria was born in Puerto Rico, and transitions to life in a basement apartment in New York. Maria is torn between living with her father in the city and her mother who remains on the island of Puerto Rico. In the process Maria faces many challenges she struggles with the idea of adapting to her new life in America and losing not only her Puerto Rican roots, but her connection to her mother. She tells her story of perseverance through letters and poems. In the process she discovers the poet within her. I think this book will engage adolescent readers that have moved from one place to another or that struggle with the idea of discovering who they are.

Themes: Culture, Identity, Immigration, Family Dynamics

Suggested Activities: I like to use this book as a mentor text when teaching author's craft and present it in a Socratic seminar. First, I select one of the poems from this book titled: "Call me Maria". Then, I pair students up. One of the students will sit inside the circle and serve as the speaker. The second student will sit on the outside and serve as the observer/note taker. I provide students with annotating marks they should focus on as they read this poem in pairs. Together with their partner they discuss the author's usage of figurative language, theme, symbolism, repetition, and the manner in which the text is structured. I provide them with graphic organizers to record the information and ideas that the person in the inside of the circle should share with the class. During the seminar, the outside circle also has a graphic organizer asking them to record explicit information. Socratic Seminars are great because they allow students to take control of classroom discussion.

Submitted by Karheline Abad



The Catcher in the Rye
J.D Salinger

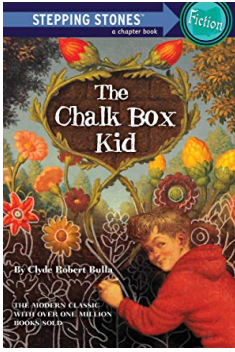
Themes: Coming of age, angst, alienation

Appeal: The Catcher in the Rye is about a 16 year old boy named Holden Caulfield, who gets expelled from his preparatory school. As a reader we get to join Caulfield on his numerous journeys in this "phony" world. We watch him develop from this immature, confused, delusional teenager to a mature "adult". As you continue to read the novel we realize he loses his innocence.

Suggested Activities:

- Take turns reading each chapter with the class and discuss any questions, thoughts, or predictions
- Students can make a self-text connection
- Students will be expected to write a paper that identifies and explains the theme, tone, or characterization of Holden Caulfield.
- Create a before and after characterization web to see how Holden Caulfield loses his innocence and exemplifies coming of age.

Submitted by Melisa Akdemir



The Chalkbox Kid

Clyde Robert Bulla

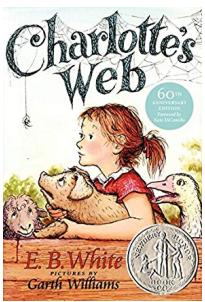
Appeal: *The Chalkbox Kid* is a book about a young boy, Gregory, just moved to a new town and struggles to make friends at school. One day, someone comes in to talk to his class about different vegetables and how to make a garden. He asks his parents if he could have a garden in their backyard, his parents so no. However, he uses his creativity to create one in an old chalk box factory near his house. He soon realizes that art helps him cope with the move to a new house, school and making friends. Then, someone in his class helps everyone see how talented Gregory is and everything begins to change for him.

This book is a great book to use with students who are transitioning into chapter books.

Suggested Activities:

- Students can discuss the different characters in the book and their traits.
- Discuss how the character's actions affect the story.
- Discuss character change from beginning to end of the story.
- Students can have a discussion based on if they have any connections to the story and why.
- Students can explore the many different themes within the book.

Submitted by Cassandra Kusnic



Charlotte's Web

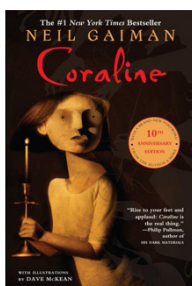
E.B. White

Potential Appeal: Theme (friendship), Character analysis

The theme of friendship, helping others and standing up for what is right is weaved throughout this book. Fern stands up for her beliefs when she convinces her father not to kill Wilbur. She develops a friendship with Wilbur and the animals at the farm. Wilbur and Charlotte have a special friendship in which they help each other (Charlotte with the words of her web and Wilbur with her egg sac at the end). The characters develop and change throughout the story. The idea of innocence can be explored through the development of Fern. This book is rich in descriptive language. It uses content-specific vocabulary of a rural area and of the time. It also utilizes many high-level vocabulary words that may not have been explained or understood at a younger age.

Suggested Activities: I don't work with adolescent readers often but I do read this book to my first graders. I thought it might be interesting for older students to revisit this story, especially if their teachers read it to them in a younger grade. This book presents ideas of friendship and kindness while using descriptive language and vocabulary adolescents can understand. If the book was read to them, it would be interesting to use this book to connect to their past understanding of it. Also it could be used to make connections to real-life friendships or issues they would defend. Also the vocabulary aspect of this text would lend itself to many exploration activities.

Submitted by Rachel Shanagher



Coraline

Neil Gaiman

Potential Appeal: *Coraline* is a popular thriller/ fantasy movie and book. Coraline is an adventurous, brave and strong-minded character who must fight forces of evil to save her loved ones and her world as she knows it. The story starts with Coraline moving into a shared house that has been divided up into various apartments with very peculiar neighbors.

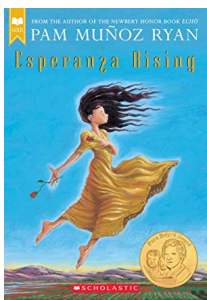
Coraline explores her new surroundings and finds a secret door that brings her to another world with an “other mother” and “other father.” Coraline is at first intrigued and excited about this new world and new set of parents because they pay more attention to her than her real ones. Soon, however, Coraline must choose between the fantasy world that is not as perfect as it seems and her real world, flaws and all. Students may like the fantasy elements, thriller elements and heroic story in Coraline.

Themes: good vs. evil, courage in doing the right thing, bravery in the face of danger, familial love

Suggested Activities: *Coraline* can be used to teach various literacy elements including, theme, symbolism and characterization.

- Students can use Coraline to identify theme by tracking major plot events and characters
- Students can learn about symbolism through various symbols and motifs in Coraline including the black cat, buttons for eyeballs, mirrors, etc.
- Students can learn and practice using characterization by tracking characters thoughts and actions, to determine which characteristics fit each character

Submitted Sam Russo



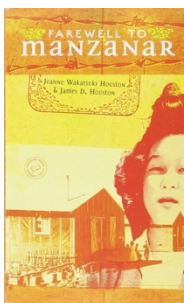
Esperanza Rising

Pam Munoz Ryan

Esperanza Rising is a novel about a girl who was living in Mexico with her family. Her life was going well in Mexico until she had to leave with her mother. Esperanza immigrated to California from Mexico during the Great Depression. When she came to California with her mother, her life suddenly changed. She had to work in a camp with other workers on the farm in California. Esperanza faces many challenges throughout the novel. Her grandmother played a huge role in her life and would teach her about perseverance. This text also brings up the concepts of wealth, resilience, and family.

Suggested Activities: Students can engage in gallery walks of images from people working in farms in California or images from the Great Depression. After students viewed the images they would be able to make connections in their journal of the historical events that were taking place during Esperanza’s immigration. This would also lead students to write about their family and to learn about their families past and journey. At the conclusion of this novel, students can write about their own family journey. This would start with where their parents came from to how their family ended up living in the town they live in.

Submitted by Kelly Cofrancesco



Farewell to Manzanar

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston

Potential Appeal: The author, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, provides a detailed memoir of her family’s experience living in a Japanese internment camp during World War II. Jeanne was a young girl of Japanese descent living in California when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Her entire life gets turned upside down by this event, as she and her family are regarded as the enemy and sent to live in relocation centers. Without any idea of when they might be able to return to a normal life, Jeanne and her siblings try to make the most of their situation while her parents try to keep the family unit connected. As an old Japanese saying goes, “Shikata ga nai”, “it can not be helped” and “it must be done”.

Themes: coming-of-age; discrimination; family roles; resilience

Suggested Activities: 1. Students can link the history of the war in the Pacific during WWII with the events told by Jeanne in this story by creating a visual timeline of events. Students can choose which events they would like to portray and may include events from history on one side and events from the book on the other side. This can be done on paper or in the form of a digital slideshow.

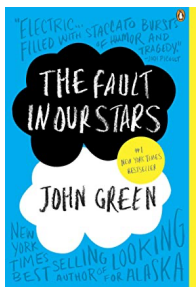
2. Students can learn about the purpose and structure of a memoir and outline the structure as it appears in the account by Jeanne. Then, they can write their own memoirs about a struggle that they have had to face in their personal lives. This can be accomplished through the use of Google Docs and/or a digital storytelling platform.

3. Students can examine and evaluate the use of primary and secondary sources that were relevant during the time period of the Japanese internment. For example, students can read Executive Order 9066 which sent all Japanese and Japanese Americans to internment camps and compare this document to an article in a history textbook about the order. This could also be done with the Loyalty Oath.

4. Students can compare and contrast the ways that different genres of literature portray historical events. Since Jeanne's account is a memoir, students can also read the graphic novel, *They Called Us Enemy*, by George Takei about his own experiences in internment.

5. Students can examine the subplots in the story and write informative essays on what the reader needs to know in order to grasp some of the more subtle references. These can be divided into sections and then compiled into a small class encyclopedia about Jeanne's allusions in the story. For example, an entire section can be dedicated to Japanese language and cultural norms. This might include Japanese idioms, moral standards, and customs.

