

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Lesley Wolf	School:	Hyatts
Book Title:	Black Like Me	Genre:	Biography
Author:	John Howard Griffin	Pages:	208
Publisher:	Signet	Copyright:	2004

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

In the Deep South of the 1950s, journalist John Howard Griffin decided to cross the color line. Using medication that darkened his skin to deep brown, he exchanged his privileged life as a Southern white man for the disenfranchised world of an unemployed black man. His audacious, still chillingly relevant eyewitness history is a work about race and humanity-that in this new millennium still has something important to say to every American.

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

10. Examine author's purpose and style.

13. Analyze plot, character, theme, point of view and setting in varied genres.

6. Write responses to literature that organize an insightful interpretation around several clear ideas, premises or images that support judgments with specific references to the original text, to other texts, authors and/or to prior knowledge.

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

### Review #1

From Publishers Weekly: Griffin's (The Devil Rides Outside) mid-century classic on race brilliantly withstands both the test of time and translation to audio format. Concerned by the lack of communication between the races and wondering what "adjustments and discriminations" he would face as a Negro in the Deep South, the late author, a journalist and self-described "specialist in race issues," left behind his privileged life as a Southern white man to step into the body of a stranger. In 1959, Griffin headed to New Orleans, darkened his skin and immersed himself in black society, then traveled to several states until he could no longer stand the racism, segregation and degrading living conditions. Griffin imparts the hopelessness and despair he felt while executing his social experiment, and professional narrator Childs renders this recounting even more immediate and emotional with his heartfelt delivery and skillful use of accents.

### Review #2

Library Journal: In 1959, Griffin, a noted white journalist, decided to try an experiment. He felt that the only way to determine the truth about how African Americans were treated by whites, and to learn if there was discrimination, was to become one. After a series of medical treatments that

darkened his skin, he began his travels in the Deep South. Made up primarily of his journal entries during that time, *Black Like Me*, read by Ray Childs, details the experiences he had while passing for black. He finds that the people who saw him as white days earlier would not give him the time of day. He suffered even more as he rode buses in New Orleans, discovering how whites would no longer sit next to him. Listeners will be fascinated by his bus trip to Mississippi during which the driver would not let any of the African Americans off at a rest stop and how some of the passengers decided to deal with this slight. A fascinating view of life before the heyday of the Civil Rights movement, showing the difficulties of being black in America.

**What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

<u>Title:</u> <b>Of Mice and Men</b>	<u>Author:</u> <b>John Steinbeck</b>
<u>Title:</u> <b>Flowers for Algernon</b>	<u>Author:</u> <b>Daniel Keyes</b>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>

**Document any potentially controversial content:**

Multiple uses of the word "nigger", "shit", "ass" as used in context with the setting of the book

**Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated  Regular  At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 6  7  8  9  10  11  12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):** 8<sup>th</sup> grade

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** 11-27-07

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults