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SLM 504 YA Literature

Final Book Evaluations and Reading Instructional Strategies

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| Photo credit: Michele Tota | Bascomb, Neal. *The Nazi Hunters: How a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the*  *World’s Most Notorious Nazi.* New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 2013. Print.  **Genre:** Biography, Non-Fiction  **Grade Level: 7-12**  ***Voice of Youth Advocates***  ***Horn Book Magazine***  **YASLA Non-Fiction Award Winner 2013** |
| **Summary** | A true story of the hunt for the most notorious Nazi, Adolf Eichmann, one of Hitler's top officers who was responsible for the untimely and cruel deaths of so many.  This is not just another WWII Holocaust novel, but a true account of survivors, politicians, and spies working together to find this elusive war criminal.  Not only does this non-fiction novel shows the side of the hunters and victims, but also shows the human side of the criminal.  Bascomb tells the story of Eichmann as a father and husband mixed with the greediness to be powerful and successful.  Throughout each chapter there are photographs to coincide with this spy thriller, holocaust tale of justice. |
| **Personal Reaction** | Wow, just wow!  I have read quite a few of WWII and Holocaust novels and accounts and nothing amounts to this one.  Bascomb does such a great job at capturing the unthinkable and the humanistic side to this awful time in history and does this with such suspense and powerful language.  This book was really well written and didn't read like a history book, but more of a thriller novel.  The use of photographs really put the text's imagery into perspective and captured each of the chapter's main ideas. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | The overall layout of the book and the images in each chapter were the most memorable and appealing to the reader. Each photo provided an image to go along with the narration. Bascomb also included actual pictures of some of the documents centered on the search for Eichmann. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This book would be a good supplementary read for European and World History classes and could be used for various research projects.  **AASL 1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within a learning community.**  **AASL 4.3.1: Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | The narration starts off with a young boy (about 15) being shipped off to the Ghetto and then to Auschwitz where he is forcibly separated from his parents and brothers and sisters.  This will appeal to young adults because of the similarity in age.  Beyond that, I think young adults would be attracted to the style of writing, because it doesn't read like a history book, but more of suspense novel with loads of drama, it's hard to believe that this is a true story, that something this horrific really happened.  There are not many negatives for this book, I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and would recommend it to anyone who is interested in the Holocaust and the hunt for the war criminals of WWII. |
| **Similar Titles** | *Imprisoned: The Betrayal of Japanese Americans During WWII* by Martin W. Sandler |
| Photo credit: Michele Tota | Chbosky, Stephen. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. New York:  Pocket Books, 1999. Print.  **Genre:** Realistic Fiction  **Grade Level:** 9-12  ***School Library Journal***  ***Kirkus Reviews*** |
| **Summary** | A freshman in high school in Western Pennsylvania, Charlie, shy, intelligent, and a bit socially awkward, is just trying to get through his life after his best friend committed suicide. Through his letters to an unnamed friend, suggested by his counselor, the reader experiences Charlie’s first dates, mixed tapes, and new friends. While Charlie takes the role of being a wallflower, the outsider looking in, he finally decides to step to the center and live his life and feel infinite, but not without putting together all of the pieces of his past and his Aunt Helen. The coming of age novel will entice every reader to look to his or her inner-wallflower and relate to Charlie and his struggle to fit in. |
| **Personal Reaction** | I LOVE this book! It is the perfect coming of age book that reminds us of all those awkward high school moments, the bigger-than-life dramas that happen, and the feeling that the company of your friends makes everything better. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | Each chapter is written in letter-form from Charlie to his unnamed friend, revealing his inner thoughts and feelings through each of his experiences. |
| **Reading Promotion** | **AASL 1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within a learning community. AASL 4.3.1: Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.** I can see this book used in the classroom or a book talk/book club for students who love to read and discuss about the novel’s underlying themes of coming of age, family, abuse, and friendship. |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | Young adults will be drawn to this book because each of the characters (both Charlie’s friends and his family) remind them of their own friends and family and the feeling and need to belong and find ourselves. |
| **Similar Titles** | *It’s Kind of a Funny Story* by Ned Vizzini |
| Photo credit: Michele Tota | Coben, Harlan. *Seconds Away: A Mickey Bolitar Novel*. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Son, 2012. Print.  **Genre:** Fiction Mystery  **Grade Level:** 8 and up  ***BookList***  ***School Library Journal*** |
| **Summary** | Mickey Bolitar is living with his Uncle Myron because his father was just killed in a car accident and his mother, distraught from her husband’s death, hits a downward spiral of drugs and alcohol and is currently residing in a rehabilitation facility. Mickey is not allowed any contact with his mother and has to live with his estranged father’s brother. A sophomore starting at a new school, trying to make new friends, and finding a spot on the school’s basketball team finds himself in the middle of a murder investigation involving his new friends. To make matters even more complicated the Abeona Shelter has chosen him and his friends to save other children, but at what cost to Mickey and his friends. This is the second book in the series of Mickey Bolitar. |
| **Personal Reaction** | I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. I really liked trying to solve the mystery right along with Mickey and his friends, but the ending and all of the loose ends really made me want to read the rest of the series and wish that I could have read the first book as well. This book was a page-turner for me and I felt as though the action and the suspense Coben written into his chapters made me feel as though I was right in the action with them. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | The chapters in this book were very suspenseful and short, making for an easy and fast read. I also liked how each of the text messages were in a different font and in bold lettering, setting them aside from the rest of the narrative. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This book would be a good choice as part of a summer reading list or reading competition where students have a set number of time to read the entire series. It would also lend itself to a creative book trailer assignment.  **AASL 1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within a learning community.**  **AASL 4.3.1: Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | The main character, Mickey, is a sophomore in high school, but is not part of the “in” crowd and is friends with two of the biggest outcasts in the school. One of his biggest loves is basketball, he knows that where he can let go of everything that is bothering him and it can be completely honest with him. Male students especially will connect with Mickey at the basketball level, but also with the high school experiences of bullying and staying loyal to friends. |
| **Similar Titles** | *Paper Dolls* by Anya Allyn |
| **Photo credit: Michele Tota** | Cormier, Robert. *The Chocolate War*. New York: Bantam  Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1974. Print.  **Genre:** Fiction  **Grade Level:** 9-12 |
| **Summary** | A story of corruption, cruelty, bullying, and defiance, Jerry (the main character) spends the novel contemplating the question, “Do I dare disturb the universe?” He does just that by refusing the private school’s secret society, The Vigils’ chocolate sale. He refuses to sell their chocolate and the consequences that follow are like no other. An all out war ensues; amongst Jerry and The Vigils and among them are the teachers and administers backing The Vigils. Jerry has to go against Archie, The Vigil’s leader and the most intimidating bully, but does he stand a chance? Will Jerry come out on top? |
| **Personal Reaction** | To be completely honest, I did not enjoy this book as much as the others. The message stemming from the book didn’t seem to be one that was worthy of being labeled a classic nor did it seem to fit that realism that most young adults look for in a novel. To further this point, I thought the way it was written was also not appealing to this age group either. The chapters were long and drawn out, the relationships with teachers and administrators were unrealistic, as well as the characters themselves. |
| **Reading Promotion** | **AASL 3.3.1: Solicit and respect diverse perspectives while searching for information, collaboration with others, and participating as a member of the community.** This book can be used as a springboard to discuss bullying in schools, as well as to discuss the abuse of authority and intimidation. The book could also be used in a book club for reluctant readers. |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | This novel while a stepping-stone for other YA novels, did not seem to hold up to the appeal of later novels in this genre. A big negative for this novel is the unrealistic nature of the plot. |
| **Similar Titles** | *The Contender* by Robert Lipsyte  *Athletic Shorts: Six Short Stories* by Chris Crutcher |
| Photo credit: Michele Tota | Gaiman, Neil. *Anansi Boys*. New York: Harpertorch, 2005. Print,  **Genre:** Adventure, Fantasy  **Grade Level:**  ***School Library Journal***  ***Booklist (starred review)*** |
| **Summary** | Fat Charlie (the nickname that has stuck with him since boyhood) is about to have his life turned upside down when his father dies in a Karoke bar. Before he knows it his unknown brother shows up on his doorstep and Fat Charlie finds himself being investigated by the police. His fiancé starts to fall in love with his brother and Charlie finds out that his father was not just an average man, but a god. And to make matters worst, the beast gods of folklore are seeking their own revenge against Charlie and his family. |
| **Personal Reaction** | What a well-written book! The characters and the settings were very well thought out and thorough. I felt like I knew the characters by the time I was done with the first chapter, and I could picture in my mind perfectly where they were. I think the acute attention to detail the book’s outward appearance (how thick of a book this is) could be intimidating to some students, but the words that lay between the pages if given the chance would draw them in especially young adult males. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | The narration of this novel was phenomenal and made the characters and events stand out in my mind. Gaiman has a way with words that tell an unbelievable and memorable story. His use of humor and sarcasm truly make this story good. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This novel would make for a good creative writing book for the way the narration is written as well as good candidate for an adventure book club.  **AASL 1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within a learning community.**  **AASL 4.3.1: Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | This novel would appeal to young adults, especially males because of the strong male main characters. On another note, young adults would be attracted to the family dysfunction narrated in the novel as well as the underlying love story. |
| **Similar Titles** | *War of the Oaks* by Emma Bull  *The Good Fairies of New York* by Martin Millar |
| Photo credit: Michele Tota | Garcia, Kami and Margaret Stohl. *Beautiful Creatures: The Magna*. New York:  Yen Press, 2013. Print.  **Genre:** Graphic Novel, Magna  **Grade Level:** 8 and up  ***Kirkus Review*** |
| **Summary** | Ethan Lawson Wate, a popular basketball player and secret reader, has lived in Gatlin, S.C. his whole life and can’t wait to leave. His father always tells him, “there are two kinds of people in this town—the ones who are bound to stay or too dumb to go. Everyone finds a way out.” Ethan is counting the days when he can finally get out, but a recurring dream about a beautiful girl draws him to the new girl at school and Gatlin’s centuries old secret that changes everything. |
| **Personal Reaction** | I do not normally read graphic novels, but was pleasantly surprised by this one. The plot was suspenseful and intriguing with beautifully crafted images. In the hour and half it took me to read this book, I couldn’t help but to think that this would be a perfect book for a teenager who “doesn’t like to read” or “doesn’t have time to read”, in other words a reluctant reader, because of it’s quick and enticing plot line. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | Each of the graphics that accompanied the narration and dialogue of this graphic novel were extremely intricate and excellently drawn. Cassandra Jena, the illustrator for this novel did an amazing job with capturing the true essence of the novel and how beautiful Lena Duchannes is. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This novel would make a great addition to a reluctant readers book club or group. I could also see this novel as a model for a creative writing class or anime and magna class.  **AASL 1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within a learning community.**  **AASL 4.3.1: Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | Both of the main characters are high school seniors and looking to get out of where they are and find some normalcy or their own way in the world, young adults both male and female could relate to this. There was also a movie adaptation of this book a few years ago that students would love to watch after reading. |
| **Similar Titles** | *City of Bones (The Mortal Instruments, Book 1)* by Cassandra Clare  *Icons* by Margaret Stohl |
|  | Gardner, Sally. *Maggot Moon*. Somerville: Candlewick, 2012. Print.  **Awards:** Printz Award  **Genre:** Dystopian Fiction  **Grades:** 9 and up  **Connection to SLM 504:**  “Finding oneself in story.” Students can relate to the main character’s personal thoughts and teenage angst of wanting to fit in with the norm, but also the want to be different as well.  ***Horn Book Magazine*** |
| **Summary** | Standish Treadwell can’t read or write, and isn’t very bright, but sees things differently than the rest of the “train-track thinkers.” Standish and his only friend find themselves on the other side of the wall; they see what they haven’t been allowed to see by the Motherland. Standish and his best friend, Hector, plan an imaginary mission to the planet Juniper until Hector and his family are mysteriously taken because they know too much. Can Standish Treadwell find out the truth and survive? |
| **Personal Reaction** | This book was awesome! It was one hundred chapters, but fast one hundred chapters. Each chapter was only a page or two told from the point of view of Standish, which was interesting to say the least. A teenage boy who doesn’t read or write, but where he falls short, he makes up with his insight and clarity of his dystopian society. Standish, just one teenage boy, thinks he has what it takes to take down the propaganda driven totalitarian government. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | Most memorable are the short and concise chapters capture Standish’s voice, making it easy to “hear” his thoughts. |
| **Reading Promotion** | Students could create their own dystopian world and make connections through research and writing of other novels or movies of dystopian society, as well as the strict, conformists regimes of the past.  **AASL: 4.1.5** **Connect ideas to own interests and previous knowledge and experiences.** |
| **Appeal to Young Adults** | The main character is a 17-year-old male who is ridiculed by his peers and authority figures, but is smarter than they all think. Young males would make a connection with this main character. |
| **Positive/Negative Aspects** | There is not one negative for this book. This was an easy read because of the short chapters, but the appeal lies with everyone’s love of the dystopian society and the angst of wanting to fit in, but also the want to be different from what we are told we have to conform to. |
| **Similar Titles** | *Black Helicopters* by Blythes Woolston  *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins  *1984* by George Orwell |
|  | Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars.* New York: Dutton, 2012. Print.  **Awards:** VOYA Perfect 10  **Genre:** Fiction  **Grade Level: 9-12**  ***Horn Book Magazine*** |
| **Summary** | Hazel is a teenage girl who happens to be a terminally ill cancer patient, but when she thinks there is no hope left Augustus Waters walks into her life.  Augustus becomes the twist she had been waiting for in her life story.  The two become deeply in love despite what seems to be the inevitable. August uses his last wish from the Genie Foundation to grant Hazel’s only wish to meet her favorite author in Amsterdam, but when she is disappointed by the man she has admired so much, Augustus is there to pick up the pieces. |
| **Personal Reaction** | I loved this book immensely. Once I picked it up, I couldn’t put it down. I became so invested in the characters and felt like I was going through the same emotions as they were. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | Green tells the story from Hazel’s point of view, and I believe that the story would not have been as personal if it were told from another’s view or from the third person. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This book would be a perfect book to teach about plot outline and character analysis, as well as the importance of voice (tone). Students can use this for a character analysis.  **AASL 2.1.6** **Use the writing process, media and visual literacy and technology skills to create products that express new understanding.** |
| **Appeal to young adults** | This book is definitely popular with teens and I think it will remain so for a long time.  It is the type of book that seems to resonate with young adults (and adults alike) because of it's tragic topic, but the hopefulness in finding love even in the midst of something as horrific as cancer.  The book does not focus on both teens’ illnesses, this merely is a background to their teenage lives and trying to find love and deal with things like death.  While there are not a lot of teenagers dealing with this same type of terminal illness or fate, the feelings, the awkwardness of being a teenage is what will make them connect with the characters. |
| **Positive Aspects/Negative Aspects** | The major positive from this book is the strong connection the two main characters have, it is realistic of young adults and their relationships with friends and significant others. As a negative, the ending. While not all endings should be happy, this one was particularly emotional for me. |