Submitted by Jennifer Bulmer



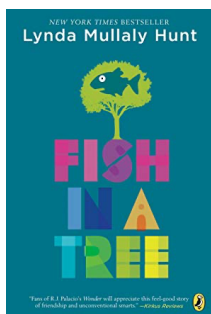
The Fault in Our Stars

John Green

Appeal: During the story the characters travel to different locations. This could cross over into Social Studies if learning about geography.

Suggested Activities: Group students together to work on an itinerary project. Since the characters in the story travel throughout the book the students will create an itinerary for the characters on their trip. Students can use google maps to look at the places from the story, but also add places and look them up. Students will then create a slideshow following their itinerary of the vacation to share with the rest of the class.

Submitted by Samantha Picciuti



Fish in a Tree

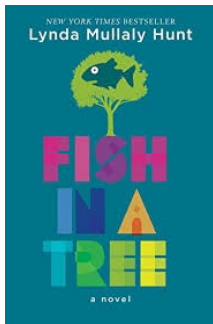
Lynda Mullaly Hunt (This novel could be on either list - I recommend it for students grades in 5 or 6)

Potential Appeal: I also suggest adolescent readers read *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt which is a realistic fiction book published in March 2017. This book explores what it is like to be a student with dyslexia. Themes in this novel include spirit of self, friendship, perseverance and compassion. The main character Ally Nickerson lives in a small town where everyone knows everyone. Ally doesn't know she has dyslexia but knows that she cannot read and chooses to hide her learning disability out of shame and fear of rejection by her peers. Many adolescent readers could connect to Ally's narration of her feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, as well as

her friend Albert's desire to hide his family's secrets, and Keisha's confidence to be an upstander when Ally is picked on for her reading struggles. When a new teacher, Mr. Daniels, enters Ally's life and notices her difficulties, he dedicates much of his time to her using new techniques to allow Ally to build the confidence she has never felt before. Mr. Daniels discovers Ally has dyslexia and shares with her famous individuals with dyslexia to ensure she is among good company.

Suggested Activities: Students could further develop their understanding of the novel by investigating dyslexia and other learning disabilities. They may develop a focus question connected to a topic of interest and conduct inquiry-based research to report findings allowing for more understanding and empathy of difference. Students could complete creative writing activities connected to maintaining a growth mindset in learning. Another idea is crafting a poem using the found poetry method with a segment of the text.

Submitted by Dina Veltri



Fish in a Tree
Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Themes: overcoming challenges, accepting differences, accept help

Potential Appeal: This is a wonderful coming of age story for students in fourth grade through middle school. The story is about a girl, Ally Nickerson, who at the beginning comes across as a disobedient student who is disrespectful to her teacher. As her teacher leaves for maternity leave, and her teacher is replaced with the caring Mr. Daniels, Ally soon realizes that she is different and learns to seek help from someone who cares about her. Along the way, Ally gets bullied for her differences, but also learns the power of friendship and being proud of who you are.

Suggested Activities: This is the perfect read aloud book for the beginning of the year. It allows the students to track character development throughout the story and make meaningful connections with their new classmates. This book has many instances of figurative language, like the title, and is perfect for teaching figurative language. In the beginning before reading the book, I like to put a few quotes on anchor chart paper and have the students go around and make predictions about what it means. We then look back as we get to the part in the book and use context clues.

Submitted by Dana Levenback



Flight
Sherman Alexie

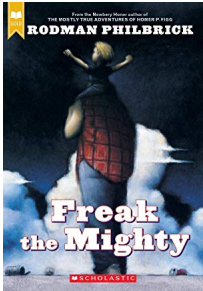
Potential Appeal: This is a YA genre book and it is written from the perspective of 15-year-old Native American boy named Zits. Zits is a foster child that has been placed in many abusive foster homes in the past. This history has molded him into an angry and detached teenager. Zits makes a connection with this boy named Justice in juvenile jail. Justice convinces Zits that an act of violence will empower him, and Zits brings a gun to a local bank. Right before he is about to commit the act of violence, Zits travels back in time to witness many important moments in Native American history. This book is filled with magical realism, and the last stop of his "body-jumping", time traveling experience, is in the body of his father. His father abandoned Zits at birth and his mother died a few years later. Zits comes to terms with his anger and is able to ask for help after his experience.

The themes of this novel are family, identity, violence, belonging, and alienation. I believe the themes are very relatable to teenagers. Zits is a recognizable teenager and also a character the reader can sympathize

with. Also, the book mentions a lot of contemporary subjects, which draws in the reader's engagement level. It is set in Seattle and gives some history on Native American struggles.

Suggested Activities: I think I would use this at the end of the year as a way to showcase students' public speaking skills. Since this book is short and direct, all chapters will be assigned to be read at home. We will read the first chapter together in class to discuss the narrator's voice and character. The Do Now's will focus on certain passages from the assigned homework chapters to track character development. The Main Activity will focus on group work. Their assignment would be to present their assigned chapters in a creative fashion.

Submitted by Estefania Rios:



Freak the Mighty
Rodman Philbrick

Potential Appeal: Characterization; first person point of view; ties to theme(s) of friendship, fitting in, and acceptance;

This story is told from the point of view of the main character, Max Kane (A.K.A. Mighty). Since it is written in the voice of a thirteen year old boy, many of the words used are informal and relatable to adolescent readers. Max is a struggling learner who is unmotivated to put any effort into school, making friends, and life in general. He lives in his grandparents basement and seldom leaves his “down under.” His father is in prison and his mother has passed away, so he is quite bitter about life. When he meets Kevin (A.K.A. Freak), the exceptionally small for his age genius, everything begins to change for Max. Kevin is the only one who continually encourages Max to push himself outside of his comfort zone. Kevin teaches Max how to be a better reader and writer through stories of King Arthur, but most importantly he teaches Max to believe in himself. Although this book discusses issues of bullying and domestic violence, it is a valuable story of a friendship where two opposite people come together to give each other what the other is missing to create—Freak the Mighty.

Suggested activities: Students can:

- infer personality traits of both Max and Kevin and compare/contrast
- create a character analysis of Max focusing on his change
- compose a letter to Kevin, from Max's point of view, sharing how Kevin impacted or changed his life (This will connect back to the thematic unit's essential question- *What role do relationships play in shaping an individual?*)
- create a soundtrack for the book by selecting songs that connect to the characters, themes, or events in the story

Submitted by Connie Fischer



George
Alex Gino

GEORGE

ALEX GINO
SCHOLASTIC

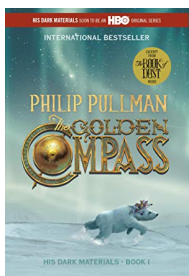
Potential Appeal: The current generation of adolescents see issues relating to the LGBT community very differently than their parents. As a result this novel about a boy named George, who knows he really is a girl, is more accepted by today's adolescents and they are more prepared to process the book. The book also allows middle schoolers to be exposed to a sensitive subject carefully and learn appropriate vocabulary for the transgender community. This book would raise objections in many places due to adult opinions, but

the lessons that can be learned from George gaining acceptance make it worth fighting to read (in or out of school). It may also allow students to resolve a curiosity with actual facts and not google searches. The book is not a terribly difficult read because it is clearly meant for meaning-making.

Potential Activities: Turn and talk and turn and talk: Students would need to have conversations in either small groups or one-on-one. However, students will need to have these conversation with multiple people to make sure they hear different perspectives. Discussion would need to be carefully monitored, but students would probably learn this topic best without a teacher “lecturing” them about the subject.

Writing: students will write a letter to a transgender individual who may be having a hard time. Students would draw upon knowledge and vocabulary from the text to formulate letters showing empathy and respect. Then letters would be mailed to a shelter upon completion. Art/labeling: Students will draw a picture of yourself using crayons to be as accurate as possible. After the pictures are drawn, write words around your picture that describe you. Students will share completed projects with the objective of learning we really are all different as no two projects were the same so acceptance is important like in *George* (do not lecture this - students should guide this conversation to find the true meaning of the activity through interaction).

Submitted by Jay Faigenbaum



The Golden Compass (1st book in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy)

Philip Pullman

Potential Appeal: This is a fictional book that follows Lyra and her daemon (which are basically your spirit or reflection of you that lives outside of your body in the form of an animal) - a young, brave, and truth-seeking 12 year old. She lives on the campus of the University of Oxford until her uncle, Lord Asriel, comes to town. She learns of an alternate universe or city in the Aurora Borealis, and of a phenomenon called Dust. At the same time,

children in her town have been disappearing and Lyra learns that they’re being used for horrible experiments somewhere up in the North. Then, a mysterious scholar and explorer named Mrs. Coulter takes her away to London, and before she leaves she receives a “truth compass” called an alethiometer. Throughout her journey to find the missing children, she learns who her true parents were, and deals with the complicated themes of self-identity, good vs. evil, betrayal, courage, trust, and of course, love. The rest of the series continues Lyra’s journey to seek truth and conquer the evils of her world, and along the way meets new friends and discovers new haunting secrets. I always loved these books, and the “closeness” to our world as we know it was always exciting to me. I think slightly “tweaking” our reality makes reading and writing even more thrilling, and bridges the gap between realistic fiction and fantasy.

Suggested Activities:

Current events: Lyra’s desire to help others could turn into a project where children examine current events and find ways to help other children. After researching current events, students could write letters to politicians, organizations, or even other children, or simply write about the importance of helping other members of the community. Or, in regards to our current cultural climate, a writing project focused on perspective and the concept of truth (or fact) could be examined: what truth means, how people use it for good and evil, etc.

Art: Children could make a “self-portrait” through a write-up and drawing of their daemon. They could reflect on their own qualities as a person and how they could relate to a type of animal. Once they chose their daemon and drew it, they could write a short story of an adventure their daemon would go on that would give readers an idea of who they were through the actions/reactions of the character.

Science: Throughout *His Dark Materials*, the characters use tools like the alethiometer to aid in their quest for the truth and what is right. Students could explore different scientific instruments that have been used to “discover the truths” of the world, and make a report or timeline of how science has used tools into the past and what scientists are using today to learn about our planet and beyond.

Submitted by Erin Pomponio



The Hate U Give

Angie Thomas

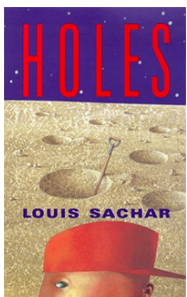
Themes: justice, racism, activism, personal responsibility, identity

Potential Appeal: I suggest adolescent readers to read *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, which is a fiction novel published on February 28th, 2017. Some of the themes discussed in this book are identity, justice, the weaponizing of stereotypes, activism and personal

responsibility. The book is about Starr Carter, a 16-year-old girl who is from a poor black neighborhood but attends a fancy suburban prep school. While getting a ride home from her childhood friend, Khalil, she witnesses a police officer shoot her friend who was unarmed. Soon afterward, Khalil's death became a national headline. Once Starr hears the police have little interest in investigating her friend's death she wonders if justice will ever be served. While protesters take to the streets in Starr's neighborhood, she decides she can no longer stay silent and agrees to testify in front of the grand jury. Even though the grand jury announces they will not indict the officer who killed her friend, Starr vows to continue fighting for justice on behalf of Khalil and all other black people killed at the hands of police. I would highly suggest this novel because of the powerful themes shown and it's a reminder you can use your voice to make a difference.

Suggested Activities: One suggested activity I would have for this text would be for students to write a discussion assignment where they could pick a theme from the book, discuss this theme and make sure to gather evidence from the text. Another activity that can be done in the classroom is allowing the students to deeply think about the main characters by giving them a chance on a poster to sketch out key characteristics, motivations, desires and history for all or just one of the characters. This could be done individually or even in a group and then these pictures can be shown and discussed with the whole class. If done in a group, roles can be assigned to each student on their job for this project. For example, one student can draw their character while another writes the details on the poster.

Submitted by Marie Emberger



Holes

Louis Sachar

Themes: friendship, perseverance, bullying, intolerance, overcoming obstacles

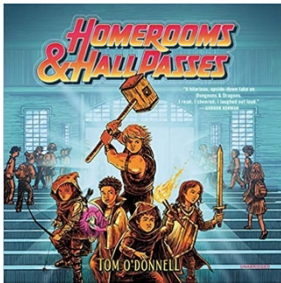
Appeal: *Holes* by Louis Sachar was a favorite book of mine growing up. The story centers around Stanley Yelnats who is sent to a juvenile detention camp called Camp Green Lake, where he is forced to dig holes. Stanley believes his family is cursed because many years before he was born, his grandfather's money was stolen and hidden by a woman named

Kissin' Kate Barlow who dies before the secret location could ever be revealed. The Warden at the camp is secretly looking for this treasure and forces Stanley and the other juveniles that he befriends to dig holes in order to find it. One day Stanley and his friend Zero learn about the treasure and escape from camp so that overnight they can secretly look for it in the holes they dug. They end up finding a suitcase of treasure on the same day that a lawyer shows up to tell Stanley that he was found innocent and retrieve him from camp. I believe this story would appeal to adolescents today because it is an unusual and unexpected mystery that would keep students' interest like it did mine at that age. It also could be used as a way to broach the topic of intolerance in history with students as well as show how important friendship and allyship are when overcoming obstacles, which I think is an important lesson for students today.

Suggested Activities:

1. Students could create a timeline poster in groups that shows each main plot point of the story as well as where the conflict, climax and six main parts of a story occur.
2. Students could create a character analysis of one of the campers detailing their main character traits as well as proof from the story to back up their ideas. These character analysis could be presented to the class in the form of a Facebook page for the character with imaginary friends, groups, likes and photos.
3. Students could practice letter writing as well as the parts of a letter by writing a letter home from Stanley or one of his friends at camp.
4. Peaches and onions are important food items throughout the story. The students could practice using sequential language to write a favorite recipe that involves either ingredient. These recipes could also be made together for a class party.
5. Holes has been made into a movie featuring Shia LaBeouf. The students could watch the movie and write an essay comparing and contrasting it with the book.

Suggested By Victoria Buchholz



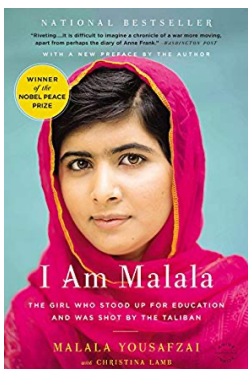
Homerooms and Hall Passes

Tom O'Donnell

Potential Appeal: This book is awesome for any student that wants to escape their everyday monotony of middle school. Not only that, but it gives those who are very much into Dungeons and Dragons or other role playing games an outlet in text form. The story uses a fun twist on the classic D&D model where players create their own characters that follow a story that is dictated by a game master. There is no board or pieces for this game, only your imagination and dice. The characters in this story find themselves playing a similar game only in this version the types of characters that one might traditionally find in a D&D game, such as: warriors, wizards, and rogues, are the actual players, and they are pretending to join a world where they must endure school bullies, lunch ladies, and dreaded algebra tests while taking on the mantles of nerds, jocks, and other tropes one might find in an actual school. Very fun book that really dives into world building and character arcs.

Themes: Friendship, and self-realization

Suggested Activity: I think it would be a lot of fun for students to create their own Homerooms and Hall Passes characters and story. The book lays out the formula early on, and I think all students would have a great time. This activity would start out with a model where the class would create the teachers character together. Students should have fun with this and really get creative. Coming up with a player name, character traits, attributes, skills, and gear will help the students find better connections with the story itself, enhancing their reading comprehension. I think the students would benefit from seeing and decoding the symbolism surrounding the many aspects of the character developments.



I Am Malala

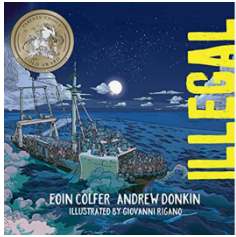
Malala Yousafzai

This story is an amazing memoir about Malala who has taken control of the situation happening in her town in Pakistan. She is an amazing role model for not only children and females, but for everyone because of her bravery to stand up and speak up when she was being silenced and told that her words didn't matter. This outspokenness and

bravery, however, caused her to become a target and she was shot in the head. This is about her journey.

Potential Activities: Young Role Models: Who do you know-Research other important young leaders; History of Pakistan and Laws related to Malala; Research/Discussion on the United Nations and the Nobel Peace Prize.

Submitted by Melissa Van Eck



Illegal

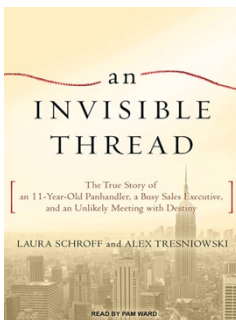
Eoin Colfer & Andrew Donkin

Theme: Graphic Novel, Shows the journey and problems that illegal immigrants face traveling from Africa to Europe

Appeal: This graphic novel is the story of a boy named Ebo who leaves Ghana searching for his brother Kwame & sister Sisi. Sisi has left Ghana for Europe in search of a better life. Kwame has chased after her to find her, and soon after Kwame left, Ebo decided to follow him. Ebo's life in Ghana is not good; his parents have died, and he now lives with his drunk uncle in poor conditions. Now that his brother and sister have left, he has no close family in Ghana. Ebo chooses to catch up with his brother Kwame on his own and travel across Africa. The two brothers find each other in Niger. Together they travel through the Sahara Desert to Libya and then across the Mediterranean Sea. Their travels are incredibly treacherous and difficult. Throughout the book, they run into terrible people who treat them poorly and are in life-threatening situations. The story goes back and forth between chapters describing then and now as Ebo tells the story of their dangerous travel. The story of Ebo is fictional but based on stories of real refugees and the problems they have faced trying to find a better life in a new country.

Activity: Class discussions would work best for this book. Some topics for discussion could be the treatment of refugees or illegal immigrants, the areas Ebo travels through, and chapter discussions to ensure the students understand what is happening. Another class activity would be to have the students write journal entries from the perspectives of Ebo and Kwame as they travel or as a refugee traveling to a new country in search of a better life.

Submitted by Kelly Palermo



An Invisible Thread

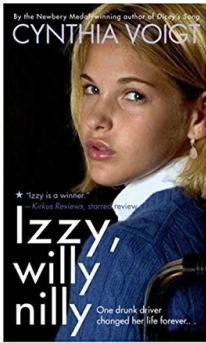
Laura Schroff and Alex Tresniowski

Appeal: This book shares the heartwarming story of Maurice, an 11-year-old boy who asks for money on the streets. Maurice asked for money in Manhattan as per usual, and bumps into Laura, who is an business executive. Laura decided to treat him out for lunch and decided to meet with Maurice every Monday for 4 years. This book shares the struggles that Maurice had to face growing up with his mother who is a drug addict yet is lucky enough to meet an angel like Laura who helped him change his life forever.