| **Similar Titles** | *Graffiti Moon* by Cath Crowley |
| **Photo credit: Michele Tota** | Green, John. *Looking for Alaska*. New York: Dutton, 2005. Print.  **Genre:** Fiction  **Grade Level:** 9-12  ***Horn Book Magazine***  ***School Library Journal*** |
| **Summary** | Miles “Pudge” Halter is 16 and has no real friends, no girlfriend, no trouble, a non-eventful life, but that is all about to change when he moves from Florida to Alabama for boarding school. His obsession with last words leads him in search of the “Great Perhaps.” He meets Chip “Colonel”, his roommate and his best friend, Alaska. Alaska is beautiful and reckless and has Miles’s heart the second he meets her. And that is what makes the “before and after” of this story that much more meaningful. |
| **Personal Reaction** | What a great book! The development of the main character and the transformation of Miles throughout the book made this the most memorable, as well as the relationships he develops with Colonel and Alaska. There were moments in this book where I was laughing, but moments that brought me to tears. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | The chapters are divided into “before” and “after” and the number of days before or after the ambiguous ending, leaving the reader to question what the meaning of before and after really is, until the event actually occurs. The dialogue between the characters is realistic as well as the degree of rebellion each of the characters partakes in. |
| **Reading Promotion** | Because of the suicide and drinking and driving described in the novel, the book could be used as an awareness of suicide discussion with teens or as a prevention presentation with a health or psychology class.  **AASL 3.3.1: Solicit and respect diverse perspectives while searching for information, collaboration with others, and participating as a member of the community.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | Young adults would be drawn to Miles’s inner thoughts and his search for something more. I also think this book would appeal to male readers because of the main male characters. |
| **Similar Titles** | *Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie |
| Photo credit: Michele Tota | Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan. *The Mad Potter: George E. Ohr Eccentric Genius.*  New York: Roaring Press, 2013. Print.  **Genre:** Biography  **Grade Level:** 6 and up  ***Horn Book Magazine*** |
| **Summary** | George E. Ohr is a very unique artist that went unknown and virtually unpopular until an antique dealer discovers his pottery in Mississippi in 1967, nearly one hundred years later. This biography showcases Ohr’s strange and unique pieces, his obsession with his creations, and the disappointment of going unknown despite his tireless efforts. During his life Ohr traveled to world’s fairs to try to sell his pottery only to come home with just as much as he left with. |
| **Personal Reaction** | This was a unique biography with clear and colorful photographs showing Ohr’s amazing and artfully crafted work. I really liked reading about Ohr’s struggles as a young man, and then finally finding himself through art. The authors did an excellent job outlining Ohr’s home life as well as his eccentricities that so many people didn’t understand. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | The authors use very descriptive and well-crafted language to capture the true essence of George E. Ohr and his life’s works. The images and descriptions, as well as the tidbit of information about each one provides great explanations for his work. There is also a note at the end of the book about the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi, MS. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This book would be a great supplementary book for an art study class or any student who is interested in art and learning about artists.  **AASL 4.1.2: Read widely and fluently to make connections with self, the world, and previous reading.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | Young adults interested in life stories and/or art would be interested in reading about George E. Ohr, especially any young adult who seems to be struggling with what they may want to do as an adult. |
| **Similar Titles** | *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin* by Jen Bryant |
| Photo credit: Michele Tota | Hopkins, Ellen. *Burned.* New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2006. Print.  **Genre:** Verse Novel  **Grade Level:** 9 and up  *School Library Journal* |
| **Summary** | Pattyon Von Stratten, a Latter Day Saint, begins to question her family’s religious strongholds; so much so that she endures much abuse and eventually is forced to find redemption and salvation in Nevada with her estranged Aunt J. As it turns out Pattyon and her Aunt J find comfort in each other, and Pattyon learns what is to truly love someone and that true love, in fact, does exist. She finds acceptance in Nevada and learns that she has more to offer than what her father and her religion made her believe. But when it is time to go back home, can she be the same Pattyon she has grown to love? |
| **Personal Reaction** | I LOVED this book!! From the very beginning Pattyon captured my attention and tugged at my heartstrings. Hopkins grips the reader early with how she forms the questions of “Did You Ever”. While reading this book I started thinking about how I was so enthralled and wanting to see how things were going to turn out for the speaker of each verse, that I felt that this sort of intrigue could be the kind that could grip the most reluctant reader. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | While this is a verse novel, Hopkins also embraces using shape poetry for some of the chapters. One in particular is shaped like a full moon when Pattyon discusses how she can’t fall asleep thinking of all the things that she has learned from her Aunt J and all that she has yet to learn and question. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This book could be used in part with a fiction writing class or with students who are interested in writing, specifically in verse and prose writing. This book would serve as an excellent example of that genre. This book would also be an excellent display book for reluctant readers.  **AASL 4.1.4: Seek information for personal learning in a variety of formats and genres.**  **AASL 4.1.3: Respond to literature and creative expressions of ideas in various formats and genres.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | Pattyon Von Stratten, a strong female main character will appeal to young adult girls as well as her want and necessity to get out of a abusive family. Girls especially will connect with Pattyon on many levels and not just the abuse she takes from her family and her religion. The love story that unfolds will be a big component that young adult girls will relate to as well. |