Themes: Kindness, friendship, social economic status, growth, childhood difficulties, addiction, education, based on true events.

Suggested activities: break students into groups and have them create a video where they do a mock interview if they had the opportunity to interview Maurice and/or Laura. Or have students break into groups where they have the opportunity to act out a chapter.

Submitted by Alejandra Zavala Guaman



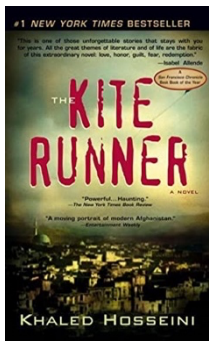
Izzy Willy Nilly
Cynthia Voigt

This book is about a 15 years old girl who lost her right leg during a car crash while on a date with a senior boy in high school. Her life changed after the accident. Izzy faces a new life and learns to cope and overcome her physical disability.

Suggested Activities:

- Ask students if they know of anyone who's been a victim of drunk driving. Discuss how that victim's life changed after the incident.
- Have students share their thoughts on how they think their lives would change if they were a victim of drunk driving.
- Have students share their thoughts on how they think their lives would change if they were the drunk driver causing the passenger to be disabled.

Submitted by Tammy Le

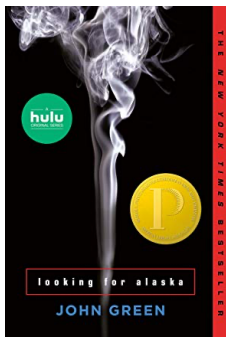


The Kite Runner
Khaled Hosseini

Appeal: The setting is in a Mid-Eastern country that is ravaged by war. The story follows two friends from boyhood to adulthood, there are conflicts of love and honor, betrayal and redemption. The story takes you to a country that is suffering from war and the lives of two very different boys in opposite social classes. The characters are unlikely friends, a wealthy boy and the poor son of his family's servants. The story evolves from the boys in their youth Amir, the main character, treats his friend unkindly because of their class differences. The story follows their journeys after a tragedy that separates them until they meet again later in life. As Amir ages, he struggles with being enough for his father and the guilt of his betrayal to his friend. The story is of family love, honor, betrayal, finding redemption, and discovering your true self identity.

Suggested Activities: There are many discussions that can come from this story. Students can discuss the setting and how this affects the plot. The differences between the characters, meanings, themes, conflicts and resolutions. Students can use various types of media to answer discussion questions, comic strips, use Storyboard to create their own summary story, create an information graphic with Canva, as well as use graphic organizers.

Submitted by Theresa Jones



Looking for Alaska
John Green

Potential Appeal: (Themes: love, guilt, friendship, death)

Miles, the main character, is a high school-aged boy who moves to Alabama to attend Prep School. Over the course of the novel, he befriends three close friends (one of them being a girl named Alaska). Alaska has a boyfriend and Miles is not necessarily interested in her in a loving way, but he loves her as a friend. The story takes place in two sections: before and after a big event. The big event is that Alaska is killed in a car crash and Miles and his friends set out to unravel the mystery. Miles deals with the guilt of not intervening or knowing if there was a problem. Miles is torn between the idea of this infatuation he had for Alaska and who he really finds that she was. **This novel is probably most suitable for grades 9 and up.

Suggested Activities: Before reading I think it would be interesting to do a theme spotlight on guilt. Class discussions can help to get children comfortable talking about guilt and some uncomfortable topics in the novel such as death and relationships (friendly or loving). After reading children can explore the following: All of the characters are changed by the death of their friend, Alaska. Children can write about a time when a life event affected them and/or the people around them. Children can explore how sometimes in the light of a tragedy, relationships, people and family dynamics can change; sometimes, people can even become closer (as they did in the book).

Submitted by Carly Norman

Lord of the Flies William Golding

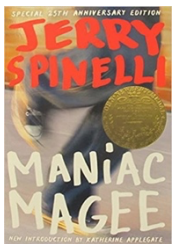
Potential Appeal: *Lord of the Flies* is a great book for adolescents who are learning their role as members of various communities in their life. They are at a stage in their life where they are striving for independence, and learning to manage the responsibilities that come with new freedoms.

WILLIAM GOLDING
With a new introduction by Stephen King

Suggested Activities:

- Students can create a list of rules for the island in order to create a fair and just community.
- Students can create an “election poster” for a character of their choosing. The poster must be created from the perspective of the chosen character and provide information on why they should be the elected leader of the island.
- Students will be given difficult survival scenarios, similar to those in the book, and asked to write how they would navigate the situations.

Submitted by Sarah Veniero

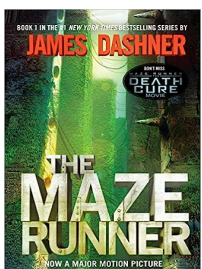


Maniac Magee Jerry Spinelli

Appeal: *Maniac Magee* is an adolescent novel about an orphan boy, Jeffery Lionel, running away and looking to belong in his town, Tow Mills. However, Tow Mills is segregated between blacks and whites within the East and West sides of the town. Listeners experience Jeffery’s character evolve as he is known for his helpfulness, athletic ability, and denial of the racial boundaries in town. Themes noticed in *Maniac Magee* are racism and inequality.

Suggested Activities: After discussing the story plot and themes with 5th -7th grade students, they are asked to define and apply important vocabulary words specific to the novel. Additionally, students can be asked to identify their favorite scene from the story. In small groups, students will write it in a play and record it or perform it in front of the class.

Submitted by Lisbel Torres



The Maze Runner James Dashner

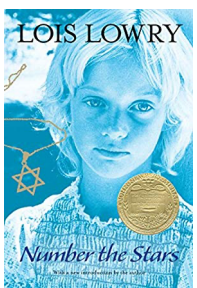
Appeal: A group of boys living the future, have no memory and find themselves in a stone maze. The characters have no idea why and how their memories were cleared. The characters must figure out how they arrived and how to escape. The book is centered around Thomas, his friendships and survival. This book is filled with action that will have readers curious about what will happen next.

Themes: identity, friendship, hope, belonging and hierarchy and power

Activities:

1. Students identify a character they identify most with. Students explain how the character's personality, interests, dislikes, relationships with others and actions are similar to themselves by writing an essay.
2. Students choose a character and create a "social media account" using a template provided by the teacher. Students choose pictures and create captions that demonstrate their knowledge of the chosen character. The "social media account" should include information about the character's values, interests, feelings and ideas about friendship.
3. Students use a venn diagram to compare and contrast the novel to the movie.
4. Students discuss conflicts where man vs. society are exposed in the novel. Students recall current issues where the conflict of man vs. society are being experienced.

Submitted by Angelica Abreu

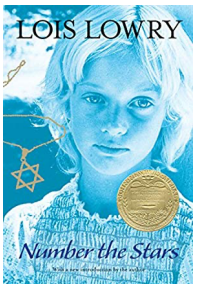


Number the Stars
Lois Lowry

Potential Appeal: One of the main aspects of the book that students would find appealing is the strong and enduring friendship between Annemarie (the protagonist) and Ellen as well as how far Annemarie is willing to go to help Ellen and her family during World War II. Another theme is bravery, which is shown by Annemarie, Ellen, their respective families, and the entire nation of Denmark in the face of Nazi occupation. A third aspect of the book is that book main centers on teenage characters actively resisting the rules of occupying government (Nazi Germany). This particular aspect can be relatable to the typical teenager, who, during this period of their lives, have desires to rebel against the authority of adults that they feel are unjust.

Suggested Activities: A number of individual activities can be derived from the book: 1) A student writes a letter to persuade his/her parents to allow allow them to rescue one of their friends who is in trouble. 2) A student writes a journal entry detailing how he/she is actively resisting/rebelling against the government of another country. 3) A student writes an action plan of how to stage a protest against something our own government is doing.

Submitted by James Curley



Number the Stars
Lois Lowry

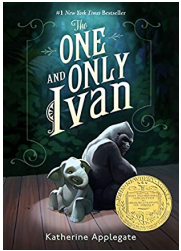
Themes: Growing Up, Patriotism, Family and Friends, Pride, Self-Sacrifice, Responsibility, Change

Potential Appeal: This book shows readers that strength and bravery come from within. It shows the reader that anyone, at any age, can make a change for the greater good. The book explores the theme of friendship, which is something each young adult is going through during their time at school. Sometimes friendships can be hard but they are worth it. The book also shows how at any moment your world can change drastically and it is better to go with the flow and make the best if the situation than to try and fight it.

Suggested Activities: Diary Entries: Have each student write a diary entry as one of the characters in the story. This will allow students to use their critical and creative writing skills to complete the activity. Teachers can also go over the first-person narrative, to ensure that students understand which narrative to use for their entry. **Vocabulary Awareness:** Introduce students to a list of vocab words they might come across

and not know the definition of. Have students use a dictionary to find each word and define it. Afterward, students can use those words to create funny sentences or fortunes to help connect the word to something they relate to for a deeper understanding of the word. **Hero Project:** Being a hero is a big theme within the book. This activity can be great for self-reflection. Each student should write a small essay about a time they were a hero. Whether it was helping out a friend or scoring the winning goal, students should use this opportunity to self-reflect. Through this activity, students can gain self-confidence and understanding that the actions they make in life reflect who they are and how others see them.

Submitted by Crystal Cordero

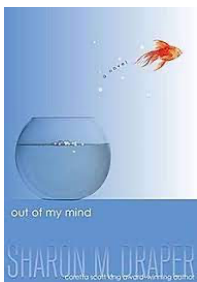


The One and Only Ivan
Katherine Applegate

This book is about animals living in a mall circus that were stolen from their homes to become an attraction. Ivan, the main character, is a gorilla that does not realize that the mall is not his true home, until he starts to recall memories that he buried away from his childhood. This is a story with topics including friendship, identity, and loss. These topics are easy to discuss with this book because they are approached through interactions between animals. Students can easily connect these topics to what they encounter in their everyday lives. The theme of this text is animal rights, which most students feel passionately about after reading this book.

Suggested Activities: Students can create a billboard, as Ivan did, to show visitors that the animals want to be free. They would have to connect to the animals to decide what the message they would want visitors driving past to see, using words or pictures. Also, since the book is written like a diary, students can write from another character's point of view about living in the mall. Also, students can research circus' and zoos' treatment of animals to conduct a debate on whether or not they should still be open for business.

Submitted by Gianna Allegretti



Out of My Mind
Sharon Draper

Potential Appeal: The narrator of this story, Melody, is a young girl who has cerebral palsy, which leaves her unable to walk, talk, or communicate her basic needs. She is reliant on her parents to take care of her. People at school don't understand Melody's disability, so they have classified her as being mentally challenged. This description couldn't be further from who Melody truly is. On the inside, Melody is extremely bright and has a keen sense of what is going on around her. Throughout the story, Melody continues to prove to her bullies that she is more than just what meets the eye. Written from Melody's point of view, *Out of My Mind* brings light to the stigma put on children and adults with disabilities and how this mis-judgement negatively impacts their social and emotional well-being.

Themes: Acceptance, inclusion, power of expression

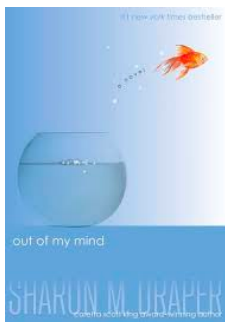
Suggested Activities: Before reading, students can complete a 'KWL Chart' where they can write what they know and what they are wondering about cerebral palsy. Throughout the story, students can fill out the 'L' section for any information they are learning about this condition.

Students can track challenges that Melody is facing, while also paying attention to the way that she responds to those challenges. After tracking for a few chapters, students can develop theories or ideas that they have about Melody's character traits and who she truly is on the inside, despite the struggles she is facing.

This book lends itself to rich discussions about inclusion and acceptance. Students can put themselves in the shoes of many different characters in this book, whether it be Melody (main character), Molly and Claire

(bullies), or even Melody's parents and talk about what should have been done in a certain situation. The focus of this activity could be on problem-solution.

Submitted by Ariel Kaplan



Out of My Mind

Sharon Draper

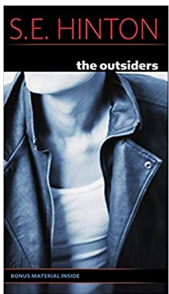
Appeal: "Out of My Mind" by Sharon Draper is about a girl named Melody Brooks who has cerebral palsy and is unable to speak or walk. Despite her physical limitations, Melody is a brilliant and perceptive thinker, with a photographic memory and a passion for learning. The novel follows Melody's journey as she navigates the challenges of middle school, including bullying, exclusion, and ableism, and discovers her own voice through the use of a communication device. Melody is a relatable and sympathetic character who faces many challenges throughout the book. The book has been praised for its portrayal of disability and the power of self-expression, as well as its honest and compassionate treatment of complex issues. This book delivers a powerful message about the importance of inclusion, empathy, and understanding.

Themes: Disability; Identity; Education; Perseverance; Empathy

Activities:

1. Character analysis: Students can analyze the different characters in the novel, focusing on their personalities, motivations, and relationships with each other.
2. Vocabulary study: The book contains many challenging words that students may not be familiar with. Teachers can create vocabulary lists and activities to help students learn and understand these words.
3. Classroom discussion: teachers can facilitate classroom discussions about the themes and issues raised in the book, encouraging students to share their thoughts and opinions on topics such as inclusion, empathy, and the power of education.

Submitted by Amy Glarner



The Outsiders

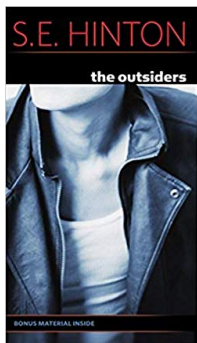
S.E. Hinton

Potential Appeal: I think this novel would be great for adolescent learners because it addresses a multitude of issues that students still face today, like bullying and socioeconomic status. The story itself, takes place in the 50's, with a ongoing rival that takes place between the "greasers" (the working class) and the "socials" (the upper class). This rival has been going on forever in this small town in Oklahoma. Then, one day a fellow "greasers" member kills a local member of the "socs" in self-defense and runs away with fear he will get caught and sentenced to life. Ponyboy and Johnny (the young boy who kills the member of the socials) are the two main characters and are best friends throughout the course of the novel. In an effort to escape the tragedy that just occurred in this small town in Tulsa, both boys run away until the news of the incident has run its course. Dally one of the older ring leaders of the greasers assist the boys in hiding out. While the two boys are hiding out, in an old, abandoned building, they run out one day and return to a fire. They run inside to assist the young children that are present, but unfortunately Johnny gets injured in the process. Both Johnny and Ponyboy return home, where Johnny is under critical condition, hoping to survive from his heroic deed. Later that evening, in an effort to end the fighting and rivalry once and for all, the greasers and socials decide to have one last rumble, and the greasers win. Even though we all know fighting is not the answer, all did not end as the greasers would've hoped. Dally is shot by police at the end of the novel, and Johnny boy

unfortunately also does not survive and leaves Johnny boy behind with the golden line in the novel..."stay gold".

Suggested Activities: A major theme in this novel is class conflict, and the pointlessness of judging someone based on where they come from. Being that this is something that is still happening around us, I think this novel would go well with students in the higher grades, possibly 8th or in high school. I think you can do a lot of activities focused on this theme or also on the symbolism that takes place within the novel since there is a lot as well. I can see students analyzing pieces of the text as well as sections of the text that maybe they didn't understand, and work together to analyze it collaboratively. I also think that students can work with a partner to analyze the last line that Johnny says to Ponyboy, "stay gold". I think there are a lot of hidden messages there, and it would be interesting to see student's take on his last message to his best friend.

Submitted by Patricia Da Cunha



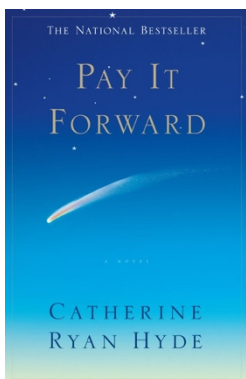
The Outsiders
S.E. Hinton

Potential Appeal: Themes of friendship and class differences, symbolism (the Greasers' hair, Socs' cars)

The story follows the main character, fourteen year old Ponyboy Curtis, a member of a lower-class group of boys called the Greasers. This group, along with his older brother, has taken Ponyboy under their wing and has helped raise him after his parents die in a car accident. Through Ponyboy's perspective, the Greasers encounter their rival the Socs, an upper class group of boys. The rivalry progressively worsens as the Socs continue to threaten and eventually seriously harm one of the Greasers. It is through this rivalry the reader views differences in class and the importance of friendship to get through difficult times. *The Outsiders* resonates so well with adolescent readers, despite the background he or she may come from, because the main character narrates in a way where the reader feels like he or she can be his friend.

Suggested Activities: One activity I personally remember completing as an adolescent reading *The Outsiders* is a cultural context activity. In order to fully understand the setting of the novel, one must learn about the time period. The students will research through internet exploration and movies during the 1960's to gather a better understanding of how people dressed, what they ate, and what activities were popular for fun. Students then complete a model of how he or she may have dressed during this time period, what he or she would do for fun, and present the time machine version of themselves to the class.

Submitted by Rachel Norton



Pay It Forward
Catherine Ryan Hyde

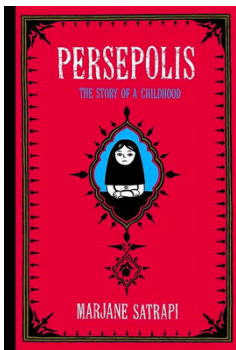
Themes: the power of kindness, the impact an individual can have on others around them, the importance of being a positive force, as well as the significance of taking action.

Appeal: *Pay It Forward* is a novel written by Catherine Ryan Hyde in 1999. The story revolves around a 12-year-old boy named Trevor McKinney, and the extra credit assignment that is given to him by his seventh grade social studies teacher Reuben St Clair. The assignment is to develop an idea that can change the world and then put it into action. Trevor's idea is focused on the power of completing good deeds. His plan, which became known

as “pay it forward”, involves doing a favor for one person and then having that individual do three good deeds for other people as a sign of appreciation. Trevor begins by doing three favors for three different individuals, and explains his “pay it forward” plan to each of them afterwards. The book details the outcome that these good deeds had, as well as highlights the effectiveness of Trevor’s plan. Pay It Forward communicates strong messages regarding the importance of being kind, and concludes in a memorable way that will leave an impact with its readers.

Suggested Activities: Being that the book itself is based upon a class assignment, I think the best activity would be to recreate the task assigned by Reuben St Clair to his students. Students will be tasked with creating a plan they feel would change the world for the better and describe how they would put it into action. Each student will work on this and will then present their plan to the class as part of the assignment.