| **Similar Titles** | *One of Those Hideous Book Where the Mother Dies* by Sonay Sones |
| Photo credit: Michele Tota | McCall, Alexander. *What You Wish For: Stories and Poems for Darfur: Book Wish.*  New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2011. Print.  **Genre:** Short Story Collection  **Grade Level:** 5-10  *School Library Journal*  *Kirkus Reviews* |
| **Summary** | A total of eighteen poems and stories, written by such authors as Joyce Carol Oats, John Green, and Ann M. Martin, and a forward by actress and advocate for the children of Darfur, Mia Farrow, capture the hopes and dreams of the children and refugees of Darfur. Each story centers on family, friends, home, safety, and love, all of the things that we sometimes take for granted in our privileged lives. But not all stories are serious and macabre, there are some that will make you laugh and smile. |
| **Personal Reaction** | What a unique book and with such a good cause to support. I loved the forward written by Mia Farrow, so heartbreaking to hear her tell just a part of the tragedy of this place and all of those children left orphaned and struggling to survive in the refugee camps in Chad. As a parent many of these stories tugged at my heartstrings, these unique tales, some fairy tales retold describe the dreams and hopes of these children. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | A well-known author creates each story; authors are described along with their accomplishments in the back of the book. No two stories are a like, one is written in letterform, one is written as a graphic-novel format. The whole idea of this collection of dreams is overall unique and memorable. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This collection of stories could be used to raise awareness of children just like our students, but part of a very different world in which we live. This could also be used as possibly a humanitarian assignment with social studies.  **AASL1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within the learning community.**  **AASL 4.1.4: Seek information for personal learning in a variety of formats and genres.**  **AASL 4.1.5: Connect ideas to own interests and pervious knowledge.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | Young adults in middle school mainly, will be intrigued by the short stories in different formats and the idea that these are the children of Darfur’s dreams, children just like them. A negative about the book is that this is not a mainstream book that would stand out to students unless they went looking for it, so this is a book that would need a special place or promotion by the librarian or classroom teacher. |
| **Similar Titles** | *The Running Dream* by Wendelin Van Draanen |
| Photo credit: Michele Tota | Roth, Veronica. *Divergent*. New York: Katherine Tegen Books, 2011. Print.  **Genre:** Science Fiction  **Grade Level:** 9 and up  ***Library Media Connection***  ***School Library Journal*** |
| **Summary** | Beatrice Pyor has turned sixteen and she with other sixteen year olds in her society are on their way to choosing their own faction. Her society is divided up into five different factions: Abgenation, Candor, Dauntless, Amity, Euridite. All teens must choose how they want to spend the rest of their lives, and Beatrice chooses hers at the surprise of all, including herself. Her decision sends her on a whirlwind of physical and psychological tests to assess her bravery and devotion to her new faction. But all the while she has a secret that she must keep from everyone, even the boy she has fallen for because this secret can mean life or death. |
| **Personal Reaction** | I loved this first book in the *Divergent* series. There are some similarities that can be drawn between this one and other Dystopian society series, but the Roth does such a fantastic job at getting the reader emotionally involved with the main character, Tris and her love interest Tobias. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | Roth does a great job at writing in the psychological warfare against the teenagers to fit into their factions and building the suspense to lead to the secret that Tris has been holding onto during the course of the novel. |
| **Reading Promotion** | Male and female young adults have fallen in love with this series and using that popularity to host a *Divergent* book talk and movie viewing special. This book could also be taught in tangent with *1984* and the *Hunger Games* in a literature class where students discuss dystopian and utopian societies and their deconstruction to the people and the government.  **AASL 4.1.2: Read widely and fluently to make connections with self, the world, and previous reading.**  **AASL 4.1.3: Respond to literature and creative expressions of ideas in various formats and genres.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | A strong female main character will draw the appeal of female readers; however, the action and intense physical aspects of the book will be appealing to male readers as well. The first book of the series has also been adapted to a movie version and provides a theatrical aspect of the book that many young adults would be inclined to read and then watch. |
| **Similar Titles** | *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins |
|  | Rowell, Rainbow. *Eleanor & Park.* New York: St. Martin’s, 2013.  Print.  **Awards:** YALSA Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers  **Genre:** Fiction  **Grade Level:** 7-12  ***School Library Journal*** |
| Summary | Two sixteen-year-olds, Eleanor and Park who are ridiculed and bullied by their peers, find love in one another. When Eleanor first arrives on the school bus, Park already knows she is going to have a hard time, with her bright red hair and very unique dress code; she becomes the butt of all jokes. But then she sits next to him day after day after day, and from this comes a unique friendship that turns to more. |
| Personal Reaction | I loved this book. The Park and Eleanor are the type of characters that are each very round and their personalities have resonated with as I have read the book. The setting and their personalities, as well as the opposite backgrounds of their home lives have mirrored much of those students that have passed through my own classroom. |