Submitted by Emma Oppido



Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood
Marjane Satrapi

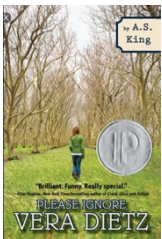
Appeal: This graphic novel describes the true story of the author’s childhood in revolutionary Iran, a time of political turmoil and extremism. The adults in Marji’s family are politically active, which leads her to learn firsthand the consequences of activism, both good and bad. Marji deals with conflicting feelings about the changes taking place in her school and her community, and navigates her relationship with her activist parents.

Due to the complexity of the Iranian Revolution and some depictions of violence, this graphic novel would be best suited to high school students.

Themes: Coming-of-age, parent-child relationships, political activism

Activities: This book provides an opportunity to dive into the genre of graphic novels. Students can use this book to explore the different features of graphic novels, and how each feature contributes to meaning-making. For example, students can analyze how the words and illustrations work together to tell the story. Before reading this book, students could analyze a series of newspaper articles about the Islamic Revolution. This would provide some necessary background knowledge, as well as an opportunity to discuss how the Islamic Revolution, Iran, and Islam is viewed throughout the world. There is also a movie adaptation of this graphic novel. Students could view the movie and compare/contrast with the graphic novel.

Submitted by Anna Kisker



Please Ignore Vera Dietz
A.S. King

Potential Appeal:

Please Ignore Vera Dietz is about a young girl who has to navigate through life without a mother and her best friend. While navigating through those hard times she is also trying to prove that the death of her best friend is due to a jealous girlfriend that the best friend had.

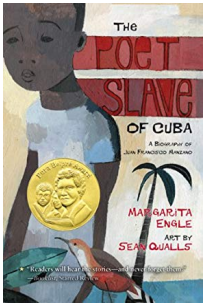
Theme: Coming of age, loss, friendship, family

Suggested Activities:

- Draw what they think the tree house looks like
- Beginning/ middle/ end chart of what is happening in the book

- What is the importance of the tree house? What does it represent? (Essay)

Submitted by Patricia Carr



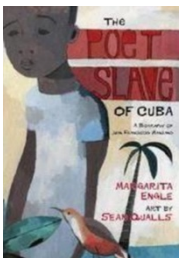
The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano

Margarita Engle

Potential Appeal: The Poet Slave of Cuba is a biography of Juan Francisco Manzano, whom was a 19th century Cuban poet. Margarita Engle tells his story through a free verse and she shifts the viewpoint through seven people (including Juan) that are all in direct contact with Juan. Throughout the poetry, the readers learn about Juan's life, enslavement in Cuba, and how he learned to read and write when he was not allowed to. Students' are really captivated, intrigued, and shocked upon reading this novel. The students' are usually shocked with the fact that slavery also took place among Latinos. It opens their minds to understand the concept and they are intrigued on learning more information. To the students' it is a powerful book while it promotes many discussions and questions in class.

Suggested Activities: Being that students have such a powerful reaction to this book, one activity is that we write the questions that students' want to answer or discover throughout the study on a flip chart. The students' will partner up with each other and try to find an answer to a question that is really intriguing to them. After some time, they will present the answer to the class. Another activity is keeping track of how Juan grows as a character throughout the biography. As the students' read, they will complete a graphic organizer that depicts character traits of Juan and evidence to support their answer. Finally, many students' are curious about the history of Cuba during this time frame. The student's will create a timeline of significant events from the beginning and progressions of slavery.

Submitted by Waleska Burgos



The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano

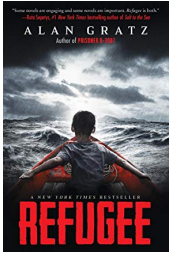
Margarita Engle

Themes: Poverty, freedom, social justice, hope

Appeal: This story takes place in 1797. The main character, Juan, was a slave to a wealthy slave owner Doña Beatriz, whom he was forced to call "mama". Despite being denied an education, Juan had the talent of memorizing songs and poems, and eventually taught himself how to read and write. He was often ordered to perform for Doña Beatriz's guests. He was told that when Doña Beatriz died, he would regain his freedom. This unfortunately was a lie, and his new slave owner was La Marquesa de Prado Ameno. After his ownership was transferred, life became even more difficult, as La Marquesa de Prado often beat him and put him in confinement. This book gives insight to slavery in Latin America. Through the poem styled story, readers can start a dialogue to analyze and learn more about Juan and many others who were oppressed in Latin America.

Suggested Activities: As an activity for this reading, a teacher can create poetry discussion circles with groups of students. In these discussion circles, students can discuss questions such as: How did the slave experience of Juan Francisco Manzano in Cuba differ from that of slaves in the United States? What was the cultural hierarchy of Cuba during the 19th century? How is that portrayed in the book? Another activity students can engage in is researching topics related to the book. Topics can include: The emergence of slavery in Cuba (creating a timeline),

Submitted by Dina Rodriguez



Refugee Alan Gratz

Potential Appeal: I suggest adolescent readers read *Refugee* by Alan Gratz which is an historical fiction book published in July 2017. The topics are relevant to the international community and include immigration, war, survivor's guilt, and anti-semitism. Middle grade readers of varying backgrounds will benefit from reading this novel, however I feel that it may be most beneficial to read with an ELL community or a heterogeneous group of readers.

Refugee reveals several themes including determination, sacrifice, faith, and tolerance through its three main characters and their similar but differing experiences fleeing their homes and countries in search of refuge at varying times in history. There are three main characters who narrate their own chapters. Perspectives switch by chapter among these three, however their storylines coincide with major similarities. Josef is a German Jew living in Berlin in 1938. His father is arrested the night of Kristallnacht and sent to a concentration camp. Josef escapes war in his country by travelling to Cuba. Izabel lives in Fidel Castro's communist Cuba in 1994 and escapes for America with her family when her father is threatened by the Cuban police. Mahmoud is a Syrian boy living in Aleppo in 2015 when a bomb strikes his home, prompting him to flee for Germany. The storylines intertwine in such a way that students can easily recognize the refugee experience despite time periods and locations.

Suggested Activities: I would suggest reading this novel in conjunction with social studies lessons on the current events connected to the world's refugee crisis. Students analyze and reflect on how this text and others (nonfiction articles, narrative nonfiction, poetry, etc.) address the topic of the refugee experience to compare perspectives or the authors' approach to the topic. There are many opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of the refugee crisis through research and inquiry projects. Additionally, students can research other refugees and complete a perspective writing task interweaving facts about the refugee as well as elements of narrative writing.

Submitted by Dina Veltri



Refugee Alan Grantz

Potential Appeal: This story is about three people's refugee story in different decades and in different continents. They all experience different dangers and hardships along their journey. I think students would find this book interesting and informative of hardships people have faced in Germany, Syria, and Cuba. I think this book is aimed for middle school students. Although, I haven't read it, my students read this book and loved it.

Suggested Activities:

- Connect this story to real world events and how students can help
- Compare and contrast the different journeys
- Write letters/diary entries from the refugees' perspectives.

Submitted by Samantha Leon

refugee boy
benjamin
zephaniah

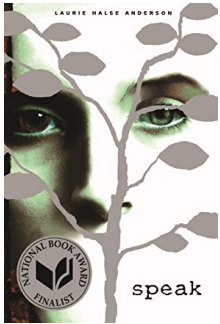
Refugee Boy Benjamin Zephaniah



Potential Appeal: The main idea is finding a sense of belonging when you aren't welcome in a country and must escape. A young boy leaves his home country with his two parents. He discusses his struggles in a simple way that students are able to understand and relate. It includes a lot of European cultural knowledge and challenges that a young refugee must face when trying to adapt to a new environment.

Suggested Activities: Students can relate their immigration experiences to those of the main character in written form or discuss current events relating to refugees. ESL students may become passionate about the topic and want to discuss government policy on refugees as well. Teacher guidance is necessary to make sure that the conversation does not spiral out of control, but controversial topics like these are important to expose to high school students.

Submitted by Marissa Chirico



Speak

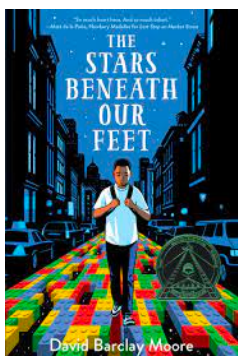
Laurie Halse Anderson

Potential Appeal: I think this book is good for adolescent readers, especially high school girls. This book is about a girl named Melinda who is a freshman in high school. She is at a party and she is the one who calls the cops. She is then judged by everybody for calling the cops, so she decides to not speak and convey her words through art. The book is written in diary format, because Melinda writes in her diary which makes her feel secure.

It is conveyed that she met a senior boy at the party at the raped her. She instantly called the cops and froze with nothing to say. She runs home and the cops show up to the party, busting it and that is why Melinda was judged. She knew she could not say what really happened, so in her mind, not speaking was the best solution. Melinda wanted to speak about it, but knew she could not with words, which is why she conveyed her message through art. This book really focuses on a weak character (Melinda), who gains the courage and strength to overcome her past. Every girl should realize even if they feel weak, they have a voice and it should always be heard.

Suggested Activities: Ultimately, Melinda is bullied in the book because the people at the party know it was her who called the cops. The students could work in groups and come up with a poster about bullying and explain how it could make a person feel. Another activity is to have the students write a page about how Melinda starts off her sophomore year of high school. The book brought the readers through her freshman year, so they will have to think outside the box and decide how her sophomore year will start off. Lastly, students can research about depression, rape, and sexual abuse. After they research, they can come up with a poster and share with the class why it is so important to know about those issues especially entering high school.

Submitted by Genine DellaValle



The Stars Beneath Our Feet

David Barclay Moore

Themes: Coming of age; Coping with death; Art; Friendship

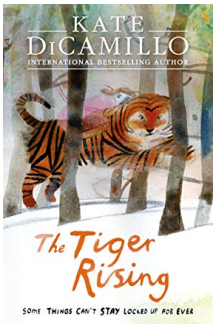
Appeal: Wallace Rachpaul, also known as Lolly, struggles to deal with the death of his beloved brother, Jermaine. In lieu of joining a gang like his deceased brother had, Lolly copes with death by building structures out of Legos. While Lolly had been playing with Legos forever, he realized how significant they were after his brother passed away because it helped him take his mind off of things. Before, Lolly played with Legos for

fun, but now he plays with them to avoid his mother, Mr. Ali who is the after-school supervisor, and especially, life. He uses the opportunity to allow the Legos to be an escape from his life and works on building cities with his friend Big Rose, a girl in Lolly's after-school program who is autistic. Throughout the book, she continuously says, "When you die, they bury you, but your soul flies to the stars. Your mama, your daddy-they were buried under the ground, but they're stars now, girl, stars beneath our feet." Lolly

never understood why Rose constantly repeated this saying, until he one day realized why, and he also came to the recognition that Jermaine was a star beneath our feet, too.

Suggested Activities: This book can be used in middle-grade classrooms, specifically fifth- through eighth-grade. The story is told through Lolly's perspective but also involves a lot of background on Jermaine and Big Rose, as well. A suggested activity would be to have students write letters from Jermaine's or Big Rose's points of view instead of Lolly's. Jermaine's letter could be to his family, especially Lolly who was badly hurt by the loss of his brother. Big Rose's letter could be to her mother, who also passed away.

Submitted by Maya Lopez



The Tiger Rising
Kate DiCamillo

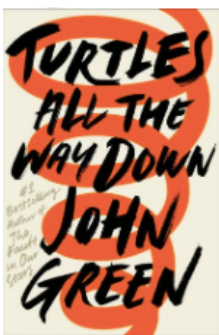
Potential Appeal:

The Tiger Rising is a book about a young boy who finds a caged tiger in the woods outside the motel he is living in with his father. It is through this tiger, along with the help of a new friend that he is finally able to let his sorrow rise on up and out. Readers could explore: Theme topics about *friendship, loss, and family*, Character Change, or Symbolism

Suggested Activities:

- Students can create a then and now character chart that demonstrates the changes in the main characters
- Students can create suitcases for Rob and Sistine filled with all of the emotions and explanations of why they feel that way
- Students can take part in group discussions about the symbolism throughout the text- for examples What does the tiger stand for? What does the rash on Rob's legs symbolize?
- Students can create sketch notes to reference all of the symbolism, themes/ideas, golden lines, character change presented throughout the text. This can be on going throughout the book
- Students can act out a scene between the two main characters to depict their traits
- Rob learned to whittling from his mother before she died. He often carved things that were important to him. Student can use clay to model or sketch something that symbolizes something of importance to their own lives and share it out with the class

Submitted by Natalie Baho



Turtles All the Way Down
John Green

The story starts with a mystery and becomes a story about grappling with life hardships. The main character, Aza reads a headline about the disappearance of the father of an old friend, Davis and winds up reconnecting with him in the process of trying to find out what happened to his father. Throughout the story, she is forced to re-evaluate friendships and relationships all while suffering from constant anxiety.

Suggested Activities:

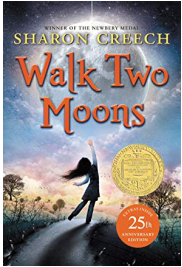
Before/After - Write about what events led up to the mysterious moment of disappearance or what happens after the mystery is solved.

Characters - Write about a portion of the story from another character's perspective. Aza's best friend is a sharp contrast to her and would provide a much different lens.

Social / Emotional - Aza suffers from anxiety and that manifests in specific ways. Students can reflect on their own anxieties and how they would play out in the story or how the story would look different if Aza did not feel this way.

Journal Entries - Throughout the story, the text provides an in-depth look at Aza's mind. She also discovers fan-fiction written by her best friend, Daisy and blog posts written by her boyfriend Davis about Aza and her anxieties. Choose a method to recreate a moment in the story in the form of a fan-fiction or a blog post to provide an alternative look at a situation from the story.

Submitted by Rachel Cordero



Walk Two Moons

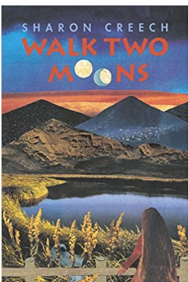
Sharon Creech

Potential Appeal: Allows teenagers to read from the perspective of someone they may not encounter in everyday life; Life lessons on love, loss and individual identity.

Walk Two Moons is a three-part book depicting stories from teenagers going through completely different life struggles. They are all ultimately trying to figure out who they are as a person and navigate through life. I would recommend this book for fifth through eighth grade students, due to some difficult topics such as death and sadness, as well as the large amount of rich vocabulary embedded in the text. This creates a perfect platform to adding new vocabulary words to their repertoire.

Suggested Activity: One activity that came to mind was creating a project where the students had to write three narratives based off of the same event, each in the voice of a different person. An example of this could be to write a journal entry during the time period of the Holocaust from the point of view of a German child, a Jewish child living in Germany, and a child living in America during that time. This allows the student's the opportunity to write unique pieces they may not have had any experience in, thus broadening their literacy understanding. There are many other adaptations to a project like this such as having the students rewrite the ending to each one of the stories in the book. This type of creative and open-ended assignment is exciting for the children as they can change the ending in whatever way they would like. You could also use this book in Social Studies by looking at the state of Kentucky, the one place that all three characters had in common. The children could look up Kentucky on a map and possibly create a powerpoint or state flag based off research done on Kentucky's location, landmarks, and other specific characteristics.

Submitted by Christine Nicholson



Walk Two Moons

Sharon Creech

Potential Appeal: This is the story of a young girl, Sal, on a road trip with her grandparents to see her mother. On the long trip Sal tells a story about her friend whose mother disappeared. Both stories are told alongside each other and in the end the truth about both girls' mothers is revealed.

Themes: Family, Friendship, Loss, Journey

Suggested Activities:

1. Have students track Sal's journey across the country using a U.S map. Combine the physical journey they took along with the plot of the story.

2. Have students inquire and write about their own “family mysteries” ? Is there a relative they never met? A family tradition they do not know the origin of? Have students interview a family member to discuss this “mystery” and write up their findings.
3. Have students take turns reading the chapters out loud. Have students discuss their predictions, questions, reactions etc.
4. Have students discuss the title quote “Don't judge a man until you've walked two moons in his moccasins” What does it mean? How does it relate to the text? What are other idioms/expressions?



The Wave
Todd Strasser

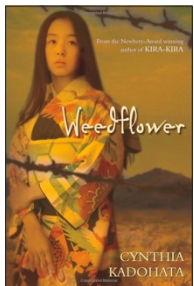
Potential Appeal: This novel for young adults is based on a true story that occurred in a high school history class during the late 1960s. While the students were studying Nazism, a teacher named Burt Ross created a “new” system to put in place within the school for students. The movement quickly took over and the rules take a turn for the worse as students are recruited to join the movement. Two students realize what is happening and decide to intervene before things continue to get worse in the school.

The Wave would be interesting to promote within literacy classrooms, where students may also be learning about the Holocaust or Nazi reform in their History classes. They can then identify the differences and similarities between the two incidents that occurred, and how conformity can quickly influence a multitude of people to shift their ideals about something.

A major theme that is presented within this novel is fascism. More specifically, what makes individuals want to become a part of a community that places such a high value on authority? There are many instances throughout the novel where excuses are made in the event that hierarchy comes into play, and there is no justice for rule breaking within the community.

Suggested Activities: One thing that would be interesting to see, especially with adolescents, is how they can connect or relate to this novel. Students should be able to identify a time where they felt they were being pressured to conform to something they may or may not believe in, and can express how it made them feel. Or, students can identify and connect with an incident where they felt as though rules and laws had exceptions for specific people, based on favoritism or a hierarchy standpoint. This novel is a little graphic, so I do suggest that it be used for older students who are able to handle the severity of some of the outcomes of this text.

Submitted by Sarah Laveratt



Weedflower
Cynthia Kadohata

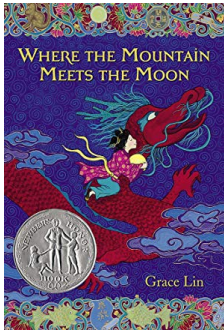
Themes: Discrimination, resilience, friendship

Appeal: This historical fiction novel is written from the perspective of Sumiko, a 12 year old Japanese-American girl who is living in California at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack. The first part of the book discusses her life before Pearl Harbor, where she tackles the challenges of being the only Japanese girl in her class. The rest of the book describes the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, when Sumiko and her family are sent to an internment camp. She describes life in the camp, and her struggle to feel a sense of belonging. This book is suitable for middle school students.

Activities:

- Before reading, students could conduct independent research about Japanese-American internment using internet sources and/or nonfiction text.
- This text could be a part of a larger unit that covers the experience of various groups during World War II. Classes could do a literature circle that includes books about Japanese internment, the Holocaust, Native American code talkers, etc.
- After reading, students could create a series of journal entries from the perspective of someone their age living in an internment camp.