| Memorable Literary Element | Each chapter changes points of view, one chapter is from Eleanor’s point of view and the next is Park’s point of view. The reader gets to know and connect with each of the main characters. |
| Reading Promotion | Students could compare and contrast the first loves in *Eleanor and Park* and *The Fault in Our Stars* to promote each of the books to other, maybe reluctant readers.  **AASL: 4.1.8** **Use creative and artistic formats to express personal learning.** |
| Appeal to young adults | The main characters are young high school students who are in the midst of fitting in with their peers, but at the same time share a certain disdain for their peer groups or lack thereof. Rowell does an excellent job at capture that awkward teenage personality and the search for something more. |
| Positive/Negative Aspects | A possible negative could be the language, but once again it is realistic of real teenagers.  The book is written very well and in such a way that the reader feels for Eleanor and Park. |
| Similar Titles | *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass* by Meg Median |
| Photo credit: Michele Tota | Sedgwick, Marcus. *Midwinter Blood*. New York: Roaring Book Press, 2013. Print.  **Genre:** Supernatural, Fantasy, Time Travel  **Grade Level:** 9-12  ***Library Journal*** |
| **Summary** | Eric Seven is a journalist on assignment to a mysterious secretive island, Blessed Island, where others have claimed that no one ages and there appears to be no children on the island. When Eric arrives on the island he is instantly greeted by the island’s Ward and Merle, a beautiful woman who somehow he seems to know, but couldn’t since they leave a world away. While he is there he seems to lose track of thought and time and by the end Eric and the local woman are sacrificed, but the book doesn’t stop there. This same ritualistic death echoes their deaths from centuries before, both Eric and Merle. Both of them were forbidden lovers in a past life on Blessed Island and each of them searching and following each other across centuries all leading back to the same island. |
| **Personal Reaction** | I loved this book! I read it in a day because I could not put it down. The idea and premise of the book made it very intriguing to read and a little chilling to finally see how Eric and Merle were meant to always find each other. It made for a very creepy love story that spanned centuries. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | The chapters are short and each part is labeled by the moon and the year; one part is labeled “Midsummer Sun: June 2073—Flower Moon. Another memorable element is how the characters are connected through each generation and time period. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This book could be used in part with a fiction writing class or with students who are interested in writing, specifically supernatural and fantasy writing.  **AASL 4.1.4: Seek information for personal learning in a variety of formats and genres.**  **AASL 4.1.3: Respond to literature and creative expressions of ideas in various formats and genres.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | The main character, Eric is and has always been searching for somewhere he belonged and has always been in search of a place to call home. Young Adults would be attracted to this kind of mentality of the search and longing to be on their own and away from their parents. |
| **Similar Titles** | *In Darkness* by Nick Lake  *Black Helicopters* by Blythe Woolston |
| **Photo credit: Michele Tota** | Sepetys, Ruta. *Out of the Easy*. New York: Philomel Books, 2013.  Print.  **Genre:** Historical Fiction  **Grade Level:** 9-12  ***School Library Journal***  ***Kirkus Reviews***  ***Horn Book Magazine***  **Click** [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_izSds8f3qs) **for the Out of the Easy Book Trailer** |
| **Summary** | Set in 1950s French Quarter, New Orleans, seventeen year old Josie Moraine is trying to find a way out of her negligent, prostitute mother’s lies and deception. She is in search of a new way of life and is in pursuit of something better and refined, far away from her mother and the sinful French Quarter. As she devises her plan to get out, a mysterious death of a wealthy man leaves Josie to decide who’s side she is really on, her mother’s, her conscience, or Willie’s. She has to find out the truth, but at what cost is she willing to go to get to it? The next big question is whether or not Josie will ever get out of New Orleans and away from the lifestyle her mother has thrust her in from the time she was a little girl and the promise of a little doll would keep her quiet? |
| **Personal Reaction** | This was a very captivating book, the setting, the characters, the plot, and the narration made this one a page-turner. I felt so connected to Josie and was rooting for her the whole time and commended her when she didn’t give into temptation and proved that she was better than her mother. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | The strong female roles stand out the most to me. Although Willie Woodley is a madam, her professionalism and stern nature makes her admirable. Josie, to persevere despite her mother’s actions is also admirable. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This book would make a great addition to an all girls’ book club to discuss strong female characters and roles. Or used in a literature class where the students discuss women in literature and their roles in society. **AASL 1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within a learning community. AASL 4.3.1: Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | Josie is young and on the verge of becoming an adult, but at the same time had to grow up way faster than any young girl should have, this will appeal to female readers as well as Josie’s love interest in the book.  All readers would be attracted to the want to break free and to want more and to achieve success, honestly. |
| **Similar Titles** | *In the Shadows of Black Birds* by Cat Winters |
| **Macintosh HD:Users:mtota82:Pictures:iPhoto Library.photolibrary:Previews:2014:06:19:20140619-105153:c9vqKRhRRdij3%8KBJNAyg:IMG_3988.jpg**  **Photo credit: Michele Tota** | Smith, Andrew. *Winger*. New York: Simon & Schuster BFYR,  2013. Print.  **Genre:** Fiction  **Grade Level**:7-12  ***School Library Journal***  ***Horn Book Magazine*** |
| **Summary** | Ryan Dean West is a fourteen-year-old junior at a boarding school in Oregon for rich kids; however, he is stuck in O-Hall (the hall reserved for the delinquents of Pine Mountain) with the biggest bully on his rugby team, Chas. “Winger” as Ryan Dean is named by his teammates, is intelligent, but very immature and very much in love with his best friend, Annie. Winger narrates and illustrates this hilarious coming of age novel filled with teenage boy pranks, jokes, drinking, and vulgarity. Amidst all the hilarity and humiliation Ryan Dean suffers, he does learn the importance of the camaraderie presented in the novel especially when things start to fall a part. Ryan Dean’s narration takes the reader through his happiest moments and his biggest mistakes. |
| **Personal Reaction** | I have never laughed more in my entire life; this book included some of the dirtiest adolescent boy humor I have ever read, but also had some real coming of age moments too. Ryan Dean’s transformation throughout the book is noteworthy and realistic. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | The comic book drawings completed by the narrator to further illustrate his humiliation and unbelievable teenage boy fantasies. These drawings added more to the creativity and humor of Winger’s rugby playing high school life. |
| **Reading Promotion** | **AASL 1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within a learning community. 4.1.8: Use creative and artistic formats to express personal learning.** This book could be used to teach about incorporating graphics with literature as well as humor. I could see this book being part of a reluctant readers book club. |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | This book will relate well to high school boys especially those who play or have played a team sport like rugby, have had a crush on an older girl, and have had a fistfight with a friend over a girl.  The only real negatives of the book are the constant thoughts of sex and the objectification of girls; however, the humor behind the narrator’s inner thoughts outweighs these negatives. |
| **Similar Titles** | *Reality Boy* by A.S. King  *Crash and Burn* by Michael Hassan |
|  | Wein, Elizabeth. *Code Name Verity.* New York: Hyperion, 2012. Print.  **Awards:** YALSA Teens Top 10  **Genre:** Historical Fiction  **Grade Level:** 9-12  ***School Library Journal*** |
| **Summary** | A fictional story set in 1943 Nazi Occupied France, two best friends, the pilot and a passenger, do just about anything to save one another. Verity is arrested and interrogated by the Gestapo when her British spy plane crashes in France. She is forced to tell them her mission or be executed. Verity’s confessions are carefully crafted while misleading her Nazi captors. |
| **Personal Reaction** | Whether or not these events happened during WWII, Wein did an excellent job at creating memorable and realistic characters. I loved this book! It took me by surprise of how suspenseful it was, the story was laid out very well. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | The flashbacks of how Verity and Maddie became friends, and also the overall organization of the book, the detailed headings. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This book could be aligned with a World Literature and History class for a unit on WWII and the Nazi movement through Europe.  **AASL: 1.1.1** Follow an inquiry-based process in seeking knowledge in curricular subjects, and make the real-world connection for using this process in own life. |
| **Appeal to Young Adults** | The main character is a strong female character that many young girls could be inspired by. |
| **Positive/Negative Aspects** | This book was slow to start, but once I gave the book a chance and got to know the characters, I began to really enjoy the book. |
| **Similar Titles** | *The Fitz-Osbornes at War (The Montgomery Journals #3)* by Michelle Cooper  *My Family for the War* by Anne C. Voorhoeve |
| Photo credit: Michele Tota | Yang, Gene Luen. *Boxers*. New York: First Second, 2013. Print.  **Genre:** Historical Fiction  **Grade Level:** 9-12  ***School Library Journal*** |
| **Summary** | At what cost would you pay to save the people of your country. Little Bao finds just that out when the people of his Chinese village are brutally attacked and robbed in 1898. Little Bao has had enough of the brutality to his people when he takes action in his own hands and harnesses the powers of the ancient Chinese Gods and bands together a group of Boxers trained in Kung Fu to free China of the foreign missionaries reeking havoc on it’s people. |
| **Personal Reaction** | I am not normally drawn to graphic novels, but this caught my attention for it’s historical accuracy while being drawn out like a comic book. It wasn’t a traditional novel nor a traditional history book and I think that is what made me like this book as much as I did. |
| **Memorable Literary Element** | A historical novel written as a graphic novel was such a creative way to teach about the Boxer Revolution. |
| **Reading Promotion** | This novel could easily be adapted to any World History class/curriculum and used to discuss the Boxer Revolution among others and the treatment of people during times of war.  **AASL1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within the learning community.**  **AASL 4.1.4: Seek information for personal learning in a variety of formats and genres.**  **AASL 4.1.5: Connect ideas to own interests and pervious knowledge.** |
| **Evaluation**  **(Appeal to young adults, positive and negatives)** | Young adults would be tempted to check this book out and the others in this series because of the graphics; it makes for a much easier read about history than history books. The graphics in this book also tell the tale of the Boxer Revolution very well and very horrifyingly that will grip the reader. |
| **Similar Titles** | *Deliah Dirk and The Turkish Lieutenant (Deliah Dirk #1)* by Tony Cliff  *War Brothers: The Graphic Novel* by Sharon McKay |
|  | Zusak, Marcus. I Am the Messenger. New York: Random House, 2002. Print.  **Awards:** Margaret A. Edwards Award  **Genre:** Fiction  **Grade Level:** 7-12  ***Horn Book Magazine*** |
| Summary | An underage cab driver, Ed Kennedy captures a would-be bank robber, and then begins receiving playing cards with addresses on them where he must deliver a message. However, none of the cards give him any further instructions, he only relies on his intuition. It is up to Ed to save each of the people receiving the messages to save themselves. |