Submitted by Anna Kisker



Where the Mountain Meets the Moon

Grace Lin

Appeal: *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* is a 279 page chapter book about a little girl named Minli who lives in China. Her family is very poor and has little food to eat. To help her parents, Minli sets off on a journey to meet The Old Man in the Moon and ask him how to help her family. Along her journey, Minli meets many mythical and magical creatures before she finds the answers she's been looking for. This book is appealing because it has a very interesting plot. This does follow the general plot line of a journey, running into trouble, then resolving a problem, but the characters Minli meets are

altogether unique. Additionally, it is inspired by and written around real Chinese myths that the author had been told as a little girl. She also used real sites in China to inspire her pictures in the book, which is something unique and interesting about this book.

Activities: Students can follow in the footsteps of Grace Lin and create their own stories based on a real-life location. They can go around their neighborhood and take a photograph of something, and use that as the end location of their character's journey. They can write stories where a character starts at their school, and ventures to their end destination to solve a problem that the students need to come up with. This can also be used in a cross-curricular manner during a study of China. Students can study different Chinese myths, connect them to this book, or study the actual myths shared in this book and compare them to the original versions of those myths. Students can also create their own questions they would want to ask The Old Man in the Moon.

Submitted by Georgia Racanelli



Who Would Win Book Series

Jerry Pallotta

Theme: animals, nature

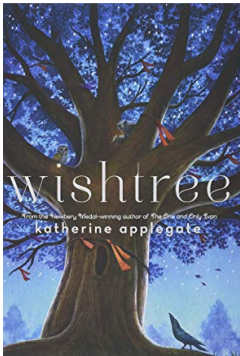
Appeal: This is a multi-book series that analyzes two different animals to listing their strengths and weaknesses. Young readers are able to learn about the more than 100 animals covered in the series and then decide for themselves which animal would be the winner in a battle. The book series includes face

offs between hammerhead vs. bull shark, lobster vs. crab, and hyena vs. honey badger. The books include interesting facts about each animal presented in written, picture, and graph formats. Books are short reads and ideal for students in grades 1 -3. I have seen first-hand how much young readers enjoy these books and then see the same students read these books so that they can either agree or debate which animal would win and why.

Activities: A fun activity would be to have students break into teams and they would need to read one of these books and do their own additional research and conduct a friendly classroom debate as to why they

believe a certain animal would win. I think for a fun twist likely for third graders assign them an animal to argue for, let them do their research and then have the teams swap animals and then prepare a new argument against their original position. The student would then write out their debate notes and conclude with a live in class debate.

Submitted by Matt Buckley



Wishtree

Katherine Applegate

Potential Appeal: This book is beautifully written as it is narrated by a Red Oak Tree named Red that is hundreds of years old. Red is nicknamed “Wishtree” by the humans around her because once a year, people come from miles to hang their wish on Red’s big branches. Red’s owner threatens to cut her down after someone spray paints “Leave” on her trunk after a new family moves in across the street.

Suggested Activities: Students read this book through the lens of a tree. Students can practice writing through a different perspective (pencil, chair, couch). I encourage students to think of another perspective. Guiding questions can be: *How does this object/thing feel? Does it have opinions? What kind of friends would it have?* Students love this activity, however, it is important to provide an example and explain the process you went through to write your own.

Submitted by Katelyn Fabiano



Wonder

R.J. Palacio

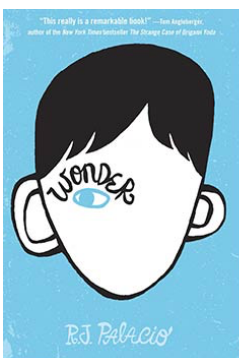
The text, *Wonder* is a novel written for young students. The main character, referred to as Auggie in the book is a young boy with a facial deformity. Throughout the text, the point of view changes from Auggie to other characters. The text tells the story of Auggie and how he is faced with different challenges of making friends in a new school, and trying to fit in the world around him. Self-acceptance, bullying and friendship are some of the themes integrated into this book.

Suggested Activities: As a whole, this book could be used for students to use in a book club activity. There are various themes that students could use to discuss with each other.

Character Study: The text has multiple characters that differ throughout the story. Teachers can have students explore how the author expresses different character traits with different characters. Teachers can also have students explore how characters can change over time in a text.

Social/ Emotional Learning: Teachers can use this text to teach their students about being kind. The book provides examples of characters being kind as well as not being kind. An extension of this could be teachers having students explain why it is important to be kind to someone.

Submitted by Kayla Miller



Wonder By R.J. Palacio

Potential Appeal: *Wonder* is a book about a young boy named Auggie Pullman who was born with an uncommon facial deformity. Auggie’s physical disability has prevented him from attending mainstream school his whole life up until now. The book takes the reader on a rollercoaster journey of Auggie Pullman’s fifth grade school experience, as he learns to navigate life in the public eye. His family, teachers, friends, and new community

struggle to uncover their acceptance and compassion as they accompany Auggie on his journey. Becoming an unlikely hero, Auggie's unique journey helps to unite his community and teach them to embrace one another's differences.

Themes: *disability, friendship, family, popularity, tolerance of differences, courage, acceptance, and kindness.*

Suggested Activities:

- Students can work in groups to create their own sequel to the book.
- Students can create their own wonder book cover portraits and reflect on something that makes them unique, just like Auggie (self-text connection).
- There are many symbols and motifs presented throughout the book. Students can identify one of the many symbols in the book in their writing journal, express the significance of it, and illustrate a photo of the symbol (ex: The Astronaut Helmet, Auggie's Dog Daisy, Star Wars)
- The book is told not only in first person, but also in the multiple perspectives of other characters. Students can explore these perspectives by choosing to write a letter to Auggie from any character of their choice (Julian, Jack, Mr. Tushman, Summer, etc.)
- Students can do a "Then and Now" writing assignment where they discuss one character that changes throughout the book and explain how this change occurred (ex: Auggie, Jack, Miranda, etc.)

Submitted by Adriana Molinini



Wonder

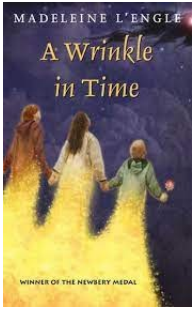
R.J. Palacio

Themes: The importance of kindness, adolescence/growing up, bullying, discovering one's own identity

Appeal: *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio is a coming-of-age novel that tells the story of 10 year old August "Auggie" Pullman. August has had 27 surgeries performed on his face due to a condition called Treacher Collins syndrome. Despite having this condition, Auggie is a regular kid who loves video games and Star Wars. After being homeschooled by his mother for years, Auggie's parents decide it is time for him to experience going to school with other children at the start of fifth grade. Auggie's narrative is witty and comical as he goes through life at his new school, Beecher Prep. As a young boy, Auggie longs for friendship and acceptance. The themes throughout this YA novel such as growing up and discovering one's own identity are certainly relevant for young readers.

Suggested Activities: This book is very popular across many grade levels. However, activities related to this book may be best suited for upper elementary to early middle school (4th-6th). While the beginning of the novel is told from Auggie's perspective, the book also features chapters which are told from the perspective of other characters such as Auggie's sister, Olivia. Students can engage in an activity in which they write a letter to a certain character in the story from another character's perspective. For example, in the novel, another student, Jack Will, talks about Auggie behind his back at a Halloween party. Students can write letters from Auggie's perspective explaining to Jack how his words made him feel. If they choose to do so, students may write letters from a different character's perspective.

Submitted by Sophie Wolf



A Wrinkle in Time

Madeleine L'Engle

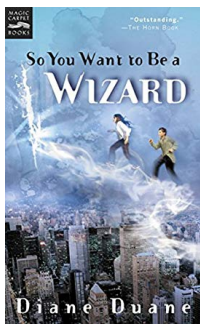
Potential Appeal: This story is about a young girl, Meg, and her family who are struggling after their scientist father goes missing. Meg and her siblings must fight through the fear to save their father who has traveled to a planet in another dimension. Will Meg gain the self-confidence needed to save her father from the evil forces that are holding him captive?

Themes: good vs. evil, family, love, individuality

Suggested Activities:

- Identify the theme by looking at the events in the story
- Compare and contrast the growth of Meg from the beginning of the story and the end
- Discuss foreshadowing with the quote “It was a dark and stormy night.”
- Create a model of a tesseract and other scientific vocabulary mentioned in the book
- Writing activity- What does “No, alike and equal are not the same thing.” mean to you
- Create a model of the major events in the text

Submitted by Heather Manochio



The Young Wizards Series

Diane Duane

Potential Appeal: This book series has the potential to appeal to both male and female adolescent readers as the main characters are Nita and Kit, a girl and a boy respectively. It deals with a wide variety of important subjects such as personal growth, sacrifice, loss, bullying, death, friendships, relationships, and the importance of taking care of our planet. The series has aliens, magic, and falls under the umbrella of the epic “good vs. evil” or “dark vs. light” trope with religious overtones, and yet it somehow manages to feel extremely relevant to the issues that a young adult or adolescent deals with during this stage of their life.

Suggested Activities: Students would discuss or write about the way(s) in which they would battle The Lone Power and entropy in the world today if they were chosen to take The Oath. It would lead to a greater discussion about the ways we can help make our planet a better place and what we can do for our world. Students would discuss ways to potentially bring about the changes they said they would put into action sans magic.

Submitted by Aliza Enker