| Personal Reaction | I did not like this book as much as I thought I would. It took me a while to get into book. Unlike the other books I have read thus far, the characters in this one did not grip me as much. I’m not sure if it was the use of the British slang in the book that didn’t appeal to me or not, but I felt as though I could not connect with him. |
| Memorable Literary Element | The twist ending, it’s unexpected, but very much exciting, and the language of the book. |
| Reading Promotion | Students could write a theme analysis of this book and share with a book club or other group.  **AASL: 4.1.8 Use creative and artistic formats to express personal learning.** |
| Appeal to Young Adults | Young adults will relate to this book because of the “in-between” stage that Ed finds himself in. They can relate to finding themselves and what they really want to do with their lives. |
| Positive/Negative Aspects | A big negative, although it is realistic of how teenagers talk, is the language in the book, as well as the drinking that takes place. However, on a positive note, the book is very much multi-layered with themes that could really touch the reader. |
| Similar Titles | *Tales of the Madman Underground*by John Barnes  *Finding Grace* by Alyssa Brugman  *One Whole and Perfect Day* by Judith Clarke |

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| **Reading Instructional Strategy**  **Book Trailer (High School)** |
| **AASL Benchmark**  **AASL 1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within a learning community.**  **AASL 4.3.1: Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.**  **AASL 2.1.6** Use the writing process, media and visual literacy and technology skills to create products that express new understanding. |
| **Grade Level: 9-12** |
| **Description:**  Students will create a book trailer of a book of their choice. Students will work individually on this project, but will share their projects using the Edublog website and discussion board for peer feedback prior to the due date. While preparing for this project, students will become familiar with using Flickr and Picasaweb and YouTube, as well as, using programs to create their trailer, iMovie, Animoto, and Stupeflix. Students will also receive instruction on how to properly cite images and music, as well as create a Creative Commons license for their project. |
| **Meaning from text:**  Students will have had to read the book and fully understand the main themes of the book as well as the major protagonist and antagonist of the book and use these ideas to entice other students/readers to want to read the book. Students will be required to find images that relate to the book and its themes, as well as music that can easily relate to the overall theme of the book. |
| **Librarian/Teacher Roles:**   * Both the teacher and the librarian will help students to chose their books, if necessary, otherwise the teacher and librarian will serve only as a guide during the book selection process. * The librarian will provide instruction on how to create a book trailer and provide examples for students to view. * The librarian will help students to create Edublog accounts and any other accounts they may need in order to complete the project. * The teacher and librarian will provide the assignment criteria as well as the scoring rubric for students to follow as they create their trailers * The teacher and librarian will work together to monitor the blog website. * The teacher and librarian will work together to assess the final projects. |
| **Assessment:**  The teacher and librarian will create a rubric together to assess the students’ book trailers. The rubric may look similar to this one from [Read Write Think](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson-docs/30914Rubric.pdf). |
| **Handouts/Materials:**  Book Trailer rubric  Assignment outline  Click [here](http://youtu.be/NbjrvHp9A4c) for an example of a book trailer  More [examples](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/u/bn-studio-author-interviews-book-videos/379003633) from Barnes and Noble bookstore |
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| **Reading Instructional Strategy**  **Book Review Bookmarks and Display (Middle School)** |
| **AASL Benchmark**  **AASL 1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within a learning community.**  **AASL 4.3.1: Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.**  **AASL 2.1.6** Use the writing process, media and visual literacy and technology skills to create products that express new understanding. |
| **Grade Level: 6-8** |
| **Description:**  After reading a book of their choice, students will create a book review bookmark to place in the book for the next potential reader. These bookmarks will not only be in the physical form, but also in the digital form on the library’s website where students and parents can look up new and old books in the school’s library. The students will also create a star rating system similar to the box office and music review, five stars meaning the best and one star meaning the worst. |
| **Meaning from text:**  Students will have had read the book in it’s entirety in order to give a comprehensive review of the book, which will also include a summary of the book (without any spoilers) as well as their personal reaction to the book. Students will have to be able to read and understand the major theme of the book as well as articulate the best features of the book. Students will also have to practice their persuasive writing skills to entice others to want to read the same book and give it a similar rating. |
| **Librarian/Teacher Roles:**   * Both the teacher and the librarian will help students to chose their books, if necessary, otherwise the teacher and librarian will serve only as a guide during the book selection process. * The librarian will provide instruction on how to create a book review and provide examples for students to view. * The librarian will help students to create their bookmarks using Microsoft Publisher and how to upload it to an email and send it to the librarian’s email to be posted to the library’s website. * The teacher and librarian will provide the assignment criteria as well as the scoring rubric for students to follow as they create their reviews * The librarian will work together to monitor the library’s website. * The teacher and librarian will work together to assess the final projects. |
| **Assessment:**  The librarian and teacher will create the rubric for the bookmarks using Read Write Think model. |
| **Handouts/Materials:**  Cardstock/Printer Ink  Microsoft Publisher |
